Tofu and Crunchy Cabbage Sesame Box

2 lunch boxes, each with half the tofu, cold rice, shredded vegetables and sesame dressing · Active 25 min · Total 1 hr 40 min

Skills: Beginner with ordinary kitchen equipment

Ingredients

- Plain firm calcium-set tofu, drained (300 g/about 10 1/2 oz)
- 2 teaspoons olive oil (10 ml/about 9 g)
- 1 1/4 cups cooked brown long-grain rice, promptly chilled (240 g)
- 2 cups finely shredded green cabbage (150 g)
- 1 medium carrot, washed and grated (100 g)
- 1 tablespoon toasted hulled sesame seeds (10 g)
- 1 tablespoon regular soy sauce (15 ml/about 16 g)
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar (15 ml/about 15 g)
- 1 teaspoon sugar (4 g)
- 1 tablespoon drinking water (15 ml)

Set out

28 cm/11-inch nonstick skillet, Spatula, Clean towel, Knife and board, Kitchen scale, Shallow cooling container, Refrigerator, 2 lunch boxes and 2 small dressing pots

Allergens

Soy, Sesame, Wheat in ordinary soy sauce; check tofu and sauce labels. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Drain and gently squeeze the tofu in a clean towel. Cut into 2 cm/3/4-inch cubes. Heat oil in the skillet over medium-high heat; add tofu in one layer and brown for 10–12 minutes, turning on several faces without crushing it.

2. Transfer tofu to a shallow container in a single layer and refrigerate promptly. Allow about 60 minutes, or longer as needed, until cold at 40°F/4°C or below. Meanwhile shred cabbage, grate carrot and keep both refrigerated.

3. Stir soy sauce, vinegar, sugar and water until the sugar dissolves, then add sesame seeds. Divide dressing between small leakproof pots.

4. Divide the cold rice, cold tofu and dry vegetables between 2 boxes. Refrigerate immediately and add the dressing only when ready to eat.

A useful kitchen skill

Judge tofu by a dry surface and gentle release from the pan, then cool it safely in a shallow layer before building a cold lunch.

A useful detail

The 100-minute total includes roughly 60 minutes to chill the tofu; a crowded or warm refrigerator may take longer. Rice starts cooked and cold, within 24 hours of its original cooking. The rice estimate uses cooked weight, not 240 g dry rice.

Keep it well

Refrigerate all components at 40°F/4°C or below. Eat on the preparation day and within 24 hours of the rice’s original cooking. Do not restart that clock by assembling this box. Carry with two cold sources in an insulated bag and refrigerate on arrival. Discard food left above refrigerator temperature for more than 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C.