

Seared Sea Scallops with Brown Butter Caper Sauce

Ingredients

- 6 Tbsp (3 ounces) unsalted butter
- 2 Tbsp canola oil, rice bran oil, or other high smoke point oil
- 1 pound sea scallops (about a dozen)*
- 3/4 cup dry white wine
- 2 Tbsp capers, drained
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest

Directions

Cut up the butter into pieces and place in a stainless steel saucepan. Melt the butter on medium heat. Allow the butter to foam up and recede. Watch carefully. After a few minutes, the milk solids will form and sink to the bottom.

Once the milk solids begin to turn caramel-colored brown, the butter will have a lovely nutty aroma. Remove from heat and pour the browned butter into a separate bowl to stop the cooking. (Pay attention. If you wait too long, you'll have blackened butter, not browned butter.) Set aside.

Remove the "foot" of the scallop from each scallop. (The foot is a small tough piece of meat that attaches the scallop to the shell.) Pat dry the scallops.

Heat the oil in a sauté pan on high heat. When the oil is shimmering hot (not quite smoking hot, but close), pat dry the scallops again and carefully place them in the pan, flat side down. (If the oil gets so hot that it does begin to smoke, remove the pan from the heat, and turn down the heat a notch before returning the pan to the burner.) You may need to work in batches so you don't crowd the pan. Once you've placed the scallops in the pan, do not move them. Allow them to sear. Once you can see that the edges of the scallops touching the pan have browned, use tongs to turn the scallops over and sear the other side. Depending on the size of the scallops and the heat of your burner, this should take 3 to 4 minutes per side. Once both sides are browned, remove the scallops and set aside. Pour out the remaining oil from the pan, leaving any browned bits in the pan. Add the white wine to the pan and return the pan to the burner on high heat. Let the wine boil and reduce until you have 2 tablespoons of liquid left in the pan. Then turn off the heat, add the capers, lemon zest, and browned butter to the pan. Swirl to combine.

Place scallops on serving plates and pour sauce over them. Serve immediately.

