



Stracciatella, Polenta Chips & Burnt Fig Jam

One of the things I love most about travel is discovering new foods, and the find of my recent trip to Emilia-Romagna was the soft fresh cheese Squacquerone di Romagna. I had it with polenta chips and candied figs at Hotel La Rocca in the lovely Medieval hill town of Brisighella - a very simple dish, but one I haven't stopped thinking about! This is my recreation of that meal, using the similar stracciatella from Marrickville cheese producer Vannella, and Maggie Beer's delicious Burnt Fig Jam. Leftover polenta keeps for at least a week refrigerated, and is delicious fried or baked with a simple tomato sauce, so it's worth making a double batch. Staying Italian-inspired with the wine, Casa Freschi Ragazzi pinot grigio, made by David Freschi in the Adelaide Hills, is a great match.

Serves 4

METHOD

1. Combine water and salt in a large saucepan and bring to the boil.
2. Sprinkle in the polenta, stirring constantly with a narrow wooden spoon or whisk, until smooth.
3. Reduce heat and simmer for an hour or so, until tender, stirring often.
4. Spread into an oiled baking dish, set aside to cool, then refrigerate until needed.
5. Preheat oven to 200°C.
6. Cut polenta into large 'chips' about 1.5-2cm thick.
7. Roll in oil and arrange on a baking tray.
8. Bake for 20 minutes, then turn and bake for a further 20 minutes or so, until crisp.
9. Arrange on plates with stracciatella and fig jam and serve.

INGREDIENTS

- 1.25 litres water
- 1 tablespoon salt flakes
- 250g yellow polenta (see below)
- 400g stracciatella cheese
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for oiling
- 6 tablespoons fig jam
- Green salad, for serving

Don't be tempted by instant polenta, an authentic stoneground version takes longer to cook but is worth the effort; it's still slightly grainy when ready, but the grains are tender.