

chrysanthemum greens with silken tofu

I'm a fan of good old-fashioned creamed spinach, but this light-handed variation, with no butter or cream in sight, can be even more satisfying. It employs tender chrysanthemum leaves, which have a curious floral flavor and a slight tannic edge. Of course, you need to use cultivated edible chrysanthemum greens, not the plants grown for their showy flowers. Use spinach if you can't find chrysanthemum, but it's worth searching out. When briefly wilted, then combined with soft, custardy tofu, the greens make a delicate treat, best served in small portions. Look for both in a Japanese grocery. **SERVES 4**

Salt and pepper	1/4 pound silken tofu, cut into 1/2-inch
2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil	cubes
1 teaspoon grated ginger	1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds
1/2 teaspoon sugar	2 tablespoons thinly slivered scallions
1 teaspoon rice wine	2 tablespoons bonito flakes (optional)
1 pound chrysanthemum greens, tough stems trimmed	

Bring a medium pot of well-salted water to a boil.

Meanwhile, make the dressing: whisk together the sesame oil, ginger, sugar, and rice wine. Add the chrysanthemum greens to the boiling water and let soften for 10 seconds. Drain and immediately transfer to a serving bowl. Season lightly with salt and pepper and add the dressing. Stir in the tofu and toss gently.

Sprinkle with the sesame seeds, scallions, and bonito flakes, if using. Serve hot or cold.

