

Bite Spoon

Hot and Sour Soup Recipe: Quick & Easy Asian Favorite

20 min Prep time	**15 min** Cook time	**35 min** Total time
6 Servings	**Easy** Difficulty	**Chinese** Cuisine

Ingredients

For the Soup

- [ ] 8 dried shiitake mushrooms
- [ ] 6 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- [ ] 1 (8-ounce) can bamboo shoots, julienned
- [ ] 1 (14-ounce) block firm tofu, pressed and julienned
- [ ] 1/4 cup rice vinegar
- [ ] 1/4 cup low-sodium soy sauce or tamari
- [ ] 1 teaspoon ground white pepper
- [ ] 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- [ ] Salt to taste

For the Slurry & Garnish

- [ ] 1/4 cup cornstarch
- [ ] 1/4 cup cold water
- [ ] 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- [ ] 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- [ ] A splash of chili oil (optional)

Instructions

1. First, let's wake up our mushrooms. Place the dried shiitake mushrooms in a medium bowl and cover them with about 2 cups of hot water. Let them sit and steep for about 20 to 30 minutes, until they are plump and soft. You'll notice the water has turned a beautiful, dark tea color. Once softened, gently lift the mushrooms out, squeezing any excess liquid back into the bowl. Don't discard that liquid! Strain it through a fine-mesh sieve into another bowl to remove any grit. Then, trim off and discard the tough stems from the mushrooms and thinly slice the caps.

2. Now it's time to build our flavor base. In a large pot or Dutch oven, combine your chicken or vegetable broth with that gorgeous, strained mushroom-soaking liquid. Bring this to a simmer over medium-high heat. Once it's gently bubbling, stir in the soy sauce, rice vinegar, and that crucial ground white pepper. Let this simmer for a few minutes to allow the flavors to marry and get to know each other. This is when your kitchen really starts to smell like a proper restaurant. It's a good moment to give it a little taste and see how that hot and sour balance is starting to develop.

3. Add your prepared ingredients to the pot. Gently slide in the sliced mushroom caps, the julienned tofu, and the bamboo shoots. Let them simmer in the broth for about 5 minutes. While they're simmering, prepare your slurry. In a small bowl, whisk together the cornstarch and the cold water until it's completely smooth, with no lumps. Reduce the heat under the soup to medium, and while stirring the soup gently, slowly pour in the slurry. Continue to stir until you see the soup thicken and turn beautifully glossy. This should only take a minute or two. It's like magic.

4 For the final, elegant touch, we'll create the egg ribbons. Make sure the soup is at a gentle simmer. Slowly drizzle the beaten eggs into the pot in a thin, steady stream while stirring the soup in a slow, circular motion. The egg will cook instantly, forming delicate, silky ribbons. Once all the egg is in, turn off the heat. Stir in the toasted sesame oil. Have a final taste and adjust if needed—maybe a pinch more salt, another tiny splash of vinegar, or a bit more white pepper. Ladle your beautiful soup into bowls and garnish generously with sliced green onions and a drizzle of chili oil if you like extra heat.

Nutrition per serving

185 kcal	14 g	15 g	7 g
Calories	Protein	Carbs	Fat

Tips & notes

- The type of vinegar you use will have a big impact on the final flavor. Standard rice vinegar is clean and sharp. Chinese black vinegar (Chinkiang) is more complex, malty, and less acidic. I personally love a 50/50 blend of both for a really nuanced 'sour' profile, but either one on its own is absolutely delicious.
- For the best texture, press your tofu before slicing it. This removes excess water and helps it hold its shape in the soup, preventing it from becoming watery or falling apart. Just wrap the block of tofu in a few paper towels or a clean kitchen towel and place something heavy on top, like a cast-iron skillet, for about 15-20 minutes.
- Remember that the heat from white pepper tends to 'bloom' or intensify as it sits in the hot liquid. So, be a little conservative when you first add it. You can always stir a little more in at the very end if you feel it needs an extra kick of that signature warmth. It’s always easier to add more than to take it away!