



Buddha's Delight

Plant-based classic Chinese vegetarian stew served at holidays & festivals

- 1/2 cup dried lily flowers
- 8 medium dried shiitake mushrooms
- 2 Tablespoons dried wood ear mushrooms
- 2 cups water, divided
- 4-1/2 to 6 cups hot water
- 1-1/2 ounces. dried rice vermicelli noodles
- 2 Tablespoons light soy sauce
- 1 Tablespoon dark soy sauce
- 1 Tablespoon vegetarian oyster sauce
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 2 Tablespoons peanut oil or vegetable oil
- 1 Tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 4 scallions, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, thinly sliced

1/2 cup sliced bamboo shoots, strained
2 cups deep-fried tofu puffs or oil free deep-fried tofu, cut in half
4 cups chopped Napa cabbage
4 small heads baby bok choy, cut in quarters
Sprinkle top with sliced green onions, if desired

1. In separate medium bowls, soak the dried lily flowers, shiitake mushrooms and wood ear mushrooms in 1-1/2 to 2 cups hot water for 20 minutes or until tender throughout.
2. Strain the lily flowers, reserving 3/4 cup soaking water. Trim and discard the tough ends, then cut each flower in half crosswise. Squeeze the excess water from the shiitakes and rub off any debris. Reserve 1/4 cup of the shiitake soaking water. Trim and discard the mushrooms stems. Then cut each shiitake in half. Trim and discard the tough parts of the wood ear mushrooms, then cut into bite-size pieces.
3. Place the vermicelli noodles in a large bowl and add boiling water to cover. Let sit for 3 to 5 minutes or prepare according to package instructions, until the noodles turn soft. Strain and set aside.
4. In a medium bowl, combine the light and dark soy sauces, oyster sauce, sugar, salt, sesame oil, reserved 3/4 cup lily flower soaking water, and reserve 1/4 cup shiitake mushroom soaking water (avoid adding any debris in the water) for the sauce. Stir to mix well.
5. Make a slurry by combining the cornstarch and 1 Tablespoon water in a small bowl and stirring to dissolve the cornstarch.
6. In large skillet (at least 13 inches, or 33 cm. in diameter) or Dutch oven, heat the peanut oil over medium-high heat until hot but not smoking. Add the ginger and scallions and cook, stirring a few times, until fragrant. Add the carrots and cook; stir for minute. Add the lily flowers and shiitake mushrooms and cook; stir for 1 minute. Add the bamboo shoots and wood ear mushrooms and cook; stir for 1 minute. Add the fried tofu; cook and stir for 1 minute.
7. Pour in the sauce, then add the cabbage and bok choy. Cover; let cook over medium heat for 3 to 5 minutes, until the vegetables are cooked through, stirring a few times to mix the vegetables with the sauce.
8. Add the noodles, cook, and stir for another 30 seconds. Stir the slurry again to make sure the cornstarch is dissolved, then pour it into the pan. Cook and stir until the sauce thickens.
9. Transfer the contents of the pan to a large serving plate; serve hot. Sprinkle with a few sliced scallions if desired. Yield: 4 servings

Note: The vegetables used in this recipe are flexible. Napa cabbage absorbs more flavor from the sauce than green cabbage. Dried lily flowers and shiitake mushrooms add an earthy umami to the broth. Use a large skillet for this recipe.

Recipe by: Maggie Zhu, *Chinese Homestyle, Buddha's Delight*, 172, Quarto Publishing Group Inc., 2022.

About the Recipe: Buddha's Delight is a classic Chinese vegetarian stew that is often served during holidays and festivals. Because of its flexibility, it is also a homestyle dish that home cooks make on a weeknight using whatever they have on hand. This recipe is a holiday version that includes many different vegetables.