



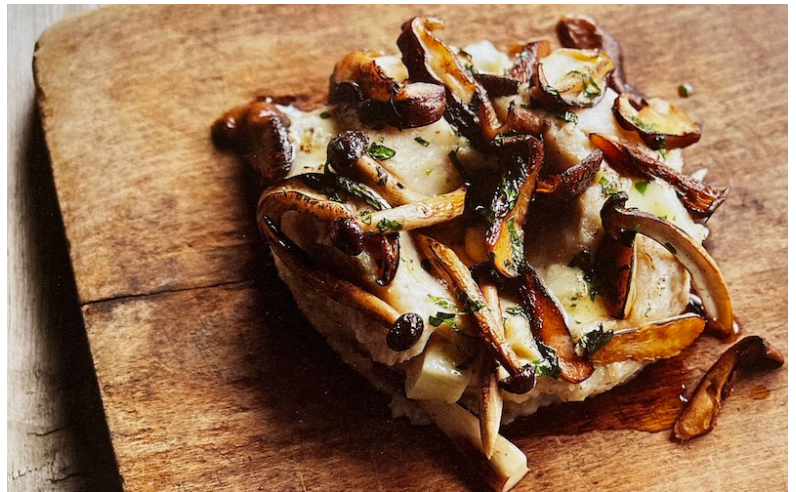
Buckwheat Polenta with Mushrooms & Gorgonzola

On the first day I was in Lombardy researching for A Lombardian Cookbook, Alessandro took me up to the hunting lodge owned by his family friends Elsa and Tulio. There in the high mountain sunshine, Elsa and Alessandro's Mum, Iolanda, made polenta taragna for us in a copper pot over an open fire in the garden. Cooked this way – or even over a wood fire at home as Iolanda often does – the polenta takes on a lovely subtle smoky flavour from the fire. Mushroom foraging is a very popular pastime in the wooded hills of northern Italy. Use any mushrooms you like for this dish, wild pine mushrooms or slippery jacks if they're available or a combination of chestnut mushrooms, Swiss browns or king brown mushrooms. I love the pale pink, dry Chiarretto rosato from Lombardian winery Cà Maiol with this dish.

Serves 2

INGREDIENTS

- 2½ cups water
- 2 teaspoons salt flakes
- 150g buckwheat polenta
- 25g butter
- 100g mushrooms, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 12 sage leaves
- 50g Gorgonzola Dolce
- 40g freshly grated Grana Padano



METHOD

1. Combine water and salt in a large heavy-based saucepan and bring to the boil.
2. Whisking constantly, slowly 'rain' in the polenta.
3. Reduce heat to low and continue cooking, stirring frequently, for about 40 minutes, until tender.
4. After 40 minutes, while still cooking the polenta, heat the butter in a frying pan until it's foaming.
5. Add the mushrooms and sage and cook for 6 minutes or so, until mushrooms are tender. Set aside to keep warm.
6. Add gorgonzola and two-thirds of the Grana to the polenta and stir until it's completely melted.
7. Transfer to a serving platter, sprinkle with remaining Grana, pour mushrooms, sage and butter over the top and serve.

Photo by Chris Chen from A Lombardian Cookbook by Alessandro Pavoni & Roberta Muir