

Transcript - Let's Talk Food Literacy: Savoury Stir-Fry

We start in a commercial kitchen with Elaine McCarthy, Community Worker. Elaine places the ingredients she plans to use in her stir-fry onto the counter, her marinade for the tofu, as well as a cutting board and two knives. As she does this, images of puzzle pieces pop up in sequence with the words 'explore', 'build', and 'connect'. As Elaine speaks, we see a colourful bowl of stir-fry.

Hello! I am Elaine, a Community Worker with a passion for delicious food and nutrition. Today I'm going to talk to you about making a vegetable stir-fry.

We see uncooked tofu, cooked tofu, and the tofu marinade on the screen. As Elaine speaks about the marinade, we see the text 'marinate tofu for 20-60 minutes' on the screen.

One of the great things about using the vegetable stir-fry is that we can use some plant-based proteins. Today I'm going to use tofu, and I'm going to marinate the tofu in some soy sauce, rice wine vinegar, a little bit of sesame oil, fresh garlic and ginger.

We see Elaine pull roasted tofu out of the oven. The text states to 'roast tofu at 200° C (400° F) for 15 minutes.'

I find that if I roast it, it dries it out a little bit and it helps with the texture. So, if you are introducing tofu to someone who might be a little bit apprehensive about it, it really does make a difference.

Elaine adds minced ginger and garlic to the marinade. She also adds some cornstarch and stirs to mix the sauce.

So here I have some minced ginger and some minced garlic and I'm just going to add this to my rice wine, my soy sauce. There's also a low sodium vegetable stock in here, and the very last thing I'm going to add is some cornstarch. This is going to be our vegetable stir-fry sauce, and the cornstarch is going to thicken it and its going to add a nice glossy finish when its all complete and we are ready to enjoy it.

Elaine starts to organize and chop her vegetables for the stir-fry. She demonstrates how to hold the French knife and slice celery thinly and, on an angle, to have the maximum surface area. While she speaks, we also see a visual of her adding different vegetables to the wok. Then we come back to Elaine chopping her broccoli and zucchini. She cuts the zucchini in half to make it safer to cut. Next Elaine roughly chops the bok choy. She shows us how she cut the carrots thinly for maximum surface area.

We are also going to add some nice fresh chopped vegetables. We can add anything that we have on hand. One of the main things about getting your stir-fry ready is you want to be organized—you want to have your mise en place ready to go. Once the heat is on, we are not going to have a lot of time to find stuff.

When we are looking at stir-fries we want to have our vegetables ready to go. It's really important to make sure that our vegetables are thinly sliced and with a maximum surface cooking area. I'm going to use a French knife here and we are going to be very careful. So, when we're cutting, the pointer finger and your thumb are what we want to protect. So, I'm just going to sort of make a little bit of a claw here. And as you can see I'm making this—slices just on a nice angle so we are going to have thin sliced celery and its also going to have the maximum surface area, so that way its going to cook very quickly. We

don't want to have big chunks of vegetables into our stir-fry because they will release their moisture and they'll steam. Once they start steaming, we're not going to get a nice colour and then some of our vegetables may not flourish in that process. So, we are also sort of just going to quickly chop up some broccoli. We just want to chop the florets in half. This broccoli, actually, I just grabbed out of the freezer—it was frozen. You know, I just didn't feel like I needed to go buy a whole head of broccoli for this particular purpose. Frozen vegetables are just fine for stir-fries. And of course, we are going to use the summer squash or zucchini. We have a round vegetable so you want to make that flat to keep it safe. And then, again, thin maximum cooking surface, watching your fingers. So along with this beautiful local zucchini, I have some nice local bok choy that came from the market. I'm just going to roughly chop this. I want to keep the sort of integrity of the vegetable, so I don't want to really finely dice the bok choy, I want to have it so that it's recognizable as bok choy. So you can notice that I did spend a little time on the carrots, again, we got some max surface area.

Next Elaine starts to chop her aromatics. As she does this, we see the text 'aromatics give flavour & aroma when heated or crushed' appear on the screen. Then we go back to Elaine prepping her aromatics.

The other thing we're going to do is we're going to chop up our aromatics. So this is ginger—so we have ginger with the peel on and this I've sort of pre prepped so we are just going to chop the ginger up. For this particular purpose you do not have to have it minced like we did in the marinade. This is just going to go in two minutes, we're going to smell it. And then we're going to remove it. Same with the garlic, so we could use fresh whole garlic here, keep the blade away from you, give it a smack. It's a good way to release some tension from the day, smack the garlic. And then again, the skins will just pop out, so this is a really easy way to get your garlic ready. So now I'm just going to give my hands a quick wash and then we're going to start putting our stir fry together.

Elaine places her wok on the stove and turns on the burner to a medium high heat. She hovers her hand over the pot to see if it has warmed up. Once it has, Elaine adds the oil to the wok. Once it looks glossy Elaine adds the ginger and garlic. She continues to stir the ginger and garlic in the oil. Once she is done, she removes the aromatics.

