

Low-Carb Kung Pao Tofu: A 20-Minute Vegetarian Keto Classic

This is my favorite way to do "Meatless Monday" on a keto diet. Here is why:



OVEN
350°F

TIME
20 min

METHOD
Air fryer

PRINT
Recipe Card

INGREDIENTS

For the Crispy Tofu:

The Protein: 14 oz extra-firm tofu (pressed and cubed).

Keto Coating: ... cup arrowroot powder or almond flour (replaces cornstarch).

The Fat: 2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil.

Seasoning: Salt and pepper to taste.

The Keto Kung Pao Sauce:

The Base: ... cup tamari or liquid coconut aminos (gluten-free and keto-friendly).

Sweetener: 2 tablespoons brown erythritol or monk fruit sweetener (replaces brown sugar).

Tang & Heat: 1 tablespoon rice vinegar and 1 teaspoon chili garlic sauce (or sriracha).

The Secret Sauce: 1 tablespoon hoisin sauce (look for a sugar-free brand) and 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil.

Thickener: 1/2 teaspoon xanthan gum (replaces cornstarch for a perfect keto glaze).

Vegetables for Stir-Fry:

Aromatics: 1 tbsp grated garlic, 1 tbsp grated ginger, and 4-5 whole dried red chilies.

The Crunch: 1 medium green pepper, 1 medium red pepper (both cut into squares), and 1 medium quartered shallot.

The Garnish: 2-3 stalks chopped green onion and ... cup roasted peanuts.

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preparation & Pressing:** Press your extra-firm tofu for at least 20 minutes. Once drained, cut it into 1-inch cubes. In a bowl, toss the cubes with your keto coating, salt, and pepper until every side is dusted.
- 2. Whisk the Keto Sauce:** In a small bowl, whisk together the tamari, hoisin, rice vinegar, chili garlic sauce, sesame oil, brown sugar substitute, and xanthan gum. Whisk until the sweetener has fully dissolved.
- 3. Sear the Tofu:** Heat sesame oil in a cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Add the tofu cubes and cook for 3-4 minutes per side. You want them to be golden brown and develop a slight "crust." Remove from the pan and let them drain on a paper towel to keep them crispy.
- 4. SautØ the Aromatics:** In the same skillet, add the dried red chilies, minced garlic, and ginger. SautØ for about 60 seconds until your kitchen smells amazing. Toss in the peppers, shallots, and peanuts. SautØ on high heat for 2-3 minutes; you want the veggies tender but still vibrant and "snappy."
- 5. Bring it Together:** Pour the sauce into the skillet. It will begin to thicken almost immediately because of the xanthan gum. Add the crispy tofu back into the pan and toss gently until every cube is glazed in that dark, spicy sauce. Cook for just 1 minute to heat through.
- 6. Garnish and Serve:** Turn off the heat and garnish with green onions and extra peanuts. Serve immediately over cauliflower rice or enjoy it on its own!

SWAPS & NOTES

: it's crunchy, salty, tangy, and carries just enough heat to keep things interesting.

Why I Love This Recipe This is my favorite way to do "Meatless Monday" on a keto diet.

Here is why: Textural Masterpiece: Pressing the tofu and using a low-carb coating ensures the cubes get golden and crispy, absorbing the sauce without becoming soggy.

The Umami Punch: Between the tamari, sesame oil, and ginger, the flavor profile is incredibly deep and satisfying.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

High Heat is Key: For the vegetables, you want a "sear," not a "steam." Keep the heat high and the veggies moving.

The Chili Warning: Dried red chilies are mostly for flavor and aroma.

If you eat one whole, be prepared for a serious kick!

Pressing Tip: If you don't have a tofu press, wrap the block in a clean kitchen towel and put a heavy cast-iron skillet on top of it.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/low-carb-kung-pao-tofu-a-20-minute-vegetarian-keto-classic/>