

Polenta with caramelized onions and walnuts

I wish I could express how much I love this dish, but I'm afraid I'll fail to capture its pure earthiness, which is why I wrote about walking my kids to school instead. Polenta is so soothing, comforting, and soft, so gentle and warm, it's like a cozy blanket on the arm of your couch. When life throws you chaos, when work makes you nuts, when you're unsure, unstable, unable, make this dish. Sit quietly, and enjoy it. I promise you'll feel better.

Makes about 3 servings

3 cups cold water
1 teaspoon Kosher salt, divided
3/4 cup polenta (coarse cornmeal)
2 teaspoons butter
2 large yellow onions
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon brown sugar
1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
Handful of walnut halves, preferably toasted

In a medium nonstick (if possible) saucepan, bring water and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt to a boil. Slowly stream in the polenta, whisking all the while. Reduce the heat to low, and cook, stirring frequently (I use a nonstick whisk but you can use a heatproof spatula or wooden spoon), until the water is absorbed and the polenta is nice a creamy, about 20 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in the butter, and keep covered.

Meanwhile, thinly slice the onions. Place a large skillet over medium-high heat and add the olive oil. Toss in the onions, the remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt, and saute, stirring frequently, until soft, about 15 minutes. Reduce the heat as needed so the onions do not burn.

Then reduce the heat as low as possible. Add the brown sugar and balsamic, and continue to cook about 15 minutes longer, or until the onions are soft and becoming jammy and caramelized.

To serve, mound some polenta in a bowl, top with the onions, and sprinkle with some walnuts.