

10 ways with Instant Polenta

Instant polenta is a great pantry staple, especially for anyone following a gluten-free diet. Here are some easy ways to experiment.



1. Polenta chips

Prepare polenta according to packet instructions, then pour into a baking pan. Cover and refrigerate to set. This may take up to six hours, so overnight is a good option. Once set, cut into 2cm-thick chips and chargrill or pan-fry with a spray of oil.

2. Polenta 'mash'

Bring to the boil 2 cups water and 1 cup reduced-salt vegetable stock, then whisk in 2 cups polenta and reduce heat. Simmer for 10 minutes, or until polenta thickens. Once thick, stir in 1/4 cup grated parmesan and some parsley for extra flavour.

3. Polenta pizza base

For a gluten-free pizza base, prepare polenta as in recipe 2, adding 1 tbsp olive oil with parmesan and replacing parsley with pepper. Cool for 5 minutes. Spread polenta onto grease-proof baking paper. Bake for 10 minutes, or until firm. Top with your favourite pizza ingredients, then bake for another 15–20 minutes, until ingredients are cooked and heated through.

4. Herby polenta-coated snapper

Add chopped flat-leaf parsley, thyme and lemon zest to uncooked polenta. Coat snapper with the mixture on both sides. Pan-fry with a spray of oil, or bake until golden.

5. Vegie polenta tart

Prepare polenta as in recipe 2, adding oregano and thyme instead of parsley. Set aside to cool. Pour polenta into a lined tart tin, spreading evenly. Top with roasted vegies of your choice and a little grated reduced-fat cheese. Bake for 30 minutes, or until golden brown.

6. Polenta pancakes

Combine 1 cup plain flour, 1/2 cup polenta, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1 tablespoon sugar and 1/2 teaspoon bi-carb soda in a bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk 1 cup buttermilk, 2 eggs and ¼ cup water. Whisk liquid mixture into dry ingredients. Cook batter in a pan sprayed with a little oil. Serve pancakes with berries and a dollop of natural low-fat yoghurt.

7. Orange polenta biscuits

Preheat oven to 180°C. Spray a baking tray with oil. Beat 75g reduced-fat table spread, zest of 1 orange and 1/3 cup sifted icing sugar until just combined. Stir in 3 tablespoons polenta and 1/2 cup sifted plain flour. Place spoonfuls of mixture onto tray. Flatten into small rounds. Bake for 15 minutes.

8. Pesto polenta

Prepare polenta as in recipe 2. When adding parmesan, also add 4 tablespoons pesto and 1/2 cup chopped basil instead of parsley. Serve with grilled chicken breast and vegies.

9. Gluten-free fritters

Try mixing traditional fritter ingredients such as corn, peas, or zucchini through cooked polenta (as in recipe 2). Pan-fry dessert-spoonfuls of mixture with a little oil spray.

10. Polenta 'sandwiches'

Slice chilled polenta into 8cm x 8cm squares, and pan-fry on both sides until light brown. Place filling of your choice on a polenta square and top with a second square. Bake for 7–8 minutes.

