

Baked Polenta with Four Cheeses

This dish makes a perfect side dish with a big Tuscan style porterhouse steak and a great glass of Frazier Cabernet. While it does take a little while to make the polenta we believe you will find the end product to be more the worth the time invested. Feel free to freeze a portion of the baked polenta as it reheats with ease.

Ingredients:

Polenta:

10.5 oz Coarse-grain polenta
2.5 oz butter

Tomato Sauce:

3 tbs olive oil
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 tbs rough chopped rosemary or thyme
1 lb 12 oz can chopped tomatoes

Cheese filling:

7 oz Gorgonzola cheese, cubed
9 oz Taleggio cheese, cubed
9 oz Mascarpone cheese
4 oz Parmesan cheese, grated

Cooking time:

1.5 hrs

Serves 6

Preparation:

Bring 6 cups water to boil in a heavy saucepan with 1 tbs salt. Add polenta to the water in a slow stream, stirring vigorously while pouring into the saucepan. Reduce heat immediately so that the water is simmering. Stir continuously for first 30 seconds to prevent any lumps from appearing- keep in mind the more you stir the better the overall texture will be. Once you have stirred sufficiently at the beginning you can leave the polenta to mildly bubble away, stirring every few minutes to prevent it from sticking to the saucepan. Cook for 40 minutes, add the butter and mix well.

Pour polenta into a shallow casserole dish about 2 inches deep (you do not want polenta to come up more than halfway up the side of the dish). Leave it in the dish to cool completely.

For the tomato sauce, heat the olive oil in a saucepan and cook the garlic gently until light brown. Add half the rosemary or thyme and then cook the tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper and cook gently, stirring occasionally until reduced to a thick tomato sauce.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Turn the polenta out of the dish and onto a board, slice horizontally in two. Pour half the tomato sauce into the bottom of the empty dish. Place the bottom slice of the polenta on top of the sauce and season. Scatter the Gorgonzola and Taleggio on top. Dot the Mascarpone over the other cheeses with a tsp, sprinkle with half the Parmesan and remaining herbs.

Place the second layer of polenta on top and pour over the remaining Parmesan and bake for 30 minutes. Let rest 20 minutes before serving.