

Sierra Nevada Style Hot & Sour Soup

I perfected this recipe when I lived in the mountains. This is a great warm soup for a cold winter day. It's also a great cold remedy which will drain your sinuses. The chili oil referred to here is sometimes sold as "Mongolian Fire Oil." I lean toward all fresh ingredients. But you can get a good soup using powdered ginger and garlic instead of fresh.

6 ounces lean pork thinly sliced into strips

4 ounces chopped mushrooms

1 clove garlic finely chopped

1 tablespoon ginger finely chopped

2 tablespoons peanut oil

3 green onions chopped

2 cups water

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar

1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

2 tablespoons corn starch

1 tablespoon sesame oil

1 8-ounce package of bean curd cut into half-inch cubes

1 teaspoon of chili oil

Place pork in a bowl and add mushrooms, ginger, garlic, soy sauce, vinegar and chili oil. Stir and refrigerate an hour to overnight. In a large sauce pan, heat peanut oil on medium high. When oil is hot, add the pork mixture and stir for one minute. Reduce heat to medium and stir in sesame oil. Stir in

corn starch. Mixture will thicken. Slowly stir in water. To achieve your desired consistency, you may use more or less than the 2 cups of water specified. I prefer a thin watery hot and sour soup; but it will taste yummy thick, also. Also, bear in mind that the soup will thicken as it simmers. Add bean curd, red pepper flakes and green onions. Reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Serve with an Asian entrée or lunch.