

Polenta and Walnuts with a Gorgonzola and herbed cream sauce

Adapted from Annie Sommerville's Everyday Greens

Serves 3 to 4 as an entrée, maybe twice as many as an appetizer

For the polenta:

Water – 4 cups

Cornmeal – 1 cup

Olive oil – 2 tbsp

Parmesan cheese – 1/4 cup, grated

A quick two gratings of nutmeg and cardamom

Salt and pepper to taste

For the sauce:

Half-and half OR skimmed milk – 1 cup

Cream – 1 cup

Red onion – 1/2, sliced fine

Garlic cloves – 3 to 4, smashed with the flat of a knife, paper skins left on,

Bay leaf – 1

Fresh Thyme sprigs – 2

Fresh oregano sprig – 1

Sage – 3 leaves

Gorgonzola cheese – 3/4 cup, crumbled

Kasseri or Fontina cheese – 1/4 cup, grated

Walnut pieces – 1/2 cup, toasted

Basil leaves – a half-handful, chopped into a chiffonade

To make the polenta:

- In a saucepan, bring the water to a boil. Salt the water, then add the cornmeal. Lower the heat a bit to gently cook the polenta until it smoothly thickens, about 20 minutes or so.

- When the polenta is cooked, take it off the heat. Stir in the pepper, nutmeg, cardamom and olive oil.

- Pour into a 9"x15" dish and allow it to cool. Upon cooling, slice the polenta into six or eight squares (which can be cut into triangles if the dish is to be an appetizer).

To make the sauce:

- Combine the cream, milk, onion, garlic and herbs in a saucepan over medium heat. Bring it to a boil and then lower the heat to simmer the sauce. Allow the sauce to reduce slightly, cooking for about 15 minutes.

- Strain the cream sauce, then return to the saucepan. Add half the Gorgonzola cheese to it, whisking it in to melt, over low heat. Season with salt and pepper as needed.

To assemble the dish:

- While the sauce is cooking, pour a little olive oil onto a skillet. Lightly crisp the polenta slices on the skillet until golden brown. Alternatively you could place the slices with some olive oil into a pre-heated oven at 325°F for 15-20 minutes.

- Place a couple of square (or a couple of triangles) on a plate. Sprinkle some Fontina (or Kasseri) and some of the reserved Gorgonzola on the slices, then ladle over some of the sauce. Sprinkle with some of the walnut pieces and a generous amount of basil. Enjoy right away!