

Tamari Stir-fried Veggies for 5

2 lb assorted veggies (pay attention to the look): red cabbage, green onion, cauliflower, broccoli, red bell peppers, onions, zucchini, snow peas, bok choy, mung bean sprouts, shredded carrots, fresh mushrooms or dried mushrooms reconstituted in boiling water, cans of bamboo shoots and baby corn
stir-fry oil (peanut, safflower, or canola)

1/4 cup Tamari

1/4 cup dry white cooking wine

1/4 cup water

Spices: fresh grated ginger, sesame oil, cider or rice wine vinegar, powdered mustard, minced or pressed garlic, a little brown sugar, white pepper, and maybe some Asian hot chili oil.

1 TBS cornstarch

1 TBS water

1. Read Green Tortoise “Stir Fry Rules of Thumb”.
2. To make the sauce, mix tamari with wine and water. Add the ginger, sesame oil, mustard powder, garlic, brown sugar, white pepper, and chili oil. Taste it and adjust spices to your preference. Set the sauce aside.
3. Dissolve the cornstarch in water and set aside.
4. Over high heat, start cooking the vegetables. Cook vegetables together that have similar cooking times: carrots with cauliflower, broccoli with cabbage, bok choy with green onion, etc. Put a little oil in the hot wok and fry a small,manageable batch of vegetables until they are just cooked, just a minute or two in a very hot wok. When the batch is cooked, take it out of the wok and into another big pot (maybe warmed over hot water). Repeat this step with the next batch of veggies until all the veggies are cooked.
5. When all of the veggies are cooked, return them all to the flame and add the sauce, cooking for a minute or so. Add half the cornstarch paste and turn the flame off when the sauce is thick and no longer in a pool at the bottom of the wok. Add more cornstarch paste if it doesn't thicken up.

Serve over rice, or add chow mein noodles into the stir fry at the very end for a good chow mein dish. Serve with egg drop soup, & fortune cookies.

Stir Fry Rules of Thumb

We end up making a lot of stir-frys on the GT, and these rules will help you achieve professional results no matter what your personal style of ingredients and flavorings might be:

- 1. Use the right kind of oil:** peanut, canola or safflower only. Peanut oil is by far the best. No olive oil! It burns at the high heats required of stir-frying. Asian sesame oil is a very intense flavoring oil; use it sparingly in the sauce, not for the frying. All-purpose vegetable, corn, or soy oil might work in a pinch but they definitely aren't the best for stir-frying.
- 2. Get everything prepped before you start,** and have a helper to hand you things as you need them.
- 3. Cook over a high heat.** It should over-so-slightly sear (blacken) the edges of the veggies for best flavor, while locking in their fresh flavor and crispness. Over a high enough heat this happens very quickly, in a couple of minutes, provided the wok isn't over-loaded with too much food.
- 4. Avoid the "additive" method.** This logic of this method, used by many amateur cooks, goes something like this: you should put the longest-cooking veggies in first, and then add the second-longest veggies, etc., etc., adding everything together until finally the leafy greens at the very end. This method has a certain logic to it but the reason this is not good for us. What happens is this: every time you introduce a new batch of veggies, you lower the heat of the wok way down, effectively lengthening the cooking time for the vegetables that you put in previously. And by the time a large wok-full of veggies for 40 people, the wok is way over-loaded and very little is getting cooked at all. The whole thing becomes unmanageable, and you end up having to use way too much oil. What you end up with is soggy veggies that lose their freshness because some have been cooking for fifteen minutes instead of two or three, and others that maybe aren't cooked at all.