

# FABIO VIVIANI

## RESTAURATEUR | AUTHOR

Fabio Viviani has harbored a passion for food since his childhood in Florence, Italy. Between training in Italian and Mediterranean cuisines at top hospitality schools, working with culinary luminaries Alessandro Panzani and Saverio Carmagnini, Viviani also owned and successfully executed multiple concepts in Florence.

Best known for his participation in Bravo's *Top Chef* Seasons 5 and 8—earning the “Fan Favorite” title—his on-screen appearances and off-screen successes have propelled him to become one of the most influential culinary and hospitality names in the country.

Since coming to the U.S. in 2005, Viviani has launched over 40 hospitality ventures. In 2013, he teamed up with DineAmic Hospitality and launched Siena Tavern, Bar Siena, Prime & Provisions, Builders Building, and BomboBar in Chicago—the city he calls home. He has launched several full-service restaurants in major cities across the country, airport dining concepts, casino dining outlets with major gaming brands like PENN National Gaming and Morongo Casino and Resort; as well as developing culinary cuisines in Hilton's Curio hotels.

Viviani is a recurring guest on national television shows such as *Good Morning America*, *The Rachael Ray Show*, and numerous Food Network shows, including *Cutthroat Kitchen: All-Star Tournament*, which he won. Off-screen he is a regular headliner at global food events, and he has authored four successful cookbooks: *Café Firenze Cookbook*, *New York Times* best-seller *Fabio's Italian Kitchen*, *Fabio's American Home Kitchen* and, most recently, *Fabio's 30-Minute Italian*.

## MEATBALLS

1½ pounds 80% lean ground beef  
4 ounces whole milk ricotta cheese  
1½ cups Parmesan cheese, grated  
1½ cups panko bread crumbs  
1 whole egg  
3 large cloves garlic, minced  
2½ shallots or ¼ cup onion, finely minced  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ tablespoon black pepper  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
2½ cups finished tomato sauce  
1 bunch parsley, chopped, for garnish  
Extra virgin olive oil for drizzling

Place first nine ingredients in a medium-sized bowl or stand-up mixer with paddle attachment and mix thoroughly until completely combined and the mixture is uniformly firm.

Coat your hands in olive oil and form balls slightly bigger than a golf ball, about 1½–2 ounces each. In a 12-inch pan, sear the meatballs with a touch of olive oil. A light sear to firm them up is plenty.

Heat the tomato sauce in a saucepan over medium heat, then drop the meatballs into the sauce and add enough water (about ½ cup) to allow the sauce to reduce and simmer, but not so much that the sauce is completely liquid.

Cook for about 10 minutes on each side, using a spoon to cover the meatballs with the sauce as they simmer. Remove from heat and let rest for 5 minutes. Garnish with parsley.

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## POLENTA

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 tablespoon each of rosemary and sage, chopped  
1 tablespoon of butter  
4 quarts water  
1 pound instant polenta  
1 quart heavy cream  
2 cups Parmesan cheese, grated  
¼ pound (1 stick) butter

In a medium pot, add the olive oil, garlic, herbs, and 1 tablespoon butter. Cook on low heat for about 3 minutes. Add the water. Bring to a boil and slowly whisk in the polenta. Cook the polenta on low heat for about 5 minutes. Finish by adding the cream, remaining stick of butter, and Parmesan cheese. Season to taste.