

TVP Textured Vegetable Protien

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Hillbilly Housewife

Frugal Food Storage



~Textured Vegetable Protein~



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What is it? **Textured Vegetable Protein** or **TVP** is a registered trademark of the Arthur Daniels Midland Company. They have been making it for over 30 years. The generic name for this product is Textured Soy Protein, or TSP. However, the way tissues are often called Kleenex, TSP is usually referred to as TVP, because this is the most commonly familiar name. It's most common use is as a meat substitute.



Where does it come from? TVP is a natural byproduct obtained from manufacturing soybean oil. It is made from the part of the soybean that is leftover after all the oil is squeezed out of the soy bean. This means it has almost zero fat in it, which is a good thing in this day and age of fat fears. It is also very high in protein, potassium and fiber, making it chock full of nutrients as well.

What is it for? Because of it's texture and protein content, TVP's



best use is as a meat substitute. It is vegetarian or vegan, for folks who are concerned about such matters. This means it contains no dairy, or other animal products. Some vegetarians won't eat it though, because it tastes too much like meat to them. Many believe TVP is best used by meat-eaters, either to extend meat, or to replace it in cooking.

What Types are there? TVP is available in several forms, with small



granules and larger chunks being the most common. The granules simulate ground beef, while the chunks simulate beef or



chicken cut into pieces for stews or stir-fries. TVP is available preflavored, or unflavored, and colored or uncolored. It's natural color is light tan, or about the same color as soybeans. It is often available with a dark brown caramel color, to help it simulate beef. The coloring doesn't affect it's flavor at all, it just makes it pretty to look at.

What does it taste like?



It's natural flavor is very bland, almost non-existent, with a minor undertone of fresh cardboard. This makes it the perfect foil for highly seasoned concoctions, like chili and spicy stews. This same quality allows manufacturers to create different flavors, like beef, bacon, chicken, sausage, ham, pepperoni, barbecue, taco, and sloppy-joe.

If you have ever eaten bacon bits, then you've eaten TVP and lived to tell the tale. I'll bet if you looked, you could probably find a jar of them in your cupboard right now. Bacon Bits are colored red to look like bacon, and flavored with artificial smoke to give them a bacon-like taste.



TVP does not taste exactly like meat. It has a meat-like texture, and can be flavored by the cook or the factory to make it taste similar to meat. It will never taste exactly like meat though, and expecting it to, will only lead to disappointment. This doesn't diminish it's value however. Turkey Bacon doesn't taste

exactly like Pork Bacon, but lots of people eat it anyway. Instant Coffee doesn't taste exactly like freshly ground coffee, but it still tastes good, and is a lot more convenient to prepare. TVP is like that. It tastes like meat, stores beautifully without much special treatment, and easily replaces meat in a lot of recipes. It isn't meat though, it is a vegetarian, soy based, meat replacement.

How do I rehydrate it?



Since its natural state is dry, TVP must be reconstituted before using. Specifically 1 level cup of TVP needs 7/8 cup of liquid (or water) to rehydrate; 7/8 of a cup is the same as a cup of liquid with 2 tablespoons removed. I find this amount of measuring tedious, so I do it a little differently. I measure a cup of water and a rounded cup of TVP. This is equivalent to about 1-1/8 to 1-1/4 cups of TVP. It isn't a heaping cup, it is just a bit rounded on top. This



ratio seems to work perfectly for me, and I don't have to be so careful with the measuring. The water or liquid must be boiled first, and then added to the TVP. Granulated TVP will absorb the water in a few minutes. TVP chunks will need to simmer in the liquid for about 20 minutes to rehydrate fully. Once reconstituted, a rounded cup of TVP makes about the equivalent of a pound of meat. It won't weigh exactly a pound, but it will be the same volume, feed the same amount of people, require the same amount of seasonings, and replace the same amount of meat in recipes.

Where Do I buy it, & how much does it cost? Plain, or unflavored TVP is usually the easiest to find, and the cheapest. My local Natural Foods



Store has it for about \$2 a pound. Each pound of dry TVP measure between 4 and 5 cups. Once rehydrated, this makes the equivalent of about 4 pounds of meat. It won't weigh the same as this amount of meat, but its volume will amount to this much in terms of meals. This makes it cost about 50¢ a meal, which is about half the price of the cheapest hamburger I am able to buy. Internet Sources have it available even cheaper, making it more of a bargain.

www.waltonfeed.com has TVP available in # 2-1/2 and #10 sized cans. They have several pre-flavored varieties, including sausage, ham, beef, chicken, pepperoni, sloppy joe, barbecue and taco, all of which taste pretty good. Sausage and Taco flavored are two of my favorites. Click on "Catalog" to see the variety they have available. These are all packaged for long term storage.

www.bulkfoods.com sells granulated plain, or caramel colored TVP. Click on



the "Baking & Cooking" category, and scroll to the bottom of the page for their TVP. Note that shipping is included in the price, but handling adds \$4.95 to each order. They have 5 pounds bags, or 25 pounds bags. The 25 pound order would be cheapest, but would only be a good deal if you would really store and use this much of it. My family likes TVP, and it's easy to store, so the 25 pound order is reasonable for us. (These are the folks who allowed the use of their TVP graphic up at the top of the page, they are friendly and nice, and very cheap too.:-)

www.soybean.com or Lumen Foods. These folks sell unflavored chunks in 5 ounce (about 2-1/2 cups) packages. They also have unflavored granules in 5 ounce packages (about 2 cups). The chunks are especially tasty, and very reasonably priced. These are packaged for long term storage (up to 5 years), in convenient sized portions.

