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Abstract

Tempeh is a popular Indonesian fermented food consisting of cooked soybeans bound together by a dense, cottony mycelium of Rhizopus mold into compact cakes or patties. Tempeh is used as a main course, in sauces, as dressings, in salads, and fried. Tempeh compares favorably with meat protein sources. It is sold in four stages: 1. premature tempeh; 2. matu and 4. overripe tempeh. Home preparation is easy, using storebought soybeans, starter, and typical kitchen utensils. The source is discussed. Variations and recipes for western-style, oriental, and Indonesian tempeh uses are given. History and uses of tempeh are explored in discussions of tempeh starter, Indonesian tempeh shops, microbial fermentation, and soybean utilization.

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The Book of Tempeh talks about "overfermented" tempeh, completely black tempeh sold on the streets of Indonesia – it's just a little more funky, and perfectly fine. One of the most interesting lessons I learned from Sandor is that the line between fermented and rotten is culturally drawn – isn't that fascinating? My tempeh starter should be here next week. I'm looking forward to a second round of tempeh making without the worry of it overheating. Right now, I have my kombucha culture in there. It usually lives on a heating pad in the kitchen.