

Red Radishes, Water Chestnuts and Tofu on Millet Polenta (“The Splendid Grain” Rebecca Wood)

Cooked radish is one of my favorite vegetables because the red softens to a rosy pink and it tastes so very sweet. Like a gaily colored pennant, the smallest leaf of each radish also helps transform this most common of vegetables.

Serves 4

1 lb firm tofu
2 Tbsp yellow miso
3 Tbsp raspberry vinegar
2/3 cup water
3 Tbsp sugar
2 tsp arrowroot
1 tsp ginger juice
¾ tsp crushed red pepper flakes
3 Tbsp vegetable oil
1 cup small radishes, with leaves
2 Tbsp dark sesame oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 ounces very small button mushrooms
1 cup whole fresh water chestnuts, peeled or canned water chestnuts, drained
6 scallions cut into 2 inch lengths
4 squares millet polenta
2 Tbsp sesame seeds, preferably black

Slice tofu lengthwise into five 1-inch slices. Lay 5 or 6 layers of paper towels or a cotton towel on the work surface. Arrange the tofu slices on the towels, cover with additional towels, and place a heavy weight, such as a skillet, on top. Let stand for 30 minutes or press out the excess water.

Mash the miso and vinegar in a small bowl until pureed. Add the water, sugar, arrowroot, ginger juice and red pepper flakes. Blend well and set aside.

Remove all but the smallest leaves of each radish. Wash and set aside.

Warm the vegetable oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the tofu slices and fry until golden brown on both sides. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. When cool, cut into 1-inch cubes and set aside.

Heat the sesame oil in a wok or large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the garlic and mushrooms and sauté until tender. Add the radishes, water chestnuts, scallions, and tofu. Sauté until the radishes are pink and tender. Reduce the heat. Stir the miso sauce mixture

again. Scrape the tofu mixture to the far side of the pan. Gently tilt the near side of the pan toward you. Pour the sauce into the empty side of the pan. Stir the sauce constantly until thickened, about 3 minutes, then blend with the tofu and vegetables. Remove from heat.

Cut the polenta into 4 squares or 12 fingers and divide among 4 dinner plates. Top with the tofu mixture. Garnish with black sesame seeds and serve immediately.