All right, so we have all of our ingredients ready to go. So we've walked downstairs and got the wok (*laughs*). So now we're going to heat it up. So we're going to have a medium high heat, I want to get the pan hot. Anytime that we're cooking quickly or searing stir-frying, anything like that, we want to heat up the pan before we add the oil. This is the, just a vegetable oil and I have put just the tiniest little bit of Sesame oil in here. So I want to wait until this is nice and glossy looking, it's not going to take too long to heat up. Then we're going to add our aromatics. We're going to add some ginger—oh we can hear it, that's awesome, we can smell it. We're just going to give this a couple of minutes. If I was adding chili flakes, this would be a good time to add it, or hot chili peppers. So right now what we're doing is we're just going to flavour the oil. So this oil is going to get some great flavour from that ginger and garlic, and of course we do have the ginger and garlic minced up into our final sauce, as well as our tofu marinade. So I can smell this now, we've got a nice hot pan going on. So this is a good job for a slotted spoon or possibly tongs.

Next Elaine begins to add vegetables to the flavoured oil. The text 'add vegetables in order of cooking time' appears on the screen. Elaine continues to stir the vegetables to ensure they do not burn on high heat. After the onions and carrots change colour, Elaine adds the broccoli and celery to the wok.

We're going to start with our vegetables that are going to take the most time to cook. We're going to get some good flavor from our onions and our carrots. This is a stir fry, so we do want to make sure we keep these vegetables moving. With that high heat you could get some burning happening if we're not moving those vegetables. I can see that the colors changing a little bit on the carrots and the onions, so we're going to add our celery and our broccoli. As mentioned, the broccoli was actually a frozen product, so I do want to get that in there. It's going to release some water and it's going to help with the cooking of the other vegetables. This is looking and sounding amazing.

As the onions, carrots, broccoli, and celery are cooking, Elaine explains cooking times of various vegetables. Then she adds zucchini, bok choy, and bagged coleslaw and stirs. Finally she adds the baby corn. After cooking for some time, Elaine adds the red and yellow peppers.

So the vegetables all have different cooking times, stuff like broccoli, carrots, celery, onions, those are going to take a little bit more time. Your bok choy and your zucchini and peppers will take a little bit less time. But I am going to add my zucchini now, and my bok choy. And the other thing I'm adding is our bagged coleslaw. So I actually have a coleslaw in a bag in my fridge all the time. I use it mainly for stir fries, I use it for wraps. As soon as I smell that cabbage, I know it's going to be time to add my baby corn. So now what we're looking for is we're looking for that nice, bright green coming out of the bok choy. That's going to be a signal to us that it's almost cooked. So now it's time to add our peppers. So I've got some nice red and yellow peppers. I love stir fries because it's really a rainbow of colors. So we have all different colors, which is going to have all kinds of different nutrients in it. We have all kinds of flavors, all kinds of textures.

Elaine shows us a measuring cup full of nuts that she will be using to top off the stir-fry. She also has fresh chopped green onions to garnish the stir-fry. Next, Elaine stirs the stir-fry sauce before adding it to the cooking vegetables. She continues to stir the vegetables to ensure they are covered with the sauce.

Speaking of texture, when I go to finish my stir fry, I always use some sort of nuts, I like almonds, peanuts, or cashews to top my stir fry off. That's going to add another level of protein as well as some crunch. I usually use some nice, fresh chopped green onions, as well as some cilantro or a slice of lime if I have it. So now what we're going to do is we're going to add our stir fry sauce. So we're going to give that a good stir just to get that cornstarch off the bottom. Now we're going to add it to our pan. So immediately you're going to notice that the corn starch is thickening. You're going to get a nice glossy finish on this vegetable, check that out, it's beautiful. So now I'm just going to turn off the heat. I can tell by looking at it that we have a nice thick sauce.

Elaine adds the roasted tofu to her cooked vegetables. Then she plates the vegetables on top of brown rice.

So then I am going to add my warm tofu and there you go! quick, easy stir-fry. And then of course, I'm just going to spend a little bit of time garnishing it because I do believe that you eat with your eyes as well.

We see the bowl of stir-fry garnished with green onions and nuts. We see Elaine mixing the vegetables in the background, then the text 'serve with whole grains' appears on screen.

It's all finished, we've got our protein in there, we've got our beautiful vegetables. This would be delicious with a nice whole grain Brown rice noodle, wild rice, a nice rice pilaf, barley, buckwheat, anything like that. But today I'm going to serve it with Brown rice. I hope you enjoy it.

Eat well. Live well.

The video ends with an image of a puzzle piece with the words 'Eat well. Live well' on the left-hand side, with food-guide.canada.ca below it. An acknowledgement logo for Food Literacy for Life, foodliteracy.ca, appears on the right-hand side along with 'created by Peterborough Public Health' (logo shown). A visual of the food literacy framework from foodliteracy.ca appears on the left-hand side of the screen, with 'Food Literacy' pictured in the center of a circle. The following colourful puzzle pieces surround it: 'Food Skills, Self-Efficacy and Confidence, Ecological Factors (External), Food Decisions, and Food and Nutrition Knowledge.'
