

Polenta with Slow-Roasted Tomatoes and Teleme

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www.janetfletcher.com

Patience pays off with this recipe. It takes two to three hours for meaty plum tomatoes to lightly caramelize in a slow oven and a good hour for polenta to become perfectly creamy on top of the stove. Pour the polenta onto a board and top with the juicy tomatoes and soft, melting slabs of Teleme or Crescenza cheese and your patience will be rewarded. Pour a Zinfandel or Sangiovese. From [Wine Country Table](#) by Janet Fletcher.

Ingredients

- 1-1/2 pounds plum tomatoes, halved lengthwise
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano, crumbled
- Kosher or sea salt
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 yellow onion, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cups polenta
- Crushed red pepper or coarsely cracked black pepper
- 6 to 7 ounces Teleme or Bellwether Farms Crescenza cheese



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Directions

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Put the halved tomatoes, cut side up, in a baking dish just large enough to hold them. Drizzle with the olive oil. Scatter the garlic and the oregano over the tomatoes evenly. Season generously with salt. Bake, basting occasionally, until the tomatoes begin to caramelize around the edges and are completely soft but still hold their shape, 2½ to 3 hours.

Melt the butter in a pot over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until softened and beginning to color, about 5 minutes. Add 2½ quarts cups boiling water and the bay leaf. Gradually add the polenta, whisking constantly. Reduce the heat to maintain a gentle simmer. When the polenta becomes too thick to whisk, switch to a wooden spoon. Cook until the polenta is thick and creamy, about 1 hour. Stir often to keep the polenta from scorching on the bottom of the pot. Remove the bay leaf and season the polenta with salt and pepper.

Pour the polenta onto a large wooden board or rimmed serving platter and spread it to an even thickness. Top with the cheese in thin slices, then arrange the tomato halves on top, pressing them gently into the polenta. Spoon any juices from the baking dish over the polenta, sprinkle with pepper, and serve immediately.

Serves 4 to 6