



Ava's Chickpea Puttanesca + Crispy Polenta Cakes + Italian Ice

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 25 / Cook Time 20 / Serves 4 - 6

Shopping List

FRESH

2 garlic cloves

5 to 6 roma tomatoes

2 handfuls fresh basil

2 lemons

DAIRY

1/2 C grated Parmesan cheese, optional **(see allergy subs below)**

PANTRY

1 15-oz can chickpeas (garbanzo beans) **(see allergy subs below)**

15 pitted Kalamata or black olives, or a mix

1 3.5-oz jar capers, for 2 heaping T + more to taste

1/4 C + 1/2 T granulated sugar + more to taste

1/4 tsp salt + more to taste

6 T olive oil

1 tube precooked polenta

ground black pepper to taste

HAVE ON HAND

2 C ice

2 to 3 C water

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

dice: to cut foods into small pieces of equal size so that the food is cooked evenly or looks uniform and pleasant when used in the recipe.

simmer: to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

tear: to pull or rip apart a food, like basil leaves, into pieces instead of cutting with a knife; cutting breaks cell walls more, so herbs can discolor faster.

garnish: to decorate a dish or plate of food to enhance its flavor or appearance, using things like parsley, fruit slices, or edible flowers.

slice: to cut into thin pieces using a sawing motion with your knife.

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

fry: to cook in a pan in a small amount of fat.

crisp: to cook food until it becomes dry and firm and snaps easily if broken.

blend: to stir together two or more ingredients until just combined; blending is a gentler process than mixing.

squeeze: to firmly press or twist a food with fingers, hands, or a device to remove its liquid, like shredded potatoes, frozen and thawed spinach, or tofu.

tear: to pull or rip apart a food, like basil leaves, into pieces instead of cutting with a knife; cutting breaks cell walls more, so herbs can discolor faster.

zest: to scrape off the outer colored part of a citrus fruit's rind (skin or peel) using a metal tool with small sharp blades, such as a zester, microplane, or the small holes of a grater (avoid the "pith," the white, spongy lining of the rind that can be bitter).

Equipment

Skillet

Can opener

Colander or strainer

Cutting board

Kid-safe knife

Measuring spoons

- Wooden spoon
- Nonstick skillet + lid
- Heat-resistant spatula
- Blender (or pitcher + immersion blender)
- Zester (or grater with small zesting plate/side)
- Citrus juicer (optional)
- Dry measuring cups
- Liquid measuring cup

Ingredients

Ava's Chickpea Puttanesca

- 1 15-oz can chickpeas (garbanzo beans) **(for LEGUME ALLERGY sub 1 zucchini OR 1 red bell pepper OR omit chickpeas)**
- 2 garlic cloves
- 5 to 6 roma tomatoes
- 15 pitted Kalamata or black olives, or a mix
- 4 T olive oil
- 2 heaping T capers, drained + more to taste
- 1/2 T granulated sugar + more to taste
- 1/4 tsp salt + more to taste
- 1 handful fresh basil leaves

Crispy Polenta Cakes

- 1 tube precooked polenta
- salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 2 T olive oil
- 1/2 C grated Parmesan cheese, optional **(Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY or sub 1/2 C dairy-free/nut-free grated Parmesan cheese)**

Awesome Basil-Lemon Italian Ice

- 1 handful basil leaves

- 2 lemons
- 1/4 C granulated sugar + more to taste
- 2 C ice
- 2 to 3 C water + more if needed

Food Allergen Substitutions

Ava's Chickpea Puttanesca

Legume: For 1 15-oz can chickpeas (garbanzo beans), substitute 1 zucchini OR 1 red bell pepper OR omit chickpeas.

Crispy Polenta Cakes

Dairy: Omit optional 1/2 C Parmesan cheese OR substitute 1/2 C dairy-free/nut-free grated Parmesan cheese.

Awesome Basil-Lemon Italian Ice

Instructions

Ava's Chickpea Puttanesca

rinse + drain + mince

Have kids rinse and drain **1 can of chickpeas**, then smash, peel, and mince **2 garlic cloves**.

dice + tear

Have kids dice **5 to 6 roma tomatoes** and **15 pitted Kalamata or black olives** into small bits. Have them tear **1 handful of basil leaves** and set them to the side.

add + cook + count

In a skillet, heat **4 tablespoons of olive oil** over medium-high heat. Add the **minced garlic**, 2 heaping tablespoons capers, 1/2 tablespoon sugar, **and** 1 teaspoon salt** and cook until tender; about 2 to 5 minutes. Count to 10 in Italian while you wait: 1 uno (OO-noh), 2 due (DOO-eh), 3 tre (treh), 4 quattro (KWAHT-troh), 5 cinque (CHEEN-kweh), 6 sei (SEH-ee), 7 sette (SET-teh), 8 otto (OHT-toh), 9 nove (NOH-veh), 10 dieci (dee-EH-chee).

stir + simmer + taste

Stir in the **drained chickpeas**, **diced tomatoes**, and **diced olives**. Bring the sauce to a boil, then reduce heat to low, add the lid, and let simmer for 8 to 10 minutes. Taste. Does it need more salt? More sugar? More capers?

top + garnish

After cooking pasta or frying **Crispy Polenta Cakes**, top the pasta or each polenta cake with a scoop of Ava's Chickpea Puttanesca and garnish with torn basil leaves! "È squisito" (EH skwee-ZEE-toh) or "It's delicious" in Italian!

