

ORGANIC*FAT~FREE!



Traditional Italian cornmeal with the versatility of pasta.

**QUICK RECIPE IDEAS FOR
APPETIZERS~SALADS~ENTREES~SIDE DISHES~DESSERTS
EVEN BREAKFAST!**



**PREPARED IN
CONVENTIONAL OVENS
BROILERS
MICROWAVE OVENS
AND FRYING PANS**

There are several ways to prepare Food Merchants Polenta depending on what are convenient for you and your preferred cooking methods.

Conventional Oven – With this method, you may heat the Polenta before, or after topping with sauce or whatever topping you may be using. Basically, use a cookie sheet, baking pan or casserole, lightly oiled. Place slices of Polenta ($\frac{1}{2}$ ” – $\frac{3}{4}$ ” thick) in a single layer. Bake at 350° for 15-20 minutes (even more with some toppings).

Broil – Place slices of Polenta on oiled cookie sheets or baking pan. Brush olive oil on top of each slice. Place under broiler until top starts to brown. This method works particularly well on plain Polenta when a crispy texture is desired. You may want to brown both sides.

Microwave –in general polenta recipes microwave well. Placing slices of Polenta onto dish or other appropriate microwave able container, you may heat plain for 30-60 seconds (more may be needed for more slices), or top with whatever you like, which may increase your cooking time. Generally cook until desired heat level is achieved.

Pan-fry – Using a non-stick skillet, fry slices of Polenta in butter or olive oil on medium – low heat. Cook on both sides until desired heat is reached. Longer cook time will yield crisper texture. You may place desired toppings on when ready to serve.

Deep Fry – In Italy this is a real favorite among the kids. Basically, slice Polenta then cut the slices in half. You may fry plain or use an egg dip then coat with breadcrumbs. Fry at 350° for 4-5 minutes. Food Merchants Polenta is even great to eat in between meals or as a snack. It can be eaten plain or dipped in a Marinara sauce.

APPETIZERS

Let your imagination be your guide to appetizers with Food Merchants' organic Polenta.

Cut polenta into ¼ to ½ inch slices and heat in 350° oven or place in a toaster oven for a few minutes to warm through. Remove from oven or toaster and top with your favorite cheese, anti pasta or Italian cold meat. You can choose the best size for your presentation and then simply cut the polenta circles into halves or quarters.

Here are some additional ideas to brighten any appetizer tray.

- Spread a layer of pesto on a circle of polenta and cut into quarters.
- Brush a circle of hot polenta with your favorite olive oil and garnish with fresh basil.
- Substitute polenta for garbanzo beans in your favorite hummus recipe. Super!
- Melt a slice of your favorite cheese on a circle of polenta and add a dollop of marinara.
- Slice Food Merchants' polenta as thin as you can. Place several circles in the toaster oven and toast until almost crisp. Dip into your favorite salsa for fat-free chips and dip.
Muy Bien!

SALADS

Add a special spark to your next salad by adding Food Merchants' Polenta croutons.

Simply place a few circles of polenta cut ½ inch thick in a 350° oven or toaster oven and bake or toast until crispy on the outside. You can cut them into crouton sized pieces and add them to your salad as is or...heat a tablespoon of olive oil and minced garlic in a skillet and gently toss until croutons are golden brown. Be sure not to let the garlic get too dark. It can become bitter.

To make the croutons even more special, simply melt a slice of Gorgonzola cheese over the crisp circles of polenta, cut into the proper size and add to your salad.

ENTREES

Food Merchants' Polenta can become a vital ingredient to many main dishes. Here are a few that we have enjoyed, but remember, there are hundreds of wonderful recipes in cookbooks of all shapes and sizes. From classic Italian to Novella, polenta is being used and served by chefs from every school and style. When you find a recipe that you want to try, notice how much time you will save by using Food Merchants' ready-made Polenta!

Polenta with Creamy Tomato Sauce

½ cup minced Onion	1 clove minced Garlic	½ cup Chicken Broth
3 tbsp of Tomato Paste	¼ cup Dry Wine	3 tbsp Cream
4 tbsp Butter	Salt & Pepper to taste	½ cup Grated Parmesan

Sauté onions in butter over medium heat. Add garlic. Stir in wine, tomato paste and chicken broth. Simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in cream, salt and pepper to taste. Arrange ½" thick slices of Food Merchant Polenta (2-3 slices per serving) in lightly oiled baking dish, spoon over polenta and sprinkle with Parmesan. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes, or microwave 60-90 seconds on high. ~ Serves 4 ~

Polenta with Spinach

10-12 oz fresh spinach (substitute 1-10 oz pk frozen chopped spinach-defrosted)
4 tbsp Butter 1/3 cup of cream 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and Pepper to taste

Chop fresh spinach and sauté in butter until tender. (If frozen, defrost and drain water from spinach). Melt butter in skillet over medium heat until frothy. Add cream, spinach and cook stirring frequently 4-5 minutes. Stir in Parmesan, salt and pepper to taste. Meanwhile pan-fry 1/2" thick slices of Food Merchants Polenta (2-3 slices per serving) in skillet with one tablespoon butter or olive oil.

