

GRAPE SOFRITO ON GRILLED POLENTA WITH MASCARPONE

This simple bite-size appetizer combines the flavors of a spicy, slow-cooked Spanish sofrito with the smoky flavor of a firm grilled polenta bite, balanced with the cool richness of mascarpone.

Yield: 12 pieces

Ingredients	Amounts
<i>Grape sofrito</i>	
Olive oil	½ cup
White onion	1 cup
Red bell pepper, cored and diced	1 cup
Green bell pepper, cored and diced	1 cup
Red grapes, quartered	1 cup
Black grapes, halved for garnish	¼ cup
Kosher salt	½ tsp.
Cayenne	a pinch
 <i>Polenta</i>	
Butter, for greasing dish	1 Tbsp.
Milk	3 cups
Bay leaf	1 ea.
Jalapeno, roasted, stemmed, seeded, and minced	1 ea.
Polenta	1 cup
Parmesan, finely grated	½ cup
Kosher salt	½ tsp.
Mascarpone	¼ cup

Method

1. *For the grape sofrito:* In a small heavy duty saucepan over medium heat, combine the olive oil, onions, and both peppers. Stir to combine, add a pinch of salt, and cook slowly for about 30 to 40 minutes, stirring occasionally and making sure the vegetables don't get any color; turn the heat lower if you start to get dark spots on the pan.
2. When the mixture is soft and very flavorful, remove from the heat and add 1 cup of the rinsed and quartered red grapes. Stir to combine and cook for another 3 to 4 minutes, just to combine the flavors and soften the grapes. Season with salt and remove from the heat.
3. *For the polenta:* Butter a 9- by 9-inch baking dish for cooling the finished polenta. In a small saucepot, combine the milk, bay leaf, and minced roasted jalapeno and bring to a simmer. Cook on low for about 5 minutes; add the polenta in a slow stream while stirring the milk slowly. Stir with a wooden spoon occasionally until the mixture becomes thick and the grain has absorbed all of the milk, about 30 minutes. Pour into the prepared dish and smooth out

the top of the warm polenta; chill for 2 hours. Cut into 1-inch circles and set aside for grilling.

4. Preheat a grill pan over medium-high heat. Cook the polenta bites on the hot grill pan for 4 minutes per side, making sure to get nice grill marks and good color.
5. *To serve:* Place 3 grilled polenta bites on a small plate and top with 1 tablespoon of the warm grape sofrito; add a small dollop of mascarpone and then a grape half. Serve warm or room temperature.