

POLENTA PASTICCIATA

Basic polenta recipe:

I do mine a little bit different than what most recipes say to do. I start with adding my polenta corn meal to cold water and stirring it as it cooks. I use 1 cup of polenta to 4 cups water stirring until thick and coming away from the sides of the pan. I then add about 3/4 of a cup grated fontina cheese.

Double basic polenta recipe. Pour into a buttered 9x13 Pyrex dish and let it cool while you prepare sauce.

Bold Ragu

1 carrot chopped
1 onion diced
1 rib celery chopped
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
3 gloves garlic minced
1 lb. pork sausage
1/3 lb. lean ground beef
1/2 lb. bacon cut into 1/2 inch pieces
Salt and pepper
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 cup red wine
1/2 cup tomato paste dissolved in 1/2 cup warm water
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 cup chopped tomatoes
1 ounce dried porcini mushrooms soaked in warm water for 1/2 hour

Sauté carrots, onions and celery for about 8 minutes. Add garlic cook for 1 minute. Add more oil if needed and brown sausage, beef and bacon over medium heat. Season with salt and pepper and nutmeg. Drain off any accumulated fat. Pour in wine cook until it evaporates. Add paste, parsley, tomatoes and porcini with the liquid from the soaking. Cook for 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 375 F.

Remove cooled polenta from Pyrex. Cut a length of dental floss about 16 inches and hold taut and carefully cut polenta into equal parts to form a top and bottom slab to fit back into the Pyrex dish. Butter dish and place one layer of polenta and top with ragu. Top with remaining layer of polenta and top with more ragu. Grate about 1 1/2 cups parmesan cheese and bake for about 25 to 30 minutes. Until golden and bubbly.

Serves 8

From Carol Fields