Spoon spinach over fried polenta slices in individual dishes and serve. ~ Serves 4 ~

KEEP IT SIMPLE POLENTA DINNER

Slice polenta 1/2 inch thick and cover with your favorite tomato sauce. Place a slice of mozzarella cheese on top and warm in a 350° oven for 20 minutes or until it bubbles. Serve with crisp salad and garlic bread. Don't forget the wine!

Polenta Crostini

1 -18 oz FM Polenta	1-15 oz can whole tomatoes	3 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup onion finely chopped	1 tsp Oregano	1 tsp red wine vinegar
3 tbsp olive oil	1 egg yoke	Salt and Pepper to taste

Sauté onion in olive oil over medium low heat until soft. Drain juice and chop tomatoes. Add to skillet along with oregano, salt and pepper. Cook until mixture thickens. Remove from heat and stir to cool slightly. Stir in beaten egg yolk, Parmesan and vinegar. Meanwhile pan fry 1/2 inch thick slices (2-3 per serving) of Food Merchant Polenta on both sides in 1 tbsp of olive oil. Place polenta slices on a lightly oiled baking sheet, top with tomato mixture and heat under oven broiler until bubbly. Serve hot as appetizer or snack.

POLENTA LASAGNA AL FORNO

Use sliced Polenta in place of pasta to layer between layers of spaghetti sauce. Mozzarella, ground beef, etc. Top with more spaghetti sauce and mozzarella and bake for a great Lasagna or select **your** favorite lasagna recipe. Substitute 1/4 inch slices of polenta for lasagna noodles. Everything else stays the same. Nice change of pace.

POLENTA CASSEROLE

2 cups shredded mozzarella or provolone cheese	1 1/4 tsp Italian seasoning
2 tbsp butter or olive oil	1/4 cup prepared pizza sauce
2 cups shiitake or white mushrooms	4 cups fresh spinach leaves (5 oz)
2 cloves garlic	2 medium tomatoes

Heat butter or olive oil in large skillet. Sauté mushrooms, garlic, and half of the Italian seasoning for about 1 minute. Add salt, pepper and spinach. Sauté for 1 more minute.

Slice enough Food Merchants Polenta (1/2" thick slices) to cover a buttered 2-1/2 quart shallow baking dish. You can first pan fry the polenta if you wish.

Cover the polenta with pizza sauce and then top with the spinach mixture. Arrange a slice of tomato over each slice of polenta then top with cheese and sprinkle remaining Italian seasonings. Bake 350° oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until cheese is melted.

POLENTA SHEPHERDS PIE

Prepare your favorite beef, chicken, lamb or veggie stew. Slice polenta ½ inch thick. Place an individual serving of stew into an oven-proof bowl and place polenta on top. Heat in 350° oven for 25 minutes or until stew is hot and polenta is heated through.

Broiled Herbed Polenta with Wild Mushrooms

1 ½ tsp olive oil	1/3 cup canned vegetable broth
½ lb fresh wild* & button mushrooms	2 tbsp dry Marcella
2 tsp minced garlic	1 green onion, chopped
6 ½ inch thick slices seasoned Food Merchants prepared polenta	

*(Such as crimini, Portobello, oyster or steamed shitake)

Preheat broiler. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms and garlic and sauté until mushrooms soften, about 6 minutes. Add broth, Marcella and green onion and simmer about 5 minutes until liquid is reduced by half and you are scrapping up browned bits. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, arrange polenta on small baking sheet. Brush polenta on both sides with remaining ½ tablespoon oil. Broil polenta until golden and crisp, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer polenta to plates. Spoon mushroom and sauce over and serve.

Hot tip: Make a quick salad to begin your Italian-style meal; on a bed of radicchio and endive, arrange black olives, marinated artichoke hearts, cherry tomatoes and crumbled Gorgonzola cheese. Serve the salad with seeded breadsticks. End with cannoli and espresso-spiked hot chocolate.

POLENTA CHILI CON CARNE

Prepare your favorite chili recipe. Toast ½ inch slices of polenta until crispy on the outside and soft in the center. Cut polenta into small cubes and add to chili. Top with green onions and cheese.

Polenta Sausage Bake

Preheat oven to 350°. Select a shallow baking dish and coat the bottom with our favorite marinara recipe or from a jar. Next put down a ¼ inch layer of polenta. Put down a layer of browned Italian sausage. Top sausage with slices of mozzarella cheese. Add another layer of marinara, polenta, sausage, cheese etc. until you run out of shallow baking dish. Make sure the top layer is marinara sauce. Bake until bubbly, about 30-45 minutes.

Polenta Oriental

Ever heard of tofu? Here's a totally eastern thought. Simply replace tofu with Food Merchants' Polenta in your favorite Chinese recipe. Never underestimate the power of the corn.

