

Soft Polenta

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 25 minutes | Total Time: 35 minutes

Chef's Notes

Not only is this a staple dish in Italy, it is also popular in many other parts of the World. It is a great alternative to potatoes and rice. Soft polenta pairs well with almost any braised meat, hearty stews or even roast chicken.

Making Polenta Ahead:

Polenta will hold for a few hours if tightly covered and held over a bain marie and. If you are making the polenta ahead of time, add the herbs, parmesan (if using), pepper and garnish just before serving. You may need to stir every 15 minutes or so to avoid clumping, and if the polenta gets too thick, loosen it with a ladle full of hot stock or even a little bit of hot water.

Making the Polenta

Finely chop the onions. Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. The pot needs to be big enough to hold about 3 liters or 12 cups volume.

Once the oil is hot, add the onions and sweat for about five minutes or until translucent. Adjust the heat to avoid adding any color to the onions.

Next, add the minced garlic and sweat for about 30 seconds or until fragrant, being careful not to burn the garlic. Add the stock, milk and salt. Turn the heat up to medium high and bring to a boil, then lower to a simmer.

When liquid is simmering, slowly add the polenta into the liquid in a slow steady stream while stirring constantly with a whisk. Once fully incorporated, switch to a wooden spoon stirring every 1 or 2 minutes for about 20 to 25 minutes or until the mixture pulls away from the sides of the pan and the grains of polenta begin to soften.

While the polenta is cooking, chop the herbs and grate the parmesan (if using). Once the polenta has fully cooked (taste it), turn the heat off and fold in the herbs and parmesan (unless you are going to hold the polenta before serving). Then add the butter to finish (if using). Transfer to a serving bowl and finish with freshly ground black pepper. Serve immediately.

Step 1: Making the Polenta

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion
- 5 garlic cloves
- 4 cups stock
- 4 cups milk (can substitute with stock or water)
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1/4 tsp white pepper
- 2 cups coarsely ground cornmeal
- 3 tbsp fresh sage (or thyme)
- 1/2 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano (optional)
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter (optional)
- freshly ground black pepper (for garnish)