

Hot and Sour Soup

<http://userealbutter.com/2007/10/08/hot-and-sour-soup-recipe/>
adapted from Chinese Cooking in American Kitchens by Ming Li

1/2 cup cloud ears (aka wood ears or tree fungus) *I was too lazy to add these this time
1/2 cup tiger lily buds
1/2 cup shitake mushrooms
1/2 cup pork or chicken strips (optional)
1 cup tofu, cut into 1-inch strips
1/2 cup water chestnuts, cut into strips
1/2 cup bamboo shoots, in strips
1 cup enoki mushrooms with base removed
3 eggs, beaten
2 tbsps cornstarch (add more if you want a thicker broth)
3/4 tsp ground white pepper
1 tsp sesame oil
2 tbsps vinegar (I prefer red wine vinegar)
6 cups chicken broth
1 tbsp soy sauce

If the cloud ears, lily buds, and shitake mushrooms are dried, rehydrate them separately in hot water for 30 minutes. When the lily buds are soft, remove the hard tips. When the cloud ears and mushrooms are soft, wash them free of any sandy particles. Cut the lily buds into 1-inch lengths. Cut the cloud ears coarsely. Squeeze the mushrooms out and cut off the stems. Cut the mushrooms into thin strips to match the size of the lily buds. Mix the cornstarch with 1/4 cup of water and set aside.

Heat the broth in a soup pot and add any meat if you are using it. Bring the broth to a boil. Add the cloud ears, lily buds, and shitake mushrooms and simmer for 10 minutes. Add sliced tofu, water chestnuts, bamboo shoots, enoki mushrooms, and soy sauce and let return to boil. Reduce heat, stir cornstarch mixture into soup, stirring constantly. Let it return to a boil. Stir in beaten egg slowly while it cooks into long threads. Add pepper, sesame oil, and vinegar. Serve hot.