Fennel, Orange and Shrimp over Soft Polenta

2 shallow bowls · Active 20 min · Total 40 min

Skills: Confident beginner

Ingredients

- 2/3 cup fine polenta with an approximately 20-minute cooking time (100 g)
- 2 cups water (480 ml), plus a little hot water for loosening
- 1/2 cup whole milk (120 ml)
- 2 teaspoons unsalted butter (10 g)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (15 ml)
- 1 medium fennel bulb, trimmed and sliced 1/8 inch (3 mm) thick (250 g prepared weight)
- 1/4 cup water for the fennel (60 ml)
- 1/3 cup freshly squeezed orange juice (80 ml)
- 1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest (2 g)
- 10 1/2 oz raw peeled, deveined medium shrimp, thawed if frozen (300 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g), divided
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper (0.5 g)

Set out

Medium heavy saucepan with lid, 12-inch (30 cm) skillet with lid, Whisk, Fine grater

Allergens

Crustacean shellfish (shrimp), Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Bring the 2 cups (480 ml) water, milk and half the salt to a gentle simmer in the saucepan. Slowly whisk in the polenta. Reduce to low and cook for 20–25 minutes, stirring frequently, until tender; use the packet time if it differs. Partly cover to control splashes.

2. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in the skillet over medium heat. Add the fennel and remaining salt; cook for 3 minutes, stirring. Add the 1/4 cup (60 ml) water, cover and steam for 8–10 minutes, until the fennel is tender.

3. Uncover the skillet and let any remaining water evaporate. Pour in the orange juice and simmer for 2 minutes.

4. Pat the shrimp dry. Add them to the fennel in a single layer and cook for 3–5 minutes, turning halfway, until the flesh is pearly white and opaque throughout. Remove the skillet from the heat and stir in the orange zest and pepper.

5. Stir the butter into the cooked polenta. If needed, add hot water 1 tablespoon (15 ml) at a time until it is soft and spoonable. Divide between two shallow bowls and top with the shrimp, fennel and all the pan juices. Serve immediately.

Choose this for a meal at home

The textures are at their best straight from the pan. For a work break, select one of the collection’s packed cold meals or thermos stews instead of trying to keep this bowl lukewarm.

A useful detail

Shrimp size affects cooking time. Check the thickest ones for opaque flesh throughout rather than relying only on their curled shape.

Keep it well

Best served immediately. Refrigerate leftovers in shallow containers within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or below and use within 2 days. Reheat gently to 165°F/74°C, loosening the polenta with water; the shrimp will become firmer. Do not leave a portion on the counter to eat after work.