



## Dinner Recipe: Polenta + Peppers

[Food & nutrition](#) / Andrew Skurka

This Italian-themed dinner recipe is very filling, making it ideal for long days and late in a trip, when appetites are big. It's unique and flavorful.

### Meal stats

- Recommended serving weight: 5.6 oz
- Total calories: 595
- Caloric density: 105 cal/oz

Like instant potatoes, polenta absorbs a significant amount of water, at a 4:1 volume ratio. So this meal cooks bigger than the two-ounce serving would suggest. Those wanting more calories or a higher caloric density should increase the quantity of olive oil, Parmesan, or nuts.



## Ingredients

Backpacking Recipes & Ingredients : Polenta and Peppers						
Ingredient	Ounces	Calories per oz	Comments	Allergy info	Where to buy	Buy online now
Polenta	2.00	104	Similar to grits, but more flavor		Grocery, Costco, online	<a href="#">Colavita Polenta</a>
Dried bell peppers	0.50	63	Red + green	Nightshade	Online	<a href="#">It's Delish</a>
Tomato powder	0.20	85	Concentrated savory flavor	Nightshade	Online, Natural Grocer	<a href="#">Naturevibe Botanicals</a>
Garlic	0.05	93	A little bit goes a long way	-	Ubiquitous	<a href="#">Kirkland Granulated</a>
Dried onion	0.10	95	Adds flavor	-	Spice aisle	<a href="#">365 Organic</a>
Vegetable bouillon	0.30	0	Powders easier to prep		grocery, amazon	<a href="#">Casa de Santa</a>
Olive oil	0.75	240	Boosts caloric density	-	Grocery, Costco	<a href="#">Bertolli Extra Virgin</a>
Parmesan	0.75	93	Pre-grated is most convenient	Dairy	Grocery, Costco, online	<a href="#">Kraft Grated</a>
Sun-dried tomatoes	0.50	0	Julienne cut = less field prep	-	Grocery, Costco, online	<a href="#">Bella Sun Luci Julienne Cut</a>
Cashews	0.50	150	Adds crunch and calories	Tree nut	Grocery, Costco, or online	<a href="#">Sincerely Nuts</a>
Universal Spice Kit	0.00	0	Salt, pepper, red pepper flakes	-	Grocery, Costco, online	<a href="#">1-oz HDPE bottles</a>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5.65</b>	<b>105</b>	-	-	-	-

Polenta and Peppers >

Chunks of dry salami are a wonderful addition to this meal, for both flavor and protein.

Tomato powder can be tricky to find in stores. It adds vital flavor, however, so don't skip it. It's most easily found online, is very shelf-stable, and can be used at home for pastas and risottos.

If you're feeling fancy, you can substitute the cashews for pine nuts. They'll change the flavor a bit, and make it more authentic. Cashews or almonds work just fine though if you don't want to spend the extra money.

One word of caution, make sure you're buying quick-cook grits. More traditional varieties can take upwards of 40 minutes to cook, and they're inedible if underdone.



Clockwise from top: Olive oil, parmesan, peppers, tomato powder, polenta

## At-home preparation

When solo, I bag all of the ingredients together save for the olive oil.

In a group, each member is given their own bag of polenta, peppers, and tomato powder. The remaining ingredients are communally carried, and distributed in the field.

To carry the olive oil, I recommend a Nalgene bottle (4 to 32 oz), which has a reliably tight screw-lid.



Individual serving, left: one bag of ingredients + bottle of olive oil. Group serving, all other bags and containers.

## Cooking instructions

For perfect consistency:

1. Add the olive oil at any time.
2. Bring 12 ounces of water to a boil.
3. Add polenta, peppers, and tomato powder, and return to a simmer for 30 or 60 seconds.
4. Remove from the heat and let sit for 5 to 10 minutes until the polenta has fully cooked.
5. Add the olive oil (if you have not already) and Parmesan, and enjoy.

By adding more than the recommended volume of water, like 16 ounces, all ingredients can be added at the start, then brought to a boil. Be careful of splatter as the polenta cooks, and stir regularly to avoid burning the polenta.

## Have questions or an experience with this meal? Leave a comment.

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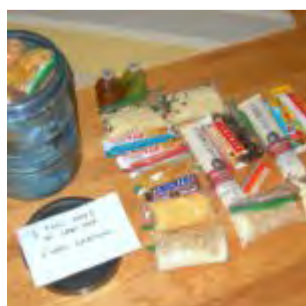
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