How can I make it taste good? Plain and flavored TVP can both be rehydrated in broth to make them taste more like the meat they are replacing. Flavored TVP should be rehydrated in a weaker broth,



and unflavored TVP should be rehydrated in a stronger tasting broth. I use this ratio:

- For a rounded cup of flavored TVP, use a cup of boiling water and 1 bouillon cube, or 1 teaspoon broth powder. I try to match up the bouillon flavor to the TVP flavor. This isn't always possible, but it does enhance the flavor.
- For a rounded cup of unflavored TVP, use a cup of boiling water and 2 bouillon cubes.
- If you don't have any bouillon or broth powder, then soy sauce will work too. For a rounded cup of TVP, use a cup of boiling water and 2 tablespoons of soy sauce.
- Canned or Homemade broth, either vegetable or meat broth may also be used for rehydrating if desired.
- Flavored TVP doesn't really need to be rehydrated in broth to flavor it. It is already flavored by the manufacturer. You can rehydrate it in plain boiling water, and get a darned tasty product. If you decide you want it to have stronger flavor though, then you can try rehydrating it in bouillon or broth, to see if you like it better that way. Experimentation is necessary to adjust it to your taste buds.

Yes, but I want



to add more zest to it, how can I do that? The best way to add extra flavor to TVP, besides using flavored liquids to reconstitute it, is to sauté it in oil or another fat after it is rehydrated. Adding fresh or rehydrated onions, garlic, celery, mushrooms or green peppers to the oil, along with the rehydrated TVP makes it taste so good that folks can't always tell it's TVP.

Reconstitute the TVP as directed above. Heat a couple spoonfuls of oil or other fat in a large skillet. Add a couple of minced garlic cloves, and a chopped onion, along with any other vegetables you like.

Fry it all up like you would fry meat, only for a shorter period of time. The TVP absorbs the flavors of the vegetables, and the fat carries the flavors in a very friendly way, making the finished product taste better than you would expect.

Is that all? Nope, of course not. Certain flavors are associated



together in our brains and memories. When we smell ginger and cinnamon we think of pumpkin pie and get all happy inside. Other associations work in the cooks favor too, especially when trying to mimic meat flavors. A few of them follow, if you think of others, feel free to share them.

- Beef flavors are good sautéed with mushrooms, or plain onion and garlic.
- Chicken flavors are good sautéed with celery specifically and also garlic and onion.
- Ham flavors are good when sautéed with onion and a few small dashes of cloves, or a small squirt of maple-flavored pancake syrup.
- Turkey flavors are good sautéed with onion, celery, garlic and poultry seasonings, or a pinch of sage and thyme.
- Sausage flavors are good sautéed in oil with a sprinkling of black pepper, red pepper, and sage.
- Barbecue, Taco, and Sloppy-Joe flavors are good sautéed with a little oil, onion, and a squirt or two of ketchup.

Anything else? I dearly love TVP. It is a staple at my home. We have it



once a week at least, often 3 or 4 times a week, depending on how many vegetarian meals I prepare. TVP satisfies both the vegetarians and meat-eaters of my family. I use unflavored TVP most often, but I am fond of the flavored ones too. Taco, Barbecue, and Sloppy Joe-flavors can be reconstituted and used as very quick meals when the family is fussing for lunch on Saturday, and I have a lot of other things on my "To Do" List. Chicken, Beef & Ham flavors are good in casseroles and skillet meals. They easily replace their meat counterparts in these flavorful and economical combinations. Sausage flavored is my favorite, I use it for Sausage Gravy, and sauté it into scrambled eggs, for breakfast. Bacon flavored is good in quiches and bean dishes. It works just about anywhere you want the smokier flavor of real

bacon. Pepperoni flavored can be reconstituted and is surprisingly good on pizza, I like it sautéed for a few minutes in a little oil first, but this is a personal matter.

Great, I'm sold, how do I store it?: That depends on how you buy it. If you buy it in sealed cans then you don't need to do anything to it, but



put it on a shelf in a cool dry area and let it rest until needed. It will keep for at least 5 years, and longer if stored under good conditions. If you buy it from www.soybean.com or Lumen Foods, in their special long term storage packets, they will keep for 5 years without any additional work.

When purchased in bulk without any special packaging, you will need to repackage it yourself. If you have a vacuum sealer, this would be a wonderful way to package the TVP. I use about 2 pounds per package, and store the prepared packages in a large plastic storage box, on a high closet shelf. If you don't have a vacuum sealer, you can place the TVP in canning jars, Rubbermaid or Tupperware containers, or even plastic zip-lock freezer bags. I double bag the TVP when I use freezer bags, for extra protection, and store them the same way I do the vacuum packed packages.

When you package the TVP yourself, it has a shorter shelf-life than the commercially packaged products. Oxygen can get to the home packaged products



in a way that it can't get to the commercially packaged ones. I've kept home packaged TVP for as long as 2 years with no detectable flavor change. I had doubled bagged it in ziplock bags, and sucked as much of the air out of it as I could with a straw before sealing it. For rotation purposes I would recommend you use your home packaged TVP within 12 to 18 months to be on the safe side. If you are trying to rotate most of your stored food within a year, then this would be realistic to accomplish.

