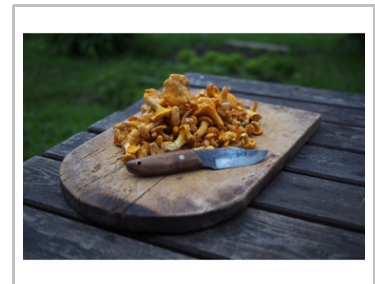


Polenta with Wild Mushrooms, Garlic and Sage

Ingredients

4 ½ cups vegetable stock (or water with 1 teaspoon salt)
1 cup polenta (ground cornmeal)
1 Tablespoon olive oil
⅛ teaspoon white pepper
salt to taste
1 pound wild mushrooms (chanterelles or morels or substitute button mushrooms, cremini, maitake, shitake or portobellos)
1 Tablespoon olive oil
2 large cloves garlic, rough chopped
½ cup chickpeas, cooked until just tender
1 Tablespoon fresh sage
finishing salt (a good sea salt or Himalayan salt)



Method

1. To make polenta, heat vegetable stock or salted water in a medium pot and bring to a boil. When boiling, turn heat down to low or off to avoid getting splattered. Gradually add 1 cup polenta to hot liquid while whisking vigorously to avoid clumping. Cover and let cook on very low heat for 20 minutes before adding any oil. If you are using a coarse polenta you could cook longer. You may also cover the pot and place it in a preheated 350 degree oven for 45 minutes to one hour. You can stir every 5-10 minutes if you like, but it works well to just leave it covered with no stirring.
2. When polenta has cooked, add olive oil and white pepper and adjust for salt.
3. To cook mushrooms, add mushrooms to a dry nonstick skillet or well-seasoned cast iron pan over medium-high heat. Don't worry about sticking, just let the mushrooms sit on the bottom of the pan until they start to release their moisture. As they cook, more and moisture will escape into the pan. Continue to cook, moving the mushrooms around the pan with a spatula from time to time to make sure they are all exposed to heat.

4. After a few minutes, moisture will no longer escape. Continue to cook until all of the water in the pan has evaporated and the mushrooms again rest on a dry bottom. Add oil to the skillet and stir the mushrooms in the pan.
5. Add chickpeas, then coarsely chopped garlic towards the end so it does not burn. Add whole sage leaves and cook until heated and a bit wilted. Salt to taste.
6. Serve mushrooms, chickpeas, garlic and fresh sage atop a bed of polenta.

Notes



Any mushrooms will be delicious in the dish but wild chanterelles in the fall and morels in the spring are particularly transcendent and are only found by foraging (wild harvesting) rather than being commercially grown as are most other mushrooms. Best sources are from farmers markets and produce sections of whole foods stores.

Wild mushrooms may come with bits of moss or pine needles on their tops and may be brushed away with a soft dry cloth or soft brush. Rinsing under cold, running water and drying on a paper or cotton towel does not seem to harm the flavor or concentration of the mushrooms although they may take a little longer to cook away a bit of extra moisture.

If you have an urge to forage for mushrooms, I recommend the Oregon Mycological Society (<https://www.wildmushrooms.org/about/>) which offers education and field trips for members. Membership in 2018 is a reasonable \$30/person, \$25 for folks over 62.

Chanterelles photo credit: photo credit: Nick Grappone,
<https://unsplash.com/@ngrapp1>

Source: modified from <https://www.feastingathome.com/chanterelles-with-creamy-polenta-and-sage/> (4 servings)