Good Old Polenta Meatloaf

The next time you decide to do meatloaf, substitute the binder (oatmeal, bread crumbs or crackers) with equal amounts of polenta. This is delicious and a great use of an exciting new product.

SIDE DISHES

Traditionally, polenta has been a staple side dish. Whether in the form of circles, squares or in a softer format, polenta can substitute for potatoes or pasta. As a side dish, Food Merchants' Polenta can be grilled or fried with a touch of olive oil and served as is. It can also be sauced as with potatoes or pasta. Simply top the heated polenta with whatever sauce or gravy you have prepared with the meal.

Food Merchants' polenta is so simple to slice, heat and serve from the package that you may forget it can take on another form; that of soft polenta. Soft polenta has the texture of mashed potatoes. To convert Food Merchants' polenta to a soft texture simply place a desired amount in a food processor, add liquid and blend to create the desired texture. Liquids used can be water, milk, cream, stocks, or even soups. When you have achieved the desired texture, simply heat in a sauce pan on top of the stove or in the microwave oven. Be careful to just heat through. Do not over-heat the mixture.

Here are a few ways to try this yummy alternative:

Blend in a couple of tablespoons of butter or margarine along with milk or cream and warm to make the perfect mashed potato alternative.

When you make your next roast beef or chicken, add some of the pan drippings to our polenta in a food processor, blend and heat. If you don't have drippings, add canned beef or chicken stock and watch the smiles appear.

For a rich change of pace, blend some butter or margarine with your favorite cheese and add to our polenta in the food processor. Warm and enjoy.

Polenta Tamale Pie

Tamale pie, made with a cornmeal-mush crust, dates back to 1911. In this recipe, we use ready-made polenta packaged in a roll. The spicy beef filling takes advantage of the excellent bottled salsas and canned refried beans now crowding market shelves.

8 Servings

1-pound ground beef
1 ½ Tablespoons chili powder
1-tablespoon ground cumin
1 16-ounce bottle spicy salsa
1 15-16 ounce can refried beans
1 14-½ ounce can chicken broth
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

2-18 oz rolls prepared polenta sliced into 1/3-inch thick rounds
3 Cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese

Sauté beef in heavy large pot over medium high heat until no longer pink, breaking up meat with back of fork, about 3 minutes. Add chili powder and cumin; stir 1 minute. Add salsa, beans and broth. Simmer until mixture thickens, about 10 minutes. Mix in ¼ cup cilantro; season with salt and pepper.

Oil 13x9x2 inch glass-baking dish. Place half of polenta in dish. Top with sauce and 1 ½ cups cheese, then remaining polenta, cheese and cilantro. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover with foil; chill.)

Preheat oven to 350° F. Bake freshly assembled pie, uncovered, until heated through and sauce bubbles, about 35 minutes, or bake refrigerated pie, covered, 20 minutes, then uncover and bake until heated through, about 35 minutes.

Grilled Polenta with Fontina

This easy side dish begins with slices of Food Merchants brand precooked polenta from the supermarket. We added melted cheese and diced tomatoes for a tasty topping.

2 ripe medium tomatoes, diced	1/8 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley	1-tablespoon olive oil
1/4 teaspoon salt	2 oz Fontina cheese, shredded (1/2 cup)
1 chub Food Merchants polenta, cut into 12 slices	

1. In small bowl, combine tomatoes, parsley, salt and pepper. Set aside.
2. Brush both sides of polenta slices with olive oil. Place polenta on grill over medium heat and cook 5 minutes or until underside is golden. Turn slices over and top with Fontina cheese. Cook polenta about 5 minutes longer or just until cheese melts.
3. Transfer polenta slices to platter and top with tomato mixture. Makes 6 accompaniment servings

SOUP:

Toss cubes of Polenta into tomato Soup, Minestrone, Chicken Soup, or Vegetable Soup.

BREAKFAST!!!

Slice polenta 1/2 inch thick. Fry slices in well-oiled skillet until crispy on the outside and soft on the inside. Place a couple of the slices on a warmed plate and put a pat of butter on each. Cover each slice with hot maple syrup or fruit compote and enjoy like a hotcake. Try variations with raisins, nuts, cinnamon, yogurt, etc.

Try the same thing with softened polenta. Soften Food Merchants' Polenta in a food processor with some milk or cream and serve hot like oatmeal or cream of wheat. Add your favorite hot cereal condiments and serve with toast or a toasted English muffin.

DESSERT!

Chunky Polenta Pudding

Slice polenta into 1/2 inch thick slices and cut into cubes. Toss with a mixture of equal parts almonds, honey, raisins and ricotta cheese. Mix in a tablespoon of cinnamon, 1/4 cup of honey and 3 tablespoons of butter. Mix well and heat in a 250° oven for 1 hour. Serve warm with a spoon of whipped cream. Tell me this isn't good.

