GODDESS NOODLES WITH TEMPEH AND BROCCOLI

Before you start:
One head of broccoli, cut in small florets, stem diced

Tempeh:
One 8-oz package of soy tempeh
1 cup water
1 tbsp rice vinegar
1 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp blackstrap molasses (preferably organic)

Noodles with Sauce:
1/2 cup tahini or mix of tahini and natural peanut butter
1 cup hot water
2 tbsp white wine vinegar or cider vinegar
1 tbsp soy sauce, tamari, or liquid aminos
Dash toasted sesame oil (optional)
8-12 oz. noodles or spaghetti

Veggies:
One red bell pepper, seeded and diced or cut in strips
1-2 cloves of garlic, minced
2-3 scallions, sliced, or other mild onion, red or white, cut in half moons
1/2 inch of fresh ginger, minced

Optional garnishes:
Chopped peanuts or sesame seeds
Cilantro, carefully rinsed and chopped
1-2 scallions, sliced
I small cucumber, julienne cut

This recipe is best approached by making the separate "pieces" and then combining them into a whole.

Chop the broccoli before doing anything else, in order to start it developing the antioxidant sulforaphane. (See Dr. Greger of Nutrition Facts.)

Tempeh piece: Remove tempeh from its package and don't be put off by any gray or black spots or streaks, which are part of the fermenting process. In a medium saucepan, combine the water, vinegar, soy sauce and molasses and whisk to mix. Add the tempeh after cutting it into pieces if necessary to fit the pan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to simmer, then poach 20 minutes or until what's left of the liquid is a dark syrup. Don't walk away and don't let the tempeh burn. Set aside.

Noodles and Sauce: Whisk together the tahini and hot water, then add the other ingredients. Cook noodles according to package directions; toss with the sauce in a bowl that will also hold the veggies and tempeh.

Veggies: Steam the broccoli to desired degree of doneness. In a separate skillet, add some sherry, veg broth or water and briefly sauté the bell pepper, adding the garlic, ginger and onion towards the end.

Final steps: Fold the tempeh and veggies into the saucy noodles and gently mix. You can add some garnishes to the large bowl or simply offer them at the table.

NOTE: Be sure to choose an egg-free noodle. Imported Asian noodles are lovely but not always made from whole grains. For a whole-grain option, use brown rice noodles, brown-rice quinoa blends (both are gluten-free) or whole-wheat spaghetti or linguine. I like noodles here but you can choose a different pasta shape if you wish!





