

Seth Cluett and Jennifer Eberhardt's

Caramelized Tofu, Pecans, and Brussel Sprouts*

for Julian Ottavi and Jenny Pickett

(9 December 2020)

Ingredients:

A big block of the firmest tofu you can get, cut into 1/2" thick by 1" square pieces

A couple dozen brussel sprouts, shredded to the extent of your patience

A big handful or two of cilantro, washed and chopped

3-4 garlic cloves minced

1/2 cup of toasted pecans, chopped roughly

3 tablespoons raw or turbinado sugar

1 tbsp soy sauce

1 tspn sesame oil

1/2 teaspoon five-spice powder

1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes

some olive oil

kosher salt

pepper

Instructions:

1. You'll have to work quickly, so you'll need to prepare your *mise en place* (that's French for getting your shit together)... garlic, pecans, sugar in separate little bowls
2. Combine the soy sauce, sesame oil and five-spice powder in a bowl
3. Toss the tofu squares in the soy sauce mixture and let soak for a bit
4. Put the tofu squares in a large cold frying pan in one layer. Over high heat, wait a few minutes until the first side is browned and crisp, then flip with a fork. Be patient and don't move the little tofus, they'll let go of the pan when they're ready and don't need you to rush them.
5. Remove the tofu from the pan and set aside
6. Put a hefty drizzle of olive oil in the pan over medium heat, and toss in the red pepper flakes.
7. Then dump in the garlic and saute until fragrant
8. Throw in the pecans and cook with the garlic until you can smell garlic AND pecans
9. Add the tofu and stir it up
10. Shake the pan to evenly distribute the mixture and sprinkle the sugar over everything
11. Count to 15 and don't touch it
12. Season with a generous pinch of kosher salt and pepper and then toss to combine the sugar with the rest of it all thoroughly. Let it sit, untouched for 1-2 minutes so the sugar can caramelize
13. Remove everything from the pan and return the pan to the stove, raising the heat to high
14. Add a hearty glug of olive oil
15. When the oil starts to shimmer, add the brussel sprouts, some kosher salt and cover. Don't touch for 2 minutes. We really want to char the brussel sprouts at the bottom. Seriously. Don't touch.
16. Toss the brussel sprouts, cook until they can be pierced by a fork, then add the cilantro
17. Turn off the heat and let sit covered for 2 minutes
18. Add the tofu, garlic, and pecans to the brussel sprouts and cilantro, toss to combine
19. Season with salt and pepper to taste. We usually add some siracha. Serve over rice.

*based on <https://www.101cookbooks.com/caramelized-tofu/>