GINATAANG TOFU

Ginataang (GHEE-nah-ta-ANG) is a Filipino dish meaning "done with coconut milk", so Ginataang tofu is tofu cooked with coconut milk (amongst other things). It often uses fish sauce, but to keep this recipe vegan, I opted for liquid aminos (soy sauce works too), rice vinegar, and mushrooms to give a similar flavor. This dish is served with rice but is great on its own or with bean thread or rice noodles.

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup dry white rice

2 cups water

1 can coconut milk

1 pack extra firm tofu

1/4 cup oil

1/3 cup liquid aminos or soy sauce

1/3 cup rice vinegar

1 tsp red chili flakes (optional)

1 medium sweet onion

3 cloves garlic

1 thumb ginger

0.4 lb crimini mushrooms (or 2 portabellas)

1 medium carrot

1/2 lb green beans

INSTRUCTIONS:

Start your rice. I prefer to use a rice cooker because there's no fuss, but stove top works as well. The Co-op also has pre-cooked packs of rice you can heat up on the stove top or in the microwave. I like to use jasmine or sushi rice. Once the rice is started, you can begin

making the ginataang tofu. If using pre-cooked rice, wait until your meal is almost ready to serve to heat it up, so it isn't cold by the time you are plating it.

Cook rice in rice cooker:

Rinse rice with cool water until it runs fairly clear. Add one cup uncooked rice and 2 cups cool water to rice cooker and turn on. When it is done, fluff with a rice cooker paddle or wooden spoon and unplug machine.

Cook rice on the stove:

Rinse rice with cool water until it runs fairly clear. Add one cup uncooked rice and 2 cups cool water to a pot. Heat over medium high heat until it reaches a simmer. Cover with a lid and turn down to medium low heat. Cook about 16-18 minutes or until the water is gone. Remove from heat and let sit (with the lid on!) for 10 minutes. Fluff with a wooden spoon and then re-cover.

Ginataang Tofu:

Heat ¼ cup avocado oil in a large pan over medium high heat.

Drain liquid out of tofu container. Press lightly with a dish towel to remove some excess moisture. Cut the tofu into bite sized pieces.

When oil is heated, add the tofu into the pan.

While the tofu cooks, cut the onion up. I like to cut it into a size between diced and bite sized.

When the tofu is crisp and browned, flip them over. You can crisp all sides but I usually just do the two largest sides.

When the tofu is crisped to your liking, remove them from the pan and put them on a plate with paper towels. These will absorb the excess oil. Turn the heat down to medium, but don't remove the oil.

Add the cut onion into the pan and stir regularly. While they cook, prepare your garlic and ginger. These can be finely minced, but I like the texture of them so for the garlic, I crush the clove (unpeeled) with the side of the knife blade and then cut them up into large pieces. For the ginger, I peel as much skin as I can with a spoon and then cut it into a few big chunks.

When the onion pieces are translucent with some browning, add in the garlic and ginger.

Cook for about two minutes, then add in 1/3 cup aminos, 1/3 cup vinegar and stir. I let this cook for a minute or two to let the onion get more flavorful, then add the can of coconut milk. Stir it in to break up any chunks.

Cut up the crimini or portabella mushrooms into bite sized pieces and add them into the pan. Ginataang is usually made with fish sauce, but for a vegan version, I've found that aminos/soy sauce, vinegar, and mushrooms gives it a similar flavor.

Prepare the green beans and carrots. Cut the ends off of the green beans, then cut the beans in half. Cut the carrot into discs, like you would for a soup.

When the liquids are bubbling in the pan, let them bubble for 5-7 minutes for some moisture to cook out, stirring every so often to keep the bottom from burning or a skin on the top from forming. Add in the beans and carrots.

Let cook until the green beans and carrots are partially cooked but still more firm than you usually eat them. At this time, add the tofu chunks back in and coat with the sauce.

Continue cooking until the green beans and carrots are cooked to your liking. I prefer a decent amount of crunch to them, but you can cook them longer if you prefer them soft.

Serve with rice!

SUBSTITUTIONS:

Aminos/soy sauce: If you are open to it, I highly recommend using fish sauce in place of aminos – it's delicious. Be sure to use half the amount though, as it is strong. If you are avoiding soy, I recommend coconut aminos. If you are on a low-sodium diet, try a low-sodium soy sauce.

Tofu: If you eat meat, you can use this instead of tofu. My favorite to use for ginataang is salmon, but I think chicken would be great too! Just cook your meat first and add it last, like the tofu. For more vegan options, the Co-op does have Pumfu, which is a soy-free pumpkin based tofu alternative, as well as seitan, tempeh, and plant-based meats. You can also just use more vegetables in place of a protein – I think potatoes would be delicious. A can of chickpeas would work well and provide protein.

Veggies: You can do anything here! If there's a vegetable you don't like in this, feel free to omit it. If there's something you think would be delicious, absolutely add it! Spinach is common, I also think baby bok choy would be great. Onion could be substituted for shallots if you want to get fancy.

If you like your veggies very much on the crunchy raw side, let the sauce cook down on its own before adding the veggies. This gives the sauce a chance to thicken and lets the flavors cook together.

Coconut milk: I don't have a non-coconut substitution (ginataang means "done with coconut milk), but if you want a lighter option, you can use low fat or lite coconut milk, although it will likely be a more watery sauce. Coconut cream (NOT coconut creamer – coconut cream is found next to the coconut milk) is a fantastic replacement if you want to get decadent.

Rice: Rice isn't necessary, but I love it. I've had this meal with no rice and just way more veggies and it's great that way. I think rice or mung bean noodles would be fantastic as well. I could eat this stuff on toast.