

## Tofu Shashlik



4 fat cloves of garlic

A small amount of fresh ginger

400g tinned tomatoes

1 tsp ground coriander

1 tsp cumin

A pinch of chilli flakes or two

A few pinches of salt

100g peppers

2 tbsp vegetable or sunflower oil

100g firm tofu

2 tsp any flour

First peel and slice your onion, and peel and roughly chop your garlic and ginger, and toss it into a saucepan with a splash of oil. Add the spices, and cook on a medium heat for a few minutes to start to soften. Pour in the tomatoes and add the peppers, stir well, and transfer to a back burner on a low heat to cook. This forms the sauce for the shashlik, and will benefit from the longest possible cooking time you can bear to give it. I do mine for around an hour, but not everyone's budgets and patience will stretch to that, so fifteen minutes is just fine.

When the sauce is thickened and smells delicious, you can start to cook your tofu. When I first posted about this recipe, I was inundated with requests from people, especially about how to make tofu crispy. I'm no expert, as it is a new ingredient to me, but have just about managed to pull it off by now. First you make sure all of the excess water is gently squeezed out, similar to how you would gently squeeze a mozzarella ball or similar. I do this one of two ways- either place it in a sieve over the sink with a side plate over the top, and pop a can or two of beans on top of the plate. The weighted pressure pushes the liquid out of the tofu and down the sink (in the interests of improved frugality, if anyone has a use for this, I am all ears.) Or, I wrap it several times in a clean flat tea towel and gently press it between my hands over the sink, where the tea towel will absorb a good deal of the liquid. Either way, use 'firm' tofu, and give it a squish.

Dice your tofu as fine or as chunky as you like, and pop it in a bowl with some flour and a pinch of salt. Give it a shake to coat it and slightly rough up the edges, important for the crisp factor as dishevelled edges cook faster than clean and tidy Stepford Wife ones. This is the secret to perfect roast potatoes too, is to throw them around a bit.

Gently grease a frying pan with a little oil. Bring it to a high heat to warm the pan, and carefully put your tofu in. Cook for a few minutes, then turn the tofu over to cook it on the other side. A cube has six sides, remember, so there is going to be some serious turning over to do if you are determined to have the crispiest tofu in all the land.

When crisp as you like, remove and pop it in the pan of sauce sitting on the back of the stove. Give it a quick stir, garnish with some greenery if you are cooking it for someone special (that can be you, you are special) and enjoy.