Soft Parmesan Polenta

Stir the Parmesan and butter through at the end for a soft, spoonable finish.



SERVES 4 AS A SIDE / HEAVY SAUCEPAN AND WHISK

Prep 5 min · Cook 25–40 min

Ingredients

500 ml reduced-salt vegetable or chicken stock, plus extra hot stock as needed

90 g regular medium-ground polenta

A small pinch of grated nutmeg

30 g butter and 30 g finely grated Parmesan

Fine salt to taste

At the stove

1. Whisk

Bring the stock and nutmeg to a simmer. Rain in the polenta in a thin stream, whisking.

2. Cook gently

Simmer on low, stirring often. Add hot stock if the pan becomes dry before the grains soften.

3. Finish

Take off the heat. Stir in butter and Parmesan. Loosen and season to taste. Serve straight away.

KOOK'S SECRET

Taste a few grains before adding the cheese. If they still feel gritty, a splash of hot stock and a few more minutes will do more than extra butter.

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The full method

01 **Start with hot stock**

Bring the stock and nutmeg to a simmer. Hold the whisk in one hand and pour the polenta in a thin stream with the other. Whisk until evenly mixed.

02 **Cook the grains**

Lower the heat as the mixture thickens. Partly cover to catch splashes. Stir often with a wooden spoon, scraping the base and corners. Regular polenta takes about 25–40 minutes, depending on the grind. Follow the packet and taste as you go.

03 **Finish and serve**

If it thickens before the grains soften, stir in a little extra hot stock and keep cooking. When the grains are tender, remove from the heat and stir in the butter and Parmesan. Taste for salt. Loosen with a last splash of stock and spoon onto warm plates.

FROM MARK'S KITCHEN

Tip a spoonful onto a warm plate. It should settle into a soft mound that spreads a little at the edges.