Vegan Coconut Tofu Tenders

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Ingredients (about 12 tenders):

- 14 oz (1 block) extra-firm tofu, pressed well
- ½ cup coconut milk (from a can, stirred smooth)
- 1 Tbsp lime juice
- 1 Tbsp soy sauce or tamari
- ½ cup all-purpose flour (or rice flour for gluten-free)
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp paprika
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup panko breadcrumbs (use gluten-free if needed)
- ½ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- Oil for pan-frying (coconut oil or neutral oil)

Instructions:

1. Prep tofu:
   - Slice pressed tofu into long strips (like chicken tenders).
   - Pat dry with a paper towel so coating sticks better.
2. Marinate:
   - Mix coconut milk, lime juice, and soy sauce.
   - Place tofu strips in marinade for at least 20–30 minutes (up to 2 hours in the fridge).
3. Set up coating station:
   - Bowl 1: Flour + garlic powder + paprika + salt.
   - Bowl 2: Leftover coconut marinade (or extra coconut milk).
   - Bowl 3: Mix panko + shredded coconut.

4. Coat the tenders:

- Dip tofu strips in flour, then coconut milk, then the panko-coconut mixture.

- Press gently so the coating sticks.

5. Cook:

- Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat.

- Pan-fry tenders until golden and crispy on all sides (about 2–3 min per side).

- Drain on paper towels.

6. Serve:

- With sweet chili sauce, mango chutney, or vegan ranch.

- Great with rice, salad, or as finger food.

✨ Optional twists:

- Bake instead of fry: place on parchment-lined sheet, spray lightly with oil, bake at 400°F (200°C) for 20–25 min, flipping halfway.

- Add chili flakes to the breadcrumb mix for a spicy version.

- Use tempeh or soy curls for different textures.