Banana and Date Cornmeal Porridge

2 cornmeal breakfast bowls, each with half the date porridge and 75 g (about 2.6 oz) banana folded through | Active 10 min | Cook 9 min | Total 25 min

Ingredients

- 70 g (about 2.5 oz) fine quick-cooking polenta, with a 3-5 minute stovetop package time
- 300 ml (about 1 1/4 US cups) milk
- 250 ml (about 1 US cup plus 1 US tbsp) water
- 40 g (about 1.4 oz) soft pitted dates, chopped into 5 mm (about 3/16 in) pieces
- 150 g (about 5.3 oz) peeled banana, cut into small pieces
- 10 g (about 0.35 oz) butter
- 0.8 g ground cinnamon, about 1/4 tsp
- 0.5 g fine salt, a small pinch

Set out

1000 W microwave with turntable, Microwave-safe bowl, 2 L (about 2.1 US qt) measured capacity, Microwave-safe vented cover for the date stage, Small whisk, Spoon, Knife and board, Kitchen scale and measuring jug, Oven mitts, Two serving bowls

Allergens

Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Combine milk, water, dates, cinnamon and salt in the 2 L (about 2.1 US qt) bowl. Cover loosely with a vented cover. Microwave at 1000 W full power for 3 minutes, stopping halfway through to stir, until the liquid is hot and steaming and the dates have begun to soften.

2. Remove the cover carefully. Whisk in the polenta in a thin stream. Microwave uncovered at 50% power for 4-6 minutes, stopping every minute to whisk around the bottom and sides, until gently bubbling and the fine grain is soft. Continue in 30-second low-power bursts if needed; do not use a raw-grain taste test.

3. Stir in all the butter. Stand for 3 minutes so the porridge settles and thickens. Fold in the 150 g (about 5.3 oz) banana pieces.

4. Divide the complete batch equally between two bowls and serve warm. Each receives half the dates and butter as well as 75 g (about 2.6 oz) banana; no additional sugar or garnish is required.

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A deliberately large bowl

The 550 ml cooking liquid has plenty of headspace in a 2 L (about 2.1 US qt) bowl. Do not scale this into a narrow mug, where foaming and stirring are harder to control.

Spoonable rather than sliceable

This liquid-to-grain balance is for soft porridge. It is not a polenta cake formula and is not meant to unmold.

Ingredient labels

Check polenta for wheat cross-contact if needed. The soy-drink variation contains soy.

A useful detail

The 25-minute estimate includes preparation, up to 9 minutes of sequential heating, the 3-minute stand and serving. It depends on the specified quick-cooking fine polenta; ordinary coarse cornmeal is a different, longer recipe. Times are starting ranges for a 1000 W microwave. Use the stated power setting, stir and turn as directed, and use the food endpoint rather than the clock alone. A different wattage or bowl shape may need additional short bursts.

Another way

Replace the dates with 40 g (about 1.4 oz) chopped soft dried figs, removing any hard stalk before weighing.

Use 300 ml (about 1 1/4 US cups) unsweetened soy drink in place of milk and 10 g (about 0.35 oz) plant-based spread instead of butter. Soy becomes an allergen and spread labels may list additional ingredients.

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or below and use within 2 days. The banana softens and darkens on storage. Add 20 ml (about 1 US tbsp plus 1 US tsp) water per portion, cover loosely and reheat with stirring to 165°F/74°C throughout; stand 2 minutes.