



FROM OUR KITCHEN TO YOURS

Grown in Brooklyn

Brooklyn, NY

growninbrooklyn.com

Only two companies in the world – one in Holland and one in Tennessee – make the probiotic culture that Barry needs to ferment his tempeh. Since it can be tricky to get it delivered on time, he now makes his own.

When Barry Schwartz reflects on the start of his tempeh company, Grown in Brooklyn, he uses a phrase spoken by many at one time or another: “I didn’t know what to do with my life.” He was a nurse, and around 2005, he attended to someone in medical need at a yoga ashram in upstate New York. He took to the environment and jumped at the opportunity to help in the ashram’s kitchen. He’s an avid cook, and before too long, he was leading the kitchen. He cooked three times a day for 70 hungry yogis. His culinary creativity blossomed.

“I woke up every day and cooked whatever sounded good on that day, using fresh ingredients that we had on hand. I loved it,” says Barry.

The search for new meals led Barry to tempeh, a 100% vegetarian food, originally from Indonesia, made of fermented beans and whole grains. Today Barry makes two 500-lbs batches of tempeh per month – each batch takes three days from start to finish. After cooking and grinding the beans, he dries them in a high-speed centrifuge that he’s uniquely adapted to his tempeh process. Next he adds in the grains and probiotic culture, similar to the culture used in cheese, to catalyze the fermentation. Then comes the delicate dance of tempeh: for twelve hours, he must keep it consistently at 87°F. To do so, he moves the tempeh trays between heated rooms, from shelf to shelf, always landing on the optimal temperature.



“I use tempeh as a substitute in dishes that call for chicken. One of my favorites is Chicken Mirabella. For me, it becomes a mix of tempeh, olives, capers, and prunes – so good!”

– Barry Schwartz

“Tempeh is challenging, and I like a challenge,” he says, “You’ve got to create the right conditions for it to thrive, and you’re in charge of everything. It’s like growing your own farm.”

Now Barry and his business partner, Gordon Bennett, grow their line of original tempeh flavors by trying new beans and grains in the mix. At the farmers market, they also serve fresh tempeh dishes to go, such as tempeh tamales and green salads with tempeh and peanut sauce. As Barry describes it, Gordon has helped him “turn my passion into a business.”



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FARMERS MARKETS
FORMERLY COMMUNITY MARKETS

173 Main Street, 3rd Floor
Ossining, New York 10562

914.923.4837 tel
914.801.2336 fax

DowntoEarthMarkets.com