

## Hearty Mediterranean Stew

If you're looking for a quick and easy meal that keeps hunger at bay, check out this 25-minute marvel. Savory spices complement hearty chickpeas and polenta in this Mediterranean-inspired entrée. Chickpeas, a great source of fiber, are packed with protein and are low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Studies have shown that diets high in fiber may decrease risk for colorectal cancer. This recipe serves four, or easily stores as leftovers for another meal entirely.

### Mediterranean Chickpea Stew with Polenta

3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, divided  
2 cups diced eggplant  
2 cups diced zucchini  
1 cup chopped onions  
1 medium red bell pepper, seeded and diced  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
1 tsp. dried oregano  
1 tsp. ground paprika  
1/8 tsp. dried red pepper flakes  
1 can (28-oz.) plum tomatoes (with no added salt)  
2 Tbsp. tomato paste (with no added salt)  
1 can (15-oz.) chickpeas, rinsed and drained Salt and ground black pepper  
1 tube (17-oz.) prepared polenta, cut into 8 slices  
1 Tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley, for garnish

In small Dutch oven, heat 1 tablespoon of oil over medium-high heat. Add eggplant, zucchini, onions and bell pepper. Cover, reduce heat and cook until vegetables soften, 8 minutes. Add garlic, oregano, paprika and red pepper flakes. Holding a knife vertically, work it up and down in the can of tomatoes to chop coarsely. Add the tomatoes with liquid to vegetables. Mix in tomato paste and chickpeas. Cook until vegetables are soft but still hold their shape, 10 minutes. Season stew to taste with salt and pepper. The stew can be made up to 2 days ahead and reheated.

Meanwhile, brush polenta on both sides with oil. Heat a griddle or heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add polenta slices, in one layer, and cook until they begin to brown on bottom, 5 minutes. Turn and brown on second side, 4-5 minutes.

To serve, divide polenta among 4 wide, shallow bowls. Top each with one-fourth of the stew, garnish with parsley and serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings

Per serving: 390 calories, 12 g total fat (1.5 g saturated fat), 61 g carbohydrate, 11 g protein, 11 g dietary fiber, 500 mg sodium.