

Hot and Sour Soup

8-9 cups water
2 large onions, peeled and quartered
4 small potatoes, peeled and halved but save the peel and put in cheesecloth bag
4 carrots, peeled- 2 cut into big chunks and 2 cut into matchstick pieces
1 large garlic pearl or 4 cloves garlic peeled (put in cheesecloth bag with potato peels)
1 large bunch parsley
1 tablespoon salt
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1-2 flat teaspoons ground dried ginger
2 additional tablespoons soy sauce
4 scallions washed thoroughly- 2 for stock, 2 for later
1 250 gram package mushrooms, sliced thinly
1 250 gram package shimeji mushrooms or Bella mushrooms or shiitake mushrooms, sliced thinly or pulled apart
1 tablespoon sweet chili sauce
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon sesame oil
2 tablespoons rice vinegar
1/2 teaspoon white or black pepper
150 (5 or so ounces) grams firm tofu, cubed
2 tablespoons cornstarch
4 tablespoons water
1 egg, beaten

Directions:

Place into a large pot 8 to 9 cups of water, the onion, the potato, the potato, peels and garlic, both in the cheesecloth bag, the salt, a handful of the mushrooms and scallions (only a handful- rest will go in later) and the thick chunks of carrots as well as the parsley and 2 tablespoons of soy sauce and the salt. Bring everything to the boil and then lower to a simmer. Cook on simmer for about 35 to 45 minutes. Remove the potato onion, potato, peels, garlic, and parsley from the soup. Taste a bit of the soup to see how salty it is. If moderately salty, add the remaining soy sauce, as well as the ginger, the rice vinegar, the sweet chili sauce, the sugar and pepper and sesame oil and stir. Let cook for an additional five minutes. Add the thinly sliced matchstick carrots and other 2 scallions and rest of mushrooms to the soup. Continue to simmer for about 4-5 minutes or so. (The vegetables should not be totally tender). Put the cubed tofu in, continue to simmer. In a separate cup mix together the cornstarch and the 4 tablespoons of water stir until completely combined. Add to the soup, stirring smoothly and cook till it thickens somewhat, for a few minutes. Once thickened, take the beaten egg and dribble into the soup to form egg drops. Serve immediately, piping hot, in deep bowls.

