



Rustic Almond Polenta Cake with Orange Scented Peaches and Vanilla Cream

For Cake

- 3/4 cup coarse golden polenta (Moretti or Fondo de Toscana)
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup whole blanched almonds
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon almond extract (Nielsen Massey)
- 1 1/4 sticks (1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened
- 3 large eggs
- 3/4 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 325°F and butter an 8 1/2- by 4 1/2- by 3-inch loaf pan. Put a 24- by 3 1/2-inch strip of wax paper lengthwise down center of pan (to facilitate unmolding), leaving an overhang on each end.

In a food processor finely grind almonds with 1/4 cup sugar and almond extract. Add polenta, flour baking powder and salt. Pulse to combine.

Beat butter and remaining 1/2 cup sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed until combined well. Beat in eggs 1 at a time until just blended, then beat in vanilla. (Mixture will look curdled.) Add cornmeal mixture and stir and fold until just combined. Transfer batter to loaf pan, smoothing top, and bake in middle of oven until a tester comes out clean, about 1 hour. Cool cake in pan on a rack 5 minutes. Loosen edges with a knife, then use strips to carefully lift cake from pan onto rack.



For Peaches

- 6 peaches peeled and cut into 1 inch chunks
- 4 tablespoons of orange sugar (Qua Sud)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla bean paste (Nielsen Masey)

Stir all ingredients to combine. Let sit at room temperature to macerate flavors.



For Vanilla Cream

- 8 ounces heavy whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste

Combine cream, vanilla, and remaining 3 tablespoons sugar in large bowl. Whisk until soft peaks form.