

Chicken With Garlicky Walnut Sauce On Polenta – A Glimpse Of Circassian Cuisine

Ingredients:

Difficulty: Easy
(serves 4)

For chicken:

500 gr. chicken breast (or another part of chicken you like)

1 lt. water

4 slices of bread, around 90 gr (I used whole wheat toast bread, you can use white bread too. But don't use rye bread or bread that has seeds in it.)

4 garlic cloves

3 tbsp olive oil

1 1/2 cups / 3 dl + 4 tbsp walnuts, coarsely crushed

salt, to taste

To serve (on top of chicken) - optional:

3 tbsp olive oil

2 tsp red pepper

For polenta:

4 cups / 4.8 dl water (you can use some of the water left from boiling chicken, explained below)

1 cup / 2.4 dl polenta (For instance you can find it in Ruohonjuuri or Ekolo in Hakaniemi)

1 tsp salt

2 tbsp butter

Instructions:

1. In a medium pot, put chicken and 1 lt. water and cook.
2. When the chicken is fully cooked, take chicken out and cool it down, keep the water.
3. Prepare the sauce, while chicken is cooling. Put 2 cups of the water from boiling chicken in a food processor. Add bread (break it down into smaller pieces), garlic cloves, olive oil and walnuts and process until the ingredients are well combined. It is not going to be a smooth sauce, it will be thick and it will have a texture.
4. Add salt according to your taste, process with salt just a little and the sauce is done!
5. When chicken is cooled, shred it into smaller pieces as seen in the picture.
6. Add the sauce and mix it well. The chicken is ready! We will later make a mini sauce for serving, but it is explained below.

7. Now comes polenta. You can make Circassian chicken a bit earlier than service, but polenta is better cooked right before serving because it thickens up rather easily and it is not so nice after a couple of hours (at least, for my taste..). So, in a medium pan, put 4 cups of water and 1 tsp salt. I used the remaining water from boiling the chicken and added more water to make 4 cups. You can do the same or you can use plain water only. Bring the salted water to a boil on medium high heat.

8. When the water is boiling, lower the heat to medium, add polenta while continuously whisking.

9. When it starts to thicken, use a wooden spoon to stir about one more minute.

10. Put the heat down to lowest, cover the pan with a lid and cook the polenta for about 20-25 minute, until it is smooth. Stir it with wooden spoon every 5 minutes (I learned this technique of cooking polenta from Chef John of Food Wishes).

11. When polenta is cooked, add butter and stir a bit, letting the butter melt into it. When all butter melts, take the pan from the heat and let it sit for about 5 minutes, then serve. You can put polenta and chicken side by side or chicken on top of polenta as I did.

12. For the final touch, completely optional (but I do recommend you do it), put 3 tbsp olive oil in a mini sauce pan and warm it on medium heat for about a minute. Add red peppers (you can add less than 2 tsp if you want it less spicy). Cook the pepper for a while with oil, stirring all the time. Cook as much as you want, but do not burn it. Spread on chicken dish - either on each served plate in portions or on the main serving dish the whole thing. Enjoy!