

ROMAINE WRAPPED SEARED SCALLOPS

Serves 2 to 3.

By Dennis W. Viau; an original recipe.

Sea scallops (sometimes seen as divers' scallops) are expensive but delicious. This recipe is a quick and easy way to serve seared scallops for a light luncheon or a simple fish course.



Ingredients:

6 large “dry-pack”¹ (see Note at end) sea scallops (about 1 to 1½ ounces/28 to 43g) each

Salt and pepper

3 large Romaine lettuce leaves, trimmed of center rib

Oil for frying, such as corn oil or peanut oil

Italian salad dressing, preferably homemade (there is a recipe on my web site)

Directions:

Lightly season the scallops on both sides with salt and pepper.

Trim the lettuce leaves to remove the center rib, cutting each leaf in half from end to end.

Heat the oil in a heavy skillet until very hot, over medium-high heat. It should be nearly at the smoke point, about 400°F (200°C).

Arrange scallops in the hot oil and fry 2 to 2½ minutes, until a golden brown. Then turn and sear the other side.

Place half a Romaine leaf on a clean surface and spoon a small amount (maybe half a teaspoon) of salad dressing down the center. (This is where a good homemade salad dressing, rich in herbs, will flavor the dish well.) Arrange a seared scallop (it should be hot from the pan) on the leaf, toward the white stem end, and roll toward the green end, encasing the scallop in the leaf. Continue until all the scallops are rolled.

Plate and serve immediately. For a light side dish you could include sliced tomatoes dressed with extra virgin olive oil, salt, and pepper, or make a rice pilaf or soup.

The **Step-by-Step** begins on the following page.

STEP-BY-STEP

1



The ingredients couldn't get much simpler. I am using my own homemade salad dressing (the recipe is on my web site) because it is rich in herbs, which work well in this dish.

2



Use clean, fresh Romaine lettuce leaves and cut lengthwise to remove the center spine or rib from each leaf. This will also divide each leaf into two pieces.

3



This is my homemade salad dressing. It is made with several dried herbs. The recipe is on my web site, currently in the Recipe Archive under the “Basics” heading. I’m using a spoon here because it will be easier to put just a small amount on the Romaine lettuce leaves.

4



Heat a skillet to about 400°F (200°C) and add the oil. Use a high temperature oil, such as pure olive oil, corn oil, safflower oil, or peanut oil. Don’t fry at high temperature with extra virgin olive oil. It has a low smoke point and will burn. Clarified butter is okay for frying, but not whole butter—it will burn.

Place the scallops, one flat side down, in the hot oil and sear 2 to 2½ minutes. Then turn and sear the other side. Fry only until the flesh is cooked all the way through. Then remove from the heat and start wrapping.

5



Spoon a small amount of salad dressing down the center of one Romaine leaf half and place a scallop on the leaf toward the white stem end.

6



Roll up the leaf, encasing the scallop. Arrange on a plate for serving.

7



Two to three of these scallops is enough for a serving at a light luncheon, especially if accompanied with a light side dish of soup, rice, or some sliced tomatoes garnished with extra virgin olive oil.

8



Conclusion

This quick and simple dish makes an excellent lunch for a small, intimate get together. It can be prepared in minutes.

Notes

¹ The scallops often sold in the fish case at the grocery store are typically “wet-pack” scallops. They are treated with a sodium tripolyphosphate solution that gives them a longer shelf life. The solution makes the scallops hold more liquid (which makes them weigh more so that they sell for more). When you try to sear them the liquid oozes out and, at best, you can only steam them. “Dry-pack” scallops are not treated. They sear more easily. Reliable fish stores usually sell fresh dry-pack scallops, but they are expensive. Quick-frozen scallops will often suffice, thawed, because they are frozen soon after harvest, therefore not needing the sodium tripolyphosphate treatment.