



POLENTA RECIPES

<http://www.Net4TruthUSA.com/Polenta.htm>

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:

Polenta is a cornmeal mush popular in Italian, Savoy, Swiss, Austrian, Croatian, Slovenian, Serbian, Romanian, Corsican, Argentinean, Brazilian, and Mexican cuisine, and it is a traditional staple food throughout much of northern Italy.

Description

Polenta is made with either coarsely, medium or finely ground dried yellow or white cornmeal (ground maize), depending on the region and the texture desired.[1] As it is known today, polenta derives from earlier forms of grain mush (known as *puls* or *pulmentum* in Latin, or more commonly as gruel or porridge) commonly eaten in Roman times and after. Early forms of polenta were made with such starches as the grain farro and chestnut flour, both of which are still used in small quantity today. When boiled, polenta has smooth creamy textures, caused by the presence of starch molecules dissolved into the water.

Similarity with grits

Polenta is very similar to corn grits, a common dish in the cuisine of the Southern United States, with the difference that grits are usually made from coarsely ground hominy (see nixtamalization, which is the process of removing the hull from the kernel of the corn before grinding). When properly cooked, grits and polenta have similarly smooth textures, “grit” referring to the texture of the dried corn before cooking. Polenta’s similarity to boiled maize dishes of Mexico, where both maize and hominy originate, may be a coincidence, as polenta is not a part of Spanish cuisine.

Cooking and recipes

Formerly a peasant food, polenta has recently become quite upscale, with polenta dishes in restaurants and prepared polenta found in supermarkets commanding high prices. Many new recipes have given new life to an item, which is, in essence, a fairly bland and common food, invigorating it with various cheeses or tomato sauces. Polenta is often cooked in a huge copper pot known in Italian as *paiolo*. In northern Italy there are many different ways to cook polenta.

The most famous Lombard polenta dishes are *polenta uncia*, *polenta concia*, *polenta e gorgonzola*, and *missultin e polenta*; all are cooked with various cheeses and butter, except the last one, which is cooked with fish from Lake Como. It can also be cooked with porcini mushrooms, rapini, or other vegetables or meats, as in the Venetian *poenta e osei*, with little birds. Polenta is traditionally a slowly cooked dish, sometimes taking an hour or longer to cook. This has led to a profusion of shortcuts in cooking technique, and at least one authority (Christopher Kimball of *Cook's Illustrated* magazine) has asserted that cooking polenta using modern ingredients should take only seven minutes. Nevertheless, instant and precooked polenta have become popular in Italy and elsewhere.

Cooked polenta can also be shaped into balls, patties, or sticks and fried in oil until it is golden brown and crispy; this variety of polenta is called *crostini di polenta* or *polenta fritta*.

Regional variations

- In Croatia, polenta is common on the Adriatic coast, where it is known as *palenta* or *pura*; in the northwestern part of Croatia, in and around Zagreb, it is known as *žganci*.
- The Corsican variety is called *pulenta*, and it is made with sweet chestnut flour rather than cornmeal.
- The Serbian variety is called *palenta*.
- The Romanian variety is called *mămăligă*.

Interesting facts

- “Polentone” (or “pulentun” in dialect) meaning “polenta eater” (literally “big polenta”) is a derogatory term sometimes used by Southern Italians to refer to Northern Italians.
- The overreliance on polenta as a staple food caused outbreaks of pellagra throughout much of Europe until the 20th century (maize lacks readily-accessible niacin.)
- In South Africa, cornmeal mush is a staple food called mealie pap; in Zimbabwe it is called sadza and in Zambia it is nshima; elsewhere in Africa it may also be called fufu. In the Caribbean, similar dishes are cou-cou Barbados and funjie Virgin Islands.
- Cornmeal mush is called ugali in Swahili, and is a much appreciated food in East Africa.

WARNING!

Polenta is addictive!

Cooking polenta has to be done with a bit of caution– as the corn meal is heated, it has a tendency to bubble and splatter – like a good tomato sauce does. The bubbles release bursts of steam that can burn you quite badly; and so the author recommends you use a wooden stick (to prevent conduction of heat), and the wearing of cooking mittens or gloves when stirring the mixture.

We are not responsible for food addictions (or skin burns) which may result from the information contained herein.

You can search the Internet for “POLENTA”, and you will find THOUSANDS of recipes and articles. I use the MAXTHON BROWSER to do all my web searches. In “NEWS” mode, it will open windows to dozens of search engines while you are reading the current article. Maxthon is similar to Internet Explorer, but it saves you the trouble of logging on to each search engine in turn, if the one you last used doesn’t come up with what you’re searching for. Best thing is – Maxthon is FREE for the download... just go to www.Maxthon.com and get yourself the best browser in the business.

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Dave's Polenta Recipe

Ingredients

- 3 cups water
- 1 ½ tsp salt. (used to lower the boiling temperature of water)
- 1 ½ cups polenta, medium or coarse grain
- 1 tsp thyme.
- 1 tsp dried parsley.
- 1/8 tsp freshly ground black pepper or Adobo seasoning.
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese .
- 2 tbs olive oil.
- Oil for bread loaf pan and cookie sheet

NOTE: Do not use anything but olive oil, and do not substitute margarine or what I call “plastic butter” for real butter. Margarine, especially – is unhealthy because of poly-unsaturates and trans-fatty acids... besides, REAL food tastes better!

Directions

1. In a copper kettle heat the water and salt over medium-high heat.
2. Bring to a simmer, but don't let the water boil.
3. Use a whisk to stir the polenta into the hot water. Whisk constantly until it begins to thicken – which will take about 3 to 5 minutes.
4. Add thyme, cheese, and olive oil.
5. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring regularly with a wooden paddle, until it is very thick – this takes as long as it takes.
6. When the polenta has the consistency of bread dough, it is ready to serve – toppings can include beef or mushroom gravy, butter, or tomato sauce.
7. While the polenta is still hot, you can prepare for FRIED polenta by following the remaining steps here.
8. Oil a suitable size bread pan (big enough to hold what isn't served).
9. Fill the pan with the polenta. Smooth the polenta out evenly.
10. Cover the pan and refrigerate overnight.
11. Remove from the refrigerator and flip over onto a cutting board. The polenta should slide out of the pan.
12. Slice the polenta about ½-inch thick.
13. Place on an oiled cookie sheet and sprinkle with water. Fry in butter or broil until hot and lightly browned, flip and fry or broil on the other side. You may also grill the polenta on aluminum foil or a barbecue grill.

Herbed Soft Polenta with Sun-Dried Tomatoes

Ingredients:

- 4 ½ cups water.
- 1 ½ cups yellow cornmeal (coarse is better, but regular works).
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt.
- 2 tablespoons butter.
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese.
- ¼ cup grated Romano cheese.
- ¼ cup crumbled goat, feta or blue (Gorgonzola) cheese.
- ¼ cup chopped, sun-dried tomatoes.
- 2 tablespoons chopped herbs (any combination of basil, oregano, parsley, sage and rosemary).
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or Adobo seasoning.

Directions:

1. Bring water to a rolling boil.
2. Gradually and slowly whisk in the cornmeal and salt, constantly whisking to avoid lumps.
3. Reduce heat to low and cook until thick, stirring frequently, about 15 to 20 minutes.
4. Remove from heat and stir in butter, three cheeses, tomatoes, herbs and pepper.
5. Serve warm.