

FOOD & DINING

Fresh ingredients key to delicious dishes

Fresh ingredients go a long way toward making a meal as delicious as possible. With the right ingredients, amateur cooks can prepare restaurant-quality meals for their family and friends. Whether you're hosting a weekend brunch or a relaxed dinner party for friends, the following recipe for "Creamy Polenta With Roasted Forest Mushrooms" from Jill Lightner's "Edible Seattle" (Sterling Epicure) is sure to please, especially if you can find fresh mushrooms to add that special flavor.

Creamy Polenta With Roasted Forest Mushrooms

Serves 4

- 3 to 4 cups whole milk (you can use low-fat milk or soy milk if you like)
- 1 teaspoon crushed dried sage leaves or 2 teaspoons chopped fresh sage
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup fine polenta
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 pound mushrooms, chopped into bite-size pieces
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 4 large eggs (duck or chicken)
- 1 5 1/2-ounce wheel Mt. Townsend Creamery Cirrus or other Camembert
- Chopped fresh chives for garnish (optional)

1. In a large pot, bring the milk to a boil. Add the sage and garlic, season with some salt and pepper, then pour in the polenta. You should season the polenta while it is cooking, so try to estimate how much salt the finished dish will need. If you are not sure, be conservative with your guess. Stir the polenta constantly. When it has thickened, remove it from the heat. (You can make the polenta up to 3 days ahead; let cool and then store, covered, in the refrigerator.)

2. Preheat the oven to 350 F. In an oven-safe casserole, combine the cooked polenta, cream and 1 cup water. Let the polenta heat up in the oven, stirring it every 5 minutes or so. (Don't worry if it gets brown and crispy; that just makes the polenta taste better.) Taste for seasoning, and add more salt and pepper as needed. Let it cook in the oven for 15 to 20 minutes.

3. While the polenta is in the oven, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter in

an oven-safe sauté pan over medium-high heat, then add the mushrooms and cook, stirring, for several minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add the sprig of thyme, remove from the heat and place the pan in the oven with the polenta.

4. Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons butter in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Gently crack the eggs into the melted butter, being careful not to break the yolks. Cook slowly until the whites are set and the yolk is firm but still soft, about 90 seconds. Remove the pan from the heat immediately.

5. To serve, divide the polenta among 4 shallow bowls. Add some of the roasted mushrooms and a slice of the Cirrus cheese. Top with one egg sunny-side up and sprinkle with chives, if using.



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Q What is your comfort drink:

A: Tsunami



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