Baked Spiced Tofu

Serves 4 / Prep Time: 5 minutes / Cook Time: 20 minutes plus 24 hours inactive time

Dairy-Free, Egg-Free, Gluten-Free, Nut-Free, Vegetarian

A close up of food

Description automatically generated

I like to keep this on hand in the fridge to put atop a salad, tossed into a fridge cleanout stir fry, or even stuffed with spinach and other raw veggies into a wrap for a quick and easy meatless meal. Many people are turned off by tofu, believing it to be bland and boring, but the flavors in this dish only get more intense as it marinates. I recommend letting it sit in the fridge for at least 24 hours before enjoying, although it can be eaten immediately after preparing.

1 (14-ounce) package extra-firm tofu, drained

2 teaspoons ground cumin

2 teaspoons smoked paprika

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon ground turmeric

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes, or to taste

1 teaspoon salt

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

2 tablespoon tahini or unsweetened almond butter

1.     Preheat the oven to 400°F.

2.     In a small bowl, combine the cumin, paprika, cinnamon, garlic powder, turmeric, red pepper flakes, and salt. Place half of the spice mixture in a large bowl, reserving other half.

3.     Cut the tofu block into 4 large rectangles and place on several layers of paper towels. Cover with additional paper towels and press down to release water. Cut the rectangles into 1-inch cubes and transfer to the bowl with the spice mixture. Toss to coat well.

4.     Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and arrange the tofu cubes in a single layer, 1/2-inch apart on the sheet, reserving the bowl. Bake the tofu for 15 to 20 minutes, until crispy and golden.

5.     While the tofu bakes, add the olive oil and tahini to remaining spice mixture and whisk until smooth.

6.     In a large bowl, combine the baked tofu with the remaining spice mixture and toss well to coat. Allow to cool completely if not serving warm.

7.     Transfer to a storage container, cover, and allow to marinate 24 hours refrigerated.

Variation Tip: You can change the flavor profile of this dish by altering the spices used. For a more Mediterranean-influenced version, try dried rosemary and oregano in place of the cumin, cinnamon, and turmeric.