

Japanese Hot Pot with Carrots and Kudzu

Serves 5

A quick, soothing dish, easy enough for any day, interesting enough for a dinner party.

- 2 cups cooked grain of choice (see chapter 10)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1 /4 teaspoon salt
- 4 teaspoons kudzu (powdered or chunk style, arrowroot or cornstarch may be substituted)
- 4 teaspoons water
- 3 carrots, cut into 1-inch rounds
- 1 head cauliflower, broken into large florets
- 1 cup stock, plus extra for deglazing pan
- 4 ounces smoked packaged tofu, cut into 1/2-inch chunks (can substitute chicken)
- 1 to 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- Salt to taste
- Green onions or nori, sliced thin, for garnish

Prepare 2 cups of cooked grain using the “Grain Cooking Chart” on page 181 in chapter 10 of *Cool Cuisine*. While grain is cooking, heat a medium-size, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add oil and sauté onion with salt until translucent, about 5 minutes. While onions cook, dissolve kudzu in a small bowl with 4 teaspoons water. Set aside. After 5 minutes, move onions to one side of the pot; add half of the carrots. Spread onions on top of the carrots, and then add the remaining half of the carrots on top of the onions. Add a little stock as needed. Cover and cook over medium heat about 7 minutes. Add cauliflower florets on top of the carrots. Add a little stock as needed. Cover and cook an additional 7 minutes or so, until vegetables are tender. Add tofu and stir. By now the kudzu/water mixture will have hardened. Stir it well and combine with 1 cup stock, soy sauce, and ginger. Add to the pot and bring to a boil, stirring until sauce thickens. Check consistency; add more kudzu (diluted in water) or stock if needed. Garnish with green onions, sliced nori, and Condiment Plate (see page 183 – *Cool Cuisine*)

Excerpt from *Cool Cuisine – Taking the Bite Out of Global Warming* (Gibbs Smith 2008)