

Fresh Spring Rolls with Two Dipping Sauces

Here's why spring rolls are so amazing: They are simple little veggie-and-rice-paper wraps that feel kind of like a fancy meal when done right. Here's another reason: I'm guessing there are about zero calories in these (not including the tofu and the sauce, but we're still talking MINIMAL calories, so you can eat a bunch of these and still feel as light as a feather).

I love a tangy peanut dipping sauce for these, but if you don't like or are allergic to peanut sauce, guess what? I made an alternative sauce for you. Because I care.

INGREDIENTS

1 package of smaller size rice paper wraps
1 package extra firm tofu
2 large carrots
1 large cucumber
1 head of romaine lettuce
1 bunch of cilantro
Tamari
Unseasoned rice vinegar
Granulated garlic
Granulated onion
Sesame oil
Peanut butter
Ketchup
Raw honey
Hot sauce

DIRECTIONS

First, make the marinade for the tofu:

Whisk together:

- 2/3 cup tamari
- 1/3 cup unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon granulated garlic
- 1 Tablespoon granulated onion
- 2 teaspoons roasted sesame oil

Preheat oven to 350.

- Remove the tofu from its package and place in a colander over a bowl, allowing it to drain. For faster results, wrap the tofu in a clean cloth and place it between two heavy books, to squeeze out excess moisture.
- Slice the tofu into half-inch slides, width-wise. This should yield 8 slices.
- Arrange tofu in a shallow dish (I like to use a large glass pie dish) and pour marinade over the top making sure all the tofu is in the marinade. Let sit for 30 minutes.
- Place the tofu on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and bake for one hour, turning the pieces over once (after 30 minutes).

While that's cooking, prep your veg:

- Peel and julienne the carrot and cucumber. I use a mandolin with julienne attachment, but you can also use a Cuisinart with a julienne grate, or just very slowly and carefully julienne your own veg (slicing very thin, long slices that resemble fettuccini noodles).
- Wash and dry your lettuce (don't overly chop, the leaves should intact for this recipe because you're going to want nice long pieces of lettuce for your wrap. Cut lettuce lengthwise.
- Clean cilantro and tear off leaves until you have about one cup.

Now make your dipping sauces. Whisk together:

Sauce 1:

- 1 heaping tablespoon great quality peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons tamari
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon roasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce (I like Crystal for these sauces)
- ½ teaspoon honey
- A splash of hot water (this helps melt the peanut butter)

Sauce 2:

- 1 heaping tablespoon great quality ketchup
- 2 tablespoons tamari
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon roasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce
- ½ teaspoon honey

Time to assemble the rolls:

Once the tofu is done baking, let cool for a bit then cut each piece lengthwise (so that the slice you are using for the roll is about the size of your pinky finger).

Have your vegetables at the ready!

Fill a shallow dish with warm water. Have a nice clean surface (I use a large flat plate) for rolling.

Place a rice wrapper in the warm water and gently bob it around with your fingertips. In less than a minute it's ready to use. You'll know it when you feel it.

Lay flat on the plate and assemble the ingredients in the middle of the wrap, lengthwise; first, the lettuce, then the tofu (one slice) then the carrots, cucumber and cilantro. Not too much of each you don't want crazy bulging spring roll!

To roll: fold up the bottom and then fold each edge to the center, like wrapping a little baby in a blanket.

A couple of Pro Tips:

- Don't try to cut the assembled spring rolls in half. Serve whole. I use smaller rice wrappers so that each spring roll is a compact size to begin with. Leave one end open because it looks nice.
- If you're a person who refrigerates honey and peanut butter, leave them out on the counter the night before so that they soften up. Makes sauce-whisking much easier.