

SLOW COOKER RED WINE, TOFU & VEGETABLE STEW

Serves: 6

Prep: 60-90 mins (*Dependent upon skill and/or if you are using tofu)

Marination: 12-14 hrs

Cooking Time: 3.5-4 hrs (*On a high SC heat setting)

Type: Main Meal

Tools: Chopping board(s), sharp knife, veggie peeler, large pot, large bowl, kitchen paper, casserole dish, kitchen film, large slotted spoon, sieve, large bowl, large/non-stick frying pan (with a lid), slow cooker

Courtesy of: Eat2Health Blog



A delicious slow cooker meal that is not only healthful and comforting but absolutely delicious! This plant-based stew contains tender (melt in your mouth) slow cooked vegetables and tasty marinated tofu, all in which are served in a delicious red wine and herb/veggie-infused gravy! We think that fighting the cold weather just got easier- enjoy a bowl tonight!

Ingredients

Tofu & Marinade		Stew Essentials	
1.2kg	Firm Tofu (about 3 tetra paks)	250g	Chestnut Mushrooms
120g	Brown Onion (1 medium)	460g	Baby Onions
460g	Carrot (2 large)	2 tbsp	Rapeseed Oil
160g	Celery (2 sticks)		Low-Fat Cooking Oil
3	Garlic Clove (large ones!)		Salt & Black Pepper
475ml	Red Wine (vegan friendly)	500ml	Water
1	Bay Leaf	500ml	Vegetable Stock
8	Peppercorns	40ml	Soya Sauce (low salt)
½ tsp	Dried Thyme	60ml	Balsamic Glaze
¼ tsp	Veggie Stock Powder (low- salt)	1	Bouquet Garni
1 tbsp	Balsamic Glaze	40g	Corn Flour
1 tbsp	Soya Sauce (low/salt or Tamari for GF)		
2 tsp	Extra Virgin Olive Oil		

Directions

1. Drain and press the tofu between two heavy chopping boards or plates for 30 mins.
2. In the meantime, peel and thinly slice the onion. Wash, peel, trim the ends, quarter and then thinly slice the carrot. Wash, trim the ends and then thinly slice the celery. Peel the garlic and finely chop two of them only (leaving one whole).
3. Place the onion, carrot, celery, garlic, 400ml wine, 1 bay leaf, 8 peppercorns, ½tsp thyme and ¼ tsp vegetable stock powder into a large pot. Place it over a medium heat. Cover with a lid. Bring to a boil. Simmer and cook for 5 mins. Remove from the heat. Transfer the mixture into a large bowl. Allow it to cool down.

4. Meanwhile, drain the excess water off the tofu. Pat it dry with some kitchen paper. Transfer onto a large chopping board. Slice into pieces about one inch long (but the preference is yours!). Transfer and arrange the tofu in a single layer in a large casserole dish.
5. Add the remaining 100ml wine, 1 tbsp balsamic glaze, 1 tbsp soya sauce and 2 tsp olive oil into the bowl that contains the red wine marinade mixture. Mix to combine. Carefully pour the red wine marinade over the tofu, allowing the vegetable mixture to rest on top. Cover with a sheet of kitchen film. Refrigerate for 12-14hrs. *Tip: Even if you end up leaving this mixture for longer than 14hrs, it will be fine!*
6. The next day, remove the veggie mixture with a slotted spoon and transfer it into a slow cooker. Remove and discard the whole garlic, bay leaf and 8 peppercorns. Rest a large sieve over a large bowl. Transfer the tofu into the sieve. Pour the remaining marinade over the tofu. Allow the tofu to drain and do not discard the reserved marinade.
7. In the meantime, wash and dry the mushrooms; leave whole, halve or quarter depending on the size. Peel the onions.
8. Heat 2 tbsp rapeseed oil in a large frying pan over a medium-low heat. *Tip: Alternatively use some low-fat cooking oil or a spoonful of water and 'steam-fry'!* Add the mushrooms and onions. Season it with a little salt and a few grinds of black pepper to taste. Cover with a lid. Gently fry 4-5 mins or until the vegetables are lightly browned, stirring occasionally. Remove and transfer into the slow cooker.
9. Spray some low-fat cooking oil into the same frying pan. Add the tofu and gently fry 6-7 mins or until lightly browned. Transfer into the slow cooker. *Tip: This step will have to be completed in 2-3 batches.* Once finished, add one 1 tbsp of water. Swirl it around to help 'deglaze' the pan; add this liquid to the slow cooker.
10. In the meantime, boil 1L of water in a kettle. Prepare 500ml of vegetable stock.
11. Pour the reserved marinade into the slow cooker. Add 500ml vegetable stock, 500ml boiling water, 40ml soya sauce and 60ml balsamic glaze. Season it with a few grinds of black pepper to taste. Gently stir together. Add 1 pouch of bouquet garni. Gently submerge it into the stew. Cover with a lid. Cook on a high heat setting for 3.5-4hrs or on a low heat setting for 7-8 instead. Prepare a 'slurry' at the end of cooking; in a dish, mix 40g flour with equal parts water and whisk until the flour has dissolved. Whilst briskly stirring, pour the 'slurry' into the stew until lightly thickened.
12. Serve warm. Ladle into a large serving bowl. Garnish with a little fresh parsley (if preferred) and serve with a multi-grain or GF roll or even some steamed greens.

Enjoy!

Tip: Refrigerate any leftover stew in an air-tight and resealable container; reheat and consume within 3-4 days. Alternatively store and freeze; defrost, reheat and consume within 1 month.

Notes:

- A few good things to note include:
 - Like a lot of stews and sauce, it tastes better the next day- especially the tofu! The ideal would be to marinate the tofu throughout the day, slow cook it overnight and then enjoy it for dinner the next day!
 - If preferred, you can use balsamic vinegar instead of balsamic glaze.
 - If you don't like the idea of using soya (or tamari) sauce, you can always try swapping it for a vegan Worcestershire sauce; just adjust the quantity appropriately.
 - We were originally shopping for some meaty (baby) portobello mushrooms, but the chestnuts worked out just fine. Oh, if you are using tiny button-type mushrooms, you won't need to chop them, probably saving you 5 minutes in the process!
 - Yes the tofu is purple, but it's not GROSS! :D If you are not using it, still go ahead and make the 'marinated' veggies.
 - If you do not want to spend time marinating tofu, you can opt for using a pre-marinated block of tofu or tempeh (there are some tasty ones about!) or use some hearty cooked beans or lentils instead.
 - To help intensify the tofu marinade, we are recommending that you add an additional 100ml of (uncooked) wine to it (but we have adjusted the ingredients list for you).