

Baked, Spiced Tofu

YIELD: 2 CUPS (474 ML) BAKED AND CUBED

For most with authentic Indian tastes (my husband included), replacing homemade Indian cheese (paneer) with tofu is akin to blasphemy. I get it. There's a richness to paneer that seems irreplaceable to those who grew up on it. Indians have a lovefest with their dairy. Thus, my numerous attempts to substitute tofu for cheese in dishes such as mattar paneer and palak paneer were met with disdain at home until I discovered the art of baking tofu. This tiny step gives tofu a wonderful, almost meaty texture. Make a few batches, refrigerate them, and keep them on hand for anything and everything! Pure vegan magic.

Spray oil

2 teaspoons *garam masala* (optional)

1 (14-ounce [397-g]) package extra-firm organic tofu, sliced into ½-inch (13-mm) thick strips

1. Set an oven rack at the highest position, preheat your oven to 350°F (180°C), and lightly oil a baking sheet.
2. Sprinkle *garam masala* over one side of the tofu strips.
3. Place the tofu with the unseasoned side down on the baking sheet. Spray lightly with oil. Bake for 15 minutes. Flip the tofu slices, season them with the remaining *garam masala*, and spray lightly again with oil. Bake for another 15 minutes. Remove the pan from oven, let the tofu cool for 5 minutes, and cut it into cubes. Use the baked tofu immediately or store it for up to 1 week in an airtight container in the refrigerator for use later. You can also freeze it for up to 2 months.