Crispy Polenta Cakes

slice + measure

Open **1 tube of polenta**. Slice the polenta into disks. Make sure to slice at least 1 disk for each person. Then, sprinkle them with **salt**, **black pepper**, and **2 tablespoons of olive oil**.

frying safety

Make sure always to have your skillet lid nearby. Smoke and splatter are hazardous and need to be treated with care. As soon as you finish using the fryer oil, remove the skillet from the heat to ensure it cools as quickly as possible.

fry + crisp

After the polenta is sliced and seasoned, carefully place the polenta cakes into a nonstick skillet over medium heat with any remaining olive oil on your cutting board to get the cakes nice and crispy. Fry the polenta cakes for 3 to 5 minutes on both sides and serve with **Ava's Puttanesca Sauce** and a sprinkle of optional **Parmesan cheese**! "Buon appetito" (Bwohn ap-peh-TEE-toe) or "Enjoy your meal" in Italian!

Awesome Basil-Lemon Italian Ice

tear + zest + squeeze

With clean hands, have your kids tear **1 handful of basil leaves** and add them to a blender (or pitcher for use with an immersion blender). Then, have them wash and zest **2 lemons**, slice them in half, and squeeze their juice into the blender.

edible education

Citrus fruits, like oranges, lemons, and grapefruits, are popular for their bright flavors and nutritional benefits, including high levels of vitamin C and other antioxidants. They are also a good source of fiber and low in calories, making them a healthy addition to any diet. Citrus fruits are native to South and Southeast Asia and have been cultivated for thousands of years.

add + blend + taste

Have your kids add the **lemon zest**, **1/4 cup sugar**, **2 cups ice**, and **2 to 3 cups water** to your blender and blend until thick and smooth! Add more water if it's too thick. Taste and add more sugar if needed.

pour + cheers

Pour into cups. (It may be easier to pour from your liquid measuring cup, or use a spoon to scoop the Awesome Basil-Lemon Italian Ice into cups.) "Salute" (sah-LOO-teh) or "Cheers" in Italian!

Featured Ingredient: Chickpeas!

Hi! I'm Chickpea!

"Hmmm, I think I would like you to call me a Chickpea, not a garbanzo bean. Aren't little chicks so cute! You're probably familiar with me if you've ever eaten hummus. It's made with chickpeas! I'm a cute little seed that, when you combine a bunch of us, we can provide an excellent source of protein in your diet!"

History & Etymology

Chickpeas are a high-protein legume and the main ingredient in many Middle Eastern and Mediterranean dishes. They may also be called garbanzo beans.

Evidence of domesticated chickpeas from about 9,500 years ago has been found in Turkey and the Levant (an area bordering the Mediterranean Sea in Western Asia).

The word "chickpeas" comes from the early 18th century, and earlier was "chiche-pease," which came from late Middle English "chiche," from the Middle French "pois chiche," from the Latin "cicer."

The word "garbanzo" is Spanish for "chickpea," and the word "hummus" is Arabic for "chickpea."

Anatomy

A chickpea is a round, yellow-tan seed that grows in pods on a legume plant that can grow from 8 to 20 inches high. One pod holds two to three seeds.

Chickpeas are grown around the world, and there are dozens of varieties, including a black one from southern Italy called "ceci neri."

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Chickpeas taste like a bean, but they also have a nutty flavor, and their texture, when cooked, is described as soft and creamy or buttery. For Middle Eastern dishes, dried chickpeas are often boiled and mashed to make hummus, or they are soaked and then ground into flour to make falafels.

You can add cooked or canned chickpeas to salads, roasted veggies, soups, stews, pasta, or rice dishes. You can also roast chickpeas and eat them as a snack. In the Middle East, roasted chickpeas are called "leblebi."

Nutrition

Chickpeas provide almost 9 grams of protein in a 3.5-ounce serving. They are available either dried or canned. Because they are high in protein, chickpeas are often added to animal and bird feed.

Chickpeas have loads of dietary fiber! So what is fiber good for? Smooth digestion! It helps the body absorb the vitamins and nutrients it needs to be strong and healthy.

Chickpeas are also good sources of folate (vitamin B9), manganese, phosphorus, and iron.