Corn Tomato Polenta Bowls

Four polenta bowls with the complete tomato-bean topping · Active 30 min · Total 1 hr 5 min

Skills: Whisking and slowly cooking regular cornmeal while reducing a separate topping

Ingredients

- 1 cup plain regular yellow cornmeal (160 g)
- 4 cups water for polenta (960 ml), plus up to 1/2 cup/120 ml if needed
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g), divided
- 1 tablespoon olive or neutral oil (15 ml)
- 1 small onion, finely chopped (100 g)
- 1 can chopped tomatoes, 14–14 1/2 oz/400–411 g, including juice
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme (0.5 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper (0.5 g)
- 1 can cooked white beans, 15 oz/425 g net, drained and rinsed (240 g drained)
- 1 can plain sweetcorn, about 15 oz/425 g net, drained (about 240 g drained)

Set out

Heavy saucepan with lid, at least 3 qt/3 L, Second saucepan for tomato topping, Whisk and long-handled spoon, Strainer, Ladle

Allergens

No major US allergen identified in the base ingredients. Check labels and substitutions.

A useful detail

The polenta and tomato topping cook in parallel. The 65-minute total allows a full regular-cornmeal simmer; use its packet time if longer. Instant polenta requires a different shorter clock, not an identical dry substitution by guesswork.

Make it

1. Bring 960 ml polenta water and half the salt to a boil in the heavy saucepan. Reduce heat and whisk in cornmeal in a slow stream. Stir until smooth, then cook over very low heat, partly covered, for 25–35 minutes or its packet-directed time, stirring frequently from the bottom. It must lose its raw gritty bite. Add extra hot water gradually only if drying before tender.

2. Meanwhile heat oil in the other pan over medium heat. Cook onion for 7–8 minutes. Add tomatoes with juice, thyme, pepper and remaining salt and simmer uncovered for 12–15 minutes until thick but saucy.

3. Fold white beans into the tomato sauce and simmer gently for 4–5 minutes until hot. Stir drained sweetcorn into the fully cooked polenta and heat for 3–4 minutes, stirring; keep the base soft enough to spoon.

4. Divide all the corn polenta among 4 bowls and add one-quarter of the complete tomato-bean topping to each. Serve promptly, allowing spoonfuls to cool briefly because the thick base holds heat.

Not every yellow powder is cornmeal

Masa harina, cornstarch and a complete cornbread mix have different jobs. The written recipe needs plain cornmeal suitable for cooking into porridge.

Ingredient labels

No major allergen ingredient is deliberately included in this base. Check cornmeal, beans, vegetables and herbs for added ingredients and cross-contact information; this is not an allergen-free guarantee.

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or below for up to 3 days. Reheat a portion to 165°F/74°C throughout, stirring the polenta with a little water and keeping its topping moist. Freeze promptly cooled portions for up to 1 month and thaw in the refrigerator; polenta becomes firmer and grainier. Do not leave the thick pot out until cold.