

# POLENTA-PLUM OLIVE OIL CAKE/PIE

Serves 8-10

**REMEMBER, BEST PRACTICE: READ THE RECIPE ALL THE WAY THROUGH BEFORE YOU START COOKING!**

That's right, a cake/pie. Best of both worlds: the texture (and ease) of a cake with the interior (and goosebumpiness) of a pie. Start by making a simple stovetop jam, which simulates a pie filling when baked into a cornmeal-flecked, olive oil-based batter.

I love using red-fleshed plums or pluots. If you can find them, Santa Rosa plums are my favorite. Other stone fruit can be subbed in, sure, but there's a magical thing that happens when you turn fresh plums to jam...

This cake/pie is best eaten the same day it is made.

**2 pounds firm but ripe plums (pluots are also great here)**

**1 cup granulated sugar, divided**

**Kosher salt**

**1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus additional for greasing pan**

**3/4 cup all-purpose flour**

**1/3 cup medium grind polenta or cornmeal**

**1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder**

**3/4 cup whole milk**

**Ice cream, crème fraîche, or unsweetened whipped cream, for serving**

1. Cut 2 pounds of plums in half and twist to open. If fruit is super ripe, work over a bowl to catch any juices. Using your fingers or a small spoon, remove the pits and discard. Cut each half into fourths.

2. Add half of the sliced plums to a medium pot, along with any accumulated juices. (The remaining plums you'll add at the very end of cooking.) Add 1/4 cup sugar, a generous pinch of salt, and stir to combine. Place over high heat. After about 1 minute, when the mixture begins to sizzle, give the plums a stir and cover with a lid. Reduce heat to medium and let cook, 5 minutes.

3. Uncover the pot. Adjust heat to maintain a brisk simmer. Cook, gently stirring occasionally, until plums are broken down, the mixture has reduced, and the juices have become more concentrated, about 8 to 10 minutes. (You can tell that the jam has turned more viscous if the bubbles in the pot appear slightly larger and more syrupy than when you first uncovered the pan.)

4. Add the reserved cut plums, gently fold to combine, and cook for 1 minute. The slices will soften as they sit but you want them to retain their shape, so don't overcook. Remove from the heat and let sit until the jam has cooled a bit. (You should have between 2 1/2 and 2 3/4 cups of jam.) If desired, hasten the cooling by scraping the mixture into a heatproof container and transferring to the refrigerator. This step can be done up to 2 days in advance. Keep mixture chilled, covered, until ready to bake.

5. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees with a rack in the center. Lightly grease a 9-inch x 2-inch cake pan with olive oil. Cut a round of parchment to fit into the bottom of the pan and lightly grease.

6. In a medium bowl, whisk to combine  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup flour,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup cornmeal, 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons baking powder, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt. To a large bowl, add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup olive oil, the remaining  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk. Whisk to combine. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and whisk until smooth.

7. Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan. With a spoon, dollop mounds of the jam mixture all over the top, creating pockets of plum and letting pockets of batter shine through. It will seem like a lot of plums— don't worry, you're doing this correctly! Using a toothpick or skewer, gently swirl the pockets of jam into the batter, just ever so slightly. Don't over-swirl: your aim is to disperse the jam just a bit into the batter, not mix the jam and batter together.

8. Transfer pan to the oven and bake, rotating halfway through, until the cake parts of the pan are golden brown on the edges and beginning to turn golden in the center, about 50-60 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool until the bottom of the pan is warm to the touch, about 1 hour. If cut when too hot, the cake/pie may not hold its shape. Cut into wedges and serve, with ice cream, crème fraîche, or unsweetened whipped cream. Cake/Pie is best consumed the same day it is made.

If you want to invert onto a cake plate for serving, let the cake/pie cool until the bottom of the pan is only slightly warm to the touch. Run a knife around the edge to loosen. Place a large, flat plate over the top of the pan and flip to invert, so that the top of the cake/pie is now face-down. Remove the parchment round. Working swiftly, place your serving plate or cake stand on top of the cake/pie and, gently holding the two plates with the cake/pie now sandwiched between, flip to re-invert, so that the top is facing up again.

# NOODLE