

## Northwest Vegetarian Hot and Sour Soup

Like so many classic dishes, hot and sour soup can be made with infinite variations, depending on preference, geography, and tradition. This version relies mostly on items available in Seattle's winter farmers' markets, like carrots, kale, and dried mushrooms. And do make a trip for white pepper; it's more fragrant and has quite a different flavor from black pepper.

I prefer to make this soup in a wok, because I find it easier to stir the eggs in at the end, but any old soup pot should work.

TIME: 40 minutes

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

6 cups vegetable stock  
1 ounce dried porcini mushrooms  
8 ounces tofu (about 1/2 package)  
3 tablespoons cornstarch  
3 tablespoons cold water  
1 teaspoon sugar  
2 teaspoons dark sesame oil  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
2 teaspoons canola oil  
2 carrots, cut into 1/8" by 1" strips, or shredded in a food processor  
3 sprigs lacinato (dinosaur) kale, cut the short way into 1/8" strips  
3 tablespoons white vinegar, or to taste  
1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper, or to taste  
1 large egg, beaten

Bring the stock to a boil in a large pot. Add the mushrooms, remove from heat, and let sit for 30 minutes, until the mushrooms are soft.

Meanwhile, cut the tofu into 1/4" batons, and set aside. Blend the cornstarch, water, sugar, sesame oil, and soy sauce together with a fork in a small bowl until blended, and set that aside, too.

When the mushrooms have softened, remove them from the stock with a slotted spoon and cut into thin strips.

Heat a wok over high heat. When hot, add the canola oil, then the carrots and kale and mushrooms. Cook and stir for 2 minutes, until the carrots are soft. Add the vegetable stock (leaving any mushroom grit in the bottom of the pot), then the tofu, and bring to a simmer. Stir the cornstarch mixture, add it to the soup, and bring it back to a simmer, stirring occasionally until the soup looks a bit thicker and almost glossy. Remove the pan from the heat, stir in the vinegar, and pepper, and taste for seasoning – you may want a

bit more vinegar and/or pepper. Stir the mixture slowly, and drizzle the egg in (it will cook upon contact). Serve immediately.