

Kale Polenta

Swick

Serves 4 to 6 | Active Time: 1 hour | Total Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Step 1: Making the Kale Purée

- 2 bunches kale (preferably Lucinato), stemmed and cleaned
- 4 gloves garlic, peeled
- 2 tsp sea salt, or to taste
- 1 clove garlic, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp finishing salt, such as Maldon
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil*

To make the purée, fill a medium pot with water and add the 4 whole garlic cloves and bring to a boil. Once the water boils, add the sea salt and stir to dissolve. Taste the water, it should just taste a bit salty.

Next, add the kale and stir to ensure it is fully submerged in the water. Let the kale cook for 3 to 4 minutes, or until it has fully wilted. When done it should still be bright green, but it should be soft enough to tear into pieces.

At this point, remove the garlic cloves from the water and set aside. Drain the kale and once it is just cool enough to handle, use your hands to squeeze out the excess water. Roughly chop the kale and add it to a blender — along with the boiled garlic, raw garlic, and salt. Purée the mixture for 30 seconds or so and then add the oil and pulse again. If needed, scrape down the sides and continue to pulse until the mixture is somewhat smooth and purée-like.

Note: This recipe will make more than you need, but any leftover (which are great in pastas, on sandwiches, etc) will keep for several days in the refrigerator if stored in an airtight container.

Step 2: Making the Polenta

- 2 cups coarse stone-ground polenta*
- 4 tsp flaky salt, such as Maldon
- 8 cups water
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup Plant-Based Parmesan
- 1/2 cup Kale Purée (from above)
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper, to taste

To make the polenta, over high heat, bring the water to a boil, and then add the salt — stirring to dissolve the salt. Next, while whisking, gradually pour the polenta into the water.

Continue to whisk the mixture until the water has been soaked up by the polenta. Then turn the heat to low and continue to stir somewhat frequently. As the polenta cooks it should just slightly bubble and steam. If it starts to become too thick, add a touch more water and continue to cook until the polenta is tender but still has a nice somewhat coarse texture to it. This should take anywhere from 45 to 60 minutes.

Lastly, stir in the olive oil, Kale Purée and the Plant-Based Parmesan. Let the mixture cook for a few more minutes and then taste for seasoning. If needed, add a more seasoning and/or Plant-Based Parmesan.

Step 3: Serving the Polenta

- Roasted Tomatoes
- Roasted Garlic (1 head per person)*
- Grilled Baby Zucchini
- Grilled Asparagus
- Sautéed Garlic-Fried Wild Mushrooms
- Grilled Onions, such as cipollini or simply some sliced onion rounds
- Olive Tapenade (or pitted Kalamatas)
- Plant-Based Parmesan for garnish
- Fresh Basil, for garnish
- Flaky Salt, such as Maldon, for garnish

To serve the polenta, either pour into shallow bowls and garnish with a bit more Plant-Based Parmesan and black pepper and serve with your favorite vegetables, or serve it family-style, which is typically how we serve it.

To do this, pour the hot polenta out onto a long board and then garnish the perimeter (or serve on the side) with a variety of different grilled vegetables (see the ingredients list for ideas). If serving with the Olive Tapenade, place large spoonfuls of it around the board, so each guest can help themselves.

Note: While 1 head of roasted garlic might seem like a lot, it goes really well with this polenta and it's also a bit messy to try and get the cloves out, so it's just best to do one per person.

Just before you are ready to serve, garnish the polenta with a bit more Plant-Based Parmesan, some fresh basil (if desired), and a bit of Maldon salt. Enjoy immediately while the polenta is still nice and hot.

Chef's Notes

This recipe was adapted (and vegan-ized) from April Broomfield's "a girl and her greens".