

## Polenta Canapé with Wild Mushroom & Gruyere - makes 24

1 ½ cups polenta

½ pound mixed wild mushrooms such as hedgehog, chanterelles, shitake, pioppini, trimmed and thinly sliced

1 shallot, thinly sliced

1 teaspoon packed fresh thyme leaves

1 teaspoon dried mushroom powder\*

3 tablespoons olive oil plus more for brushing

1 ½ cups shredded Italian fontina cheese

Microgreens for garnish

Bring 4 ½ cups water to boil in a large, heavy bottomed pot. Bring another 3 cups to a simmer in a small saucepan. Whisk in polenta to the large pot and reduce the heat until simmering slowly. Adjust the heat so it remains this way throughout the cooking process.

Whisk 1/3 cup or so of the simmering water into the polenta and stir well with a wooden spoon. Let the water absorb in and stir every so often, 5 minutes. Repeat this process for at least 45 minutes, until polenta is creamy and just pulls away from the sides. Add salt and pepper to taste. You may not use all the water in the small pan – usually 6 – 6 ½ cups is enough. The idea is to keep the polenta cooking for without getting too stiff, about 45 minutes, adding water as needed.

Put a drizzle of cold water in a 13 X 9 pan and pour out (it's like "greasing" the pan). Pour in the polenta smooth out the top and let cool about 10 minutes. Then refrigerate until cold and set, about 1 ½ hours.

Preheat the oven to 425°. In a small bowl, toss the mushrooms with the shallot, thyme, 3 tablespoons oil and mushroom powder, season with salt.

Remove the polenta to a cutting board and cut into 24 pieces. Transfer to a rimmed baking sheet that has been brushed with oil. Brush the tops of the polenta squares with oil, sprinkle with cheese, and top with mushrooms. Roast until polenta is crisp on the bottom, cheese is melted and mushrooms are golden, about 25 minutes. Garnish with microgreens. Serve immediately.

\* You can buy premade mushroom powder, or make it yourself whirling dried mushrooms in a coffee grinder or vitamix. Experiment with different dried mushrooms and learn which you like most.

