

# Tofu “Steak” with Watercress and Miso Sauce

## *Tofu Dengaku*

*The versatile soybean is an indispensable part of Japanese cuisine. Introduced to Japan in the 6th century, it was called the “meat vegetable,” an apt name since it has been a primary source of protein in the Japanese diet ever since. The following recipe uses tofu and soybean curd as the “steak” of this dish, and miso, a paste made from cooked, fermented soy beans. There are various types of miso, including the two used here, delicate and fine-textured white miso and robust red miso.*

1. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, boil tofu in water to cover for 1 to 2 minutes. Squeeze out excess water by placing tofu between 2 plates or cutting boards for 10 to 20 minutes. Cut each tofu cake in half crosswise, then in half again lengthwise.
2. Cook watercress in salted boiling water for 1 to 2 minutes. Cool in cold water. Coarsely chop watercress.
3. Mix watercress, white miso, *mirin*, and salt in a small bowl.
4. In a separate bowl, combine red miso, sugar, *sake*, sesame oil, and 2 tablespoons of the vegetable oil.
5. Heat remaining 2 tablespoon vegetable oil in a skillet over moderately high heat. Sauté tofu quickly on both sides until browned.
6. Place 2 pieces of tofu on each plate. Pour white and red miso mixtures over tofu and garnish with watercress.

*\*Available at Japanese food markets and most supermarkets.*

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 servings: 4
 

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- 2 firm, fresh tofu cakes\* (*momen* tofu)
- 30 sprigs watercress, thick stems removed
- Pinch of salt
- 4 tablespoons white miso (*shiro-miso*)\*\*
- 4 tablespoons Japanese sweet cooking wine (*mirin*)\*\* or dry sherry
- 4 tablespoons red miso (*aka-miso*)\*\*
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons Japanese rice wine (*sake*)\*\*
- 1 tablespoon Asian sesame oil
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil