



Roasted Pumpkin & Vegetable Medley with Creamy Polenta

Fall's bounty of fresh pumpkins, crisp sweet bell peppers, and tender zucchini blend tastefully together over creamy, warm polenta. Roasting the pumpkin pieces along with the other vegetables releases their natural sugars, making them tender and rich with caramelized flavor. This simple dish will be sure to please anyone on a cool autumn evening.

4 servings

Ingredients

For the roasted pumpkin and vegetables:

3 cups fresh pumpkin, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 cups fresh sweet red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 cups fresh zucchini, cut into 1-inch pieces
¼ cup olive oil, divided
2 garlic cloves, minced
salt and pepper, to taste

For the polenta:

4 cups water
2 teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons butter
1 cup polenta or course ground cornmeal
2 cups half and half
¼ cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese

Equipment

Roasting pan
Serrated knife
Medium saucepan
Large non-stick skillet

Preparation

Prepare the roasted pumpkin and vegetables:

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Using a serrated knife, cut and peel the pumpkin into 1-inch pieces. Next, cut the red bell pepper and zucchini into 1-inch pieces. Place vegetables in a roasting pan lined with aluminum foil. Drizzle about half of the olive oil over the vegetables and gently toss. Spread the vegetables into a single layer and place in the oven for about 20 minutes or until tender and caramelized. Remove from the oven and cool slightly.

[Chef's Note: It is important to cut all the vegetables about the same size so they roast evenly.]

Prepare the polenta:

While the vegetables are roasting, combine the water, salt and butter in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce the temperature, and slowly add the polenta while continuously stirring with a wooden spoon. When the polenta is completely incorporated into the water mixture and smooth, slowly pour in

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the half and half. Continue to stir well. Add the grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and continue to stir for about 5 minutes or until polenta is creamy and smooth. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Sauté the roasted vegetables:

When the vegetables are roasted and slightly cooled, heat the remaining olive oil in a large skillet. Add the minced garlic and sauté for about a minute. Be careful not to brown the garlic as it will become bitter. Add the roasted vegetables and toss with the garlic and oil for about 4 minutes or until tender. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Service

Spoon a portion of the polenta onto a serving plate and top with the roasted pumpkin vegetable mixture. Serve immediately.

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