



## Crispy Polenta Cakes

By Erin Fletter

**Prep Time 5 / Cook Time 5 / Serves 4 - 6**

### Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**slice:** to cut into thin pieces using a sawing motion with your knife.

**measure:** to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

**fry:** to cook in a pan in a small amount of fat.

**crisp:** to cook food until it becomes dry and firm and snaps easily if broken.

### Equipment

- Nonstick skillet + lid
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Measuring spoons
- Heat-resistant spatula

### Ingredients

#### Crispy Polenta Cakes

- 1 tube precooked polenta
- salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 2 T olive oil
- 1/2 C grated Parmesan cheese, optional \*\*(Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY or sub 1/2 C dairy-free/nut-free grated Parmesan cheese)\*\*

# Food Allergen Substitutions

## Crispy Polenta Cakes

**Dairy:** Omit optional 1/2 C Parmesan cheese OR substitute 1/2 C dairy-free/nut-free grated Parmesan cheese.

## Instructions

### Crispy Polenta Cakes

#### slice + measure

Open **1 tube of polenta**. Slice the polenta into disks. Make sure to slice at least 1 disk for each person. Then, sprinkle them with **salt, black pepper**, and **2 tablespoons of olive oil**.

#### frying safety

Make sure always to have your skillet lid nearby. Smoke and splatter are hazardous and need to be treated with care. As soon as you finish using the fryer oil, remove the skillet from the heat to ensure it cools as quickly as possible.

#### fry + crisp

After the polenta is sliced and seasoned, carefully place the polenta cakes into a nonstick skillet over medium heat with any remaining olive oil on your cutting board to get the cakes nice and crispy. Fry the polenta cakes for 3 to 5 minutes on both sides and serve with **Ava's Puttanesca Sauce** and a sprinkle of optional **Parmesan cheese**! "Buon appetito" (Bwohn ap-peh-TEE-toe) or "Enjoy your meal" in Italian!

## Featured Ingredient: Cornmeal!

Hi! I'm Cornmeal!

"I'm made from ground corn—either yellow, white, or blue! I can be coarse, fine, or somewhere in-between. Did you know that I'm in some of your favorite foods, like tacos, tamales, tortilla chips, corn puffs, and cornbread?!"

Cornmeal is a coarse flour or meal made from grinding corn. Native Americans first ground corn in the Americas a few thousand years ago.

The most common variety of cornmeal in the US is steel-ground yellow cornmeal, which is ground between steel rollers, and the germ and hull (or husk) are removed during the process. The cornmeal may be enriched to return nutrients to it. Because the germ has been removed, which contains the fat, steel-ground cornmeal will not spoil as quickly as other types if kept cool and dry in an airtight container. Other types of cornmeal include white cornmeal (from more delicately flavored white corn), blue cornmeal

(from blue corn), and stone-ground cornmeal (ground between two stones, a coarser grain, and retains some of the germ and the husk).

The size of the grind will determine how much liquid the cornmeal will absorb. The finer the grind, the more absorbent it is.

Cornmeal can be used to make cornbread, batters for fried foods (like corn dogs), corn fritters, and hushpuppies. Cheetos are even made from cornmeal that has had the germ removed and been enriched with nutrients.

Grits is a porridge made from boiled white cornmeal that originated in the Southern United States. In Northern Italy, boiled yellow cornmeal called polenta is popular.

If corn is ground very fine, it is called corn flour. Masa harina or masa is finely ground corn that has been soaked and cooked in an alkaline solution, such as limewater. Masa is used to make corn tortillas, arepas, and tamales.

Whole-grain cornmeal, such as the stone-ground type, is a good source of fiber and protein.

Cornmeal does not contain gluten, but due to its coarseness, you can only use it in a limited way to replace wheat flour in some recipes.