



Blue Corn Polenta Squares

with Pesto

Makes 56 appetizers ~ \$8.96 (approx. \$.16 per serving)

Polenta Squares

6 cups water	2 cups blue corn meal
1 tsp. salt	4 Tbsp. butter
3/4 cup of parmesan	Olive oil for frying

Directions

Using olive oil, grease a 9 x 13 pan. Bring water and salt to boil in large saucepan. Gradually whisk in the cornmeal. Reduce heat to low and cook until mixture thickens—about 12 -15 minutes—stirring often to prevent sticking. Turn off heat. Add butter and parmesan and stir until melted. After stirring in the butter and cheese, the polenta should be spread in the oiled baking dish and then covered with foil or plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours until cold and firm.

Pesto

3/4 cup basil	4 – 6 cloves garlic
1/4 cup pinon nuts	1/2 cup parmesan
1/2 – 3/4 cup of olive oil	

Directions

In a cuisinart or blender, puree garlic cloves, basil, nuts and cheese. Gradually add oil and keep blending until ingredients are incorporated. Adjust ingredients until you get the desired consistency. Add additional oil as needed.

Assemble

Cut polenta into squares approximately 1 1/2". Pat dry with paper towel to eliminate any moisture that may have accumulated during refrigeration. In a frying pan, heat a significant amount of olive over high heat. (Watch for "waves" in the olive oil, which indicates that it is hot). Place croutons into oil and sauté until brown on both sides—several minutes. Do not crowd croutons. Drain croutons on paper if necessary. Top each crouton with a dab of pesto.

NOTE: Prices are based on using ingredients from the Farmer's Market—including Talon de Gato blue corn. Polenta can also be made with regular corn meal, thereby decreasing the costs even more. Toasted walnuts, almonds or pecans can be substituted for pinons. Toasting prior to using in the pesto brings out a great flavor in the nuts. Experiment! Use more or less garlic, cheese or nuts—according to taste. Other greens can be substituted or incorporated to change the flavor—arugula, mint, cilantro.

Add chile to the polenta and then top with a homemade salsa for a New Mexican flare!

Recipe courtesy of Mary Pat Butler

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