

## Mushroom Stew with Creamy Polenta — SCRAPS by Carolina Gelen

Makes 4 servings | Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 60 minutes

### Mushroom Stew

- 500 g or 1 lb mixed mushrooms, such as cremini, shiitake, oyster, etc.
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon Aleppo pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon whole coriander seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon whole cumin seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon black peppercorns
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 1/2 cup any stock or bone broth, plus more as needed
  - I used an onion-heavy vegetable stock
- Soy sauce
- Balsamic vinegar
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- A handful cilantro or parsley, finely chopped

### Creamy Polenta

- 1 cup cornmeal
- 4 cups water
- 1/2 cup cream, plus more as needed
- 4 tablespoons butter
- Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, optional
- Kosher salt

1. Heat the oven to 400°F (205°C). Tear the mushrooms into smaller chunks and arrange them in a single layer (making sure they're not overlapping) on a baking sheet. Generously drizzle the mushrooms with a few glugs of olive oil (about 5 tablespoons), balsamic vinegar (about 2 tablespoons), soy sauce (about 3 tablespoons), and a pinch of salt. Roast for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the mushrooms get nice and toasty. All ovens are a little different, so make sure to check on your mushrooms halfway through cooking to prevent them from overcooking or browning too fast.
2. While the mushrooms are roasting, add a few glugs of oil to a deep pan over medium heat. Add the onions and saute for 4 to 5 minutes, or until translucent. In the meantime, crush the cumin seeds, Aleppo pepper, coriander seeds, and peppercorns in a mortar and pestle or with the back of a knife. Add the spices and chopped garlic to the pan and cook for 2 more minutes. Remove off heat until the mushrooms are done.
3. Place the pan back over medium heat. Add the mushrooms. Sprinkle the cornstarch all over the mushrooms and toss to coat. Slowly drizzle in the stock, while constantly stirring. Season with salt, soy sauce and a drop of vinegar if needed. All stocks are different, so when it comes to seasoning, I prefer to leave that up to you to figure out what your base needs. Pro tip: a dollop of any miso will elevate the broth. Simmer for 3 to 5 minutes, or until the mushroom stew has thickened.
4. For the polenta, bring 4 cups of water in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Season the water with a big pinch of salt. Once the water is simmering, slowly pour in the cornmeal while constantly whisking. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer the polenta, while constantly whisking to prevent it from sticking to the bottom of the pan for 15 to 20 minutes. If the polenta gets too thick to whisk, switch to a wooden spoon. Taste a teaspoon of cooked polenta: if it's still grainy, continue cooking, if it's soft, thick and porridge-like, turn off the heat. Add the butter, and whisk to melt and incorporate. Slowly drizzle in the cream. Add more cream until the polenta reaches the desired consistency. Season with more salt to taste. If using, grate a handful of Parmesan in the polenta and mix to combine.
5. Serve right away.
6. To reheat the polenta, simply microwave it or cook it in a saucepan with a splash of milk, cream and water.