KOREAN CUISINE

Sigeumchidoenjangguk

Spinach Soybean Paste Soup | 시금치된장국



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A masterclass in utilizing colloidal suspensions and fermented umami. Dissolving Doenjang (Korean soybean paste) in starchy rice water creates a smooth, emulsified broth that perfectly balances the earthy notes of fresh spinach. Precise thermal control is critical here; minimal boiling time ensures the spinach retains its structural integrity, vibrant chlorophyll, and delicate flavor without turning mushy.

⏱️ **Total:** 20 mins | **Prep:** 10 mins | **Cook:** 10 mins | 🍳 **Difficulty:** Easy | 🌶️ **Profile:** Earthy, Savory, and Clean | 🍚 **Focus:** Vitamins, Minerals & Fermented Proteins

Ingredients (2 servings)

- **Main Ingredients:** 200g fresh spinach, 1/2 block tofu (approx. 150g), 1/2 scallion, 1 Cheongyang chili (optional)
- **Broth & Seasoning:** 4–5 cups rice water (or anchovy-kelp broth), 2.5 tbsp doenjang (Korean soybean paste), 0.5 tbsp minced garlic, a splash of soup soy sauce (or 0.5 tbsp tuna extract) for final seasoning

Allergy Information Contains: Soy, Wheat (from doenjang, soup soy sauce)

Equipment Cutting Board, Knife, Deep Pot, Ladle, Fine Strainer (for dissolving paste)

Cooking Instructions

1. **Ingredient Preparation:** Trim the spinach while retaining the sweet pink roots. Wash thoroughly under running water to remove all grit, then cut in half. Cube the tofu. Diagonally slice the scallion and chili.
2. **Broth Base & Colloidal Suspension:** Bring the rice water (or broth) to a boil in a deep pot over high heat. Using a fine strainer, dissolve the doenjang into the boiling liquid, discarding any coarse soybean solids left in the strainer to ensure a smooth, clean broth.
3. **Spinach Integration & Thermal Control:** Once the broth returns to a rolling boil, add the prepared spinach and minced garlic. Boil rapidly for only 2–3 minutes to prevent the breakdown of chlorophyll and maintain the cellular crunch of the greens.
4. **Tofu Addition:** Gently slide the cubed tofu into the pot and simmer for 1–2 minutes to allow the thermal energy to warm it through completely.
5. **Final Finishing:** Add the sliced scallion and chili. Use the residual heat to activate their volatile aromatics, adjust the final salinity with a splash of soup soy sauce if necessary, and immediately turn off the heat.

💡 Professional Culinary Tips

- **Colloidal Chemistry of Rice Water:** The water-soluble starches suspended in rice water act as a colloidal binder. This natural thickening agent mellows the sharp salinity of the fermented paste and absorbs any grassy, astringent notes from the spinach.
- **Thermodynamics of Fermented Pastes:** Prolonged boiling destroys the volatile aromatic compounds and beneficial metabolites within doenjang, often leading to a bitter aftertaste. Dissolving the paste into already-boiling water minimizes its thermal exposure, preserving its deeply savory profile.
- **Chlorophyll Preservation:** Spinach is highly susceptible to heat degradation. Introducing it late in the cooking process and applying brief, intense heat locks in its vibrant green color and prevents the cellular structure from turning to mush.

Nutrition Facts (Estimated)

Total Content : Approx. 250g (1 serving)
Calories : 110 kcal
– Sodium : 780mg
– Total Carbohydrate : 12.0g
– Sugar : 2.0g
– Total Fat : 4.0g
– Saturated Fat : 0.5g
– Cholesterol : 0.0mg
– Protein : 8.0g
– Calcium : 120.0mg

*Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet and standard Korean nutritional reference values
**Nutritional values are calculated based on original ingredients; substitutions may alter specific macronutrients.

The Earthy Resonance of Fermented Soybeans and the Verdant Breath of Spinach: A Soul-Soothing Symphony of Morning Warmth

Sigeumchi Doenjang-guk (Spinach and Soybean Paste Soup) stands as the most comforting and wholesome pinnacle of traditional Korean home-cooking

gastronomy, where earthy, aged *doenjang* (fermented soybean paste) dissolves into a clean, rich anchovy broth or rice-washing water, embracing tender, emerald-green spinach to create an exquisitely gentle soup. Eschewing heavy, aggressive spices in favor of the deep umami of fermented soy and the natural sweetness of fresh greens, this humble dish offers immediate peace to the senses from the very first spoonful.

As the soup simmers gently in the earthenware pot, the rustic, nutty aroma of the fermented bean paste calms the mind and awakens a pure, unadulterated appetite. The velvety texture of the simmered spinach melds seamlessly with the savory broth, coating every grain of white rice in luscious moisture to achieve the ultimate, harmonious pairing with our staple grain.

True gastronomy does not rely exclusively on ostentatious luxuries; it flourishes in the ancestral wisdom of uniting modest, everyday ingredients over gentle heat to comfort the body and restore inner peace. Savoring a steaming bowl of spinach and soybean paste soup today is an honest and gentle ritual—clearing away the rush of daily life and filling the spirit with unpretentious warmth, lightness, and grounded restorative wellness.

Editor's Review

1. A Gentle Cadence of Earthy Doenjang Depth, Clean Anchovy Umami, and Tender Spinach Sweetness

The moment a warm spoonful of the savory soup touches the palate, an immediate wave of deep, nutty doenjang umami and clean anchovy broth envelops the senses with comforting warmth. This is swiftly followed by the tender, sweet bite of the simmered spinach, orchestrating an endlessly soothing, multi-layered culinary experience that brings absolute peace to the senses.

2. Purine-Glutamate Umami Synergy Mechanics and Isoflavone Antioxidant Extraction Kinetics

Sigeumchi Doenjang-guk represents an exacting study in traditional culinary physics and nutritional biochemistry. The aqueous infusion of anchovy inosine monophosphate (IMP) merges with the naturally occurring glutamates of fermented soybean paste, creating a powerful purine-glutamate umami synergy. Concurrently, beneficial isoflavones and melanoidins derived from the aged doenjang preserve antioxidant activity, while controlled simmering protects the water-soluble iron and vitamins of the spinach, establishing an optimal nutritional matrix that is both highly digestible and deeply satisfying.

3. The Comforting Family Breakfast Table and the Grounding Sanctuary of Gentle Digestion

Found gracing family breakfast tables across the nation for generations, a modest bowl of spinach and soybean paste soup serves as an enduring emotional haven against daily weariness. Revered as an essential everyday staple to soothe the stomach and nourish vital energy, enjoying this honest, reliable soup washes away modern stress, granting a timeless sanctuary of stillness, maternal care, and grounded culinary happiness.



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