

Creamy Butternut Squash Polenta with Wilted Spinach

Toasted Pumpkin Seed Oil

serves 4

For the polenta

3 cups spring water
1 cup vegetable broth in cartons (Pacific Organic)
1 cup corn grits for polenta
1 cup butternut squash purée (see cook's note)
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan
1 tablespoon crème fraîche
1 teaspoon sea salt or to taste
freshly ground black pepper to taste

For the wilted spinach

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 large garlic cloves – skinned and finely chopped
1/4 teaspoon hot Hungarian paprika
1/2 teaspoon sweet Hungarian paprika
8 oz baby spinach – rinsed and spun dry
1/4 teaspoon sea salt or to taste

toasted pumpkin seed oil as garnish

Step 1: Bring the water and broth to a boil in a heavy-bottom saucepan. As soon as the mixture boils, add the corn grits. Whisk vigorously until the mixture starts to thicken. Reduce the heat to medium and gently simmer the polenta, stirring frequently, for 15 minutes until it is thick and *al dente*. Add the salt, butternut squash puree, parmesan, crème fraîche, salt and black pepper. Stir well until well incorporated. Remove from heat and keep warm.

Step 2: Heat a large heavy-bottomed skillet over high heat. Add the oil, garlic and both paprikas. Sauté for 30 seconds to 1 minute until the garlic softens, but doesn't brown. Add the spinach and salt and toss until just wilted. Remove from heat and transfer to a bowl.

Step 3: Spoon the polenta into bowls. Top with the wilted spinach and spoonful of the juices. Drizzle with the pumpkin seed oil and serve immediately.

Cook's note: *To make fresh butternut squash purée, cut squash in half lengthwise and scoop out seeds. Place cut side down in a large baking dish with spring water (1/4" up the sides of the squash). Bake at 375°F for 50 to 60 minutes until very tender. Let cool, scoop out the flesh and purée in a food processor until very smooth. Refrigerate in Tupperware for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 1 month.*