

Buttery Scallops With Lemon and Herbs

By Melissa Clark

Total Time 15 minutes

Rating ★★★★★ (451)



Christopher Simpson for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Simon Andrews.

Simple and very speedy, this dish shows off the sweetness and delicacy of fresh sea scallops, seasoned with only lemon, garlic, herbs and a sprinkle of red-pepper flakes. A little butter gives it a touch of richness, while the grated lemon zest adds brightness and a jolt of acid. You can serve this with a big green salad for a light meal, or over buttered noodles or mashed potatoes for something more substantial.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 servings

2 pounds sea scallops, patted dry
Salt and black pepper
4 to 5 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons minced thyme leaves
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, plus lemon wedges for garnish
2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest
Pinch of red-pepper flakes
½ cup chopped soft herbs (such as basil, chives, mint or cilantro), for garnish

PREPARATION

Step 1

Season scallops lightly on both sides with salt and pepper.

Step 2

Heat a large, preferably nonstick skillet over medium-high. Add 3 tablespoons butter and let melt. Place seasoned scallops in the pan in a single layer without touching. (Do this in batches if necessary, using another tablespoon of butter if needed for the second batch.) Cook without moving until bottoms are golden brown, 3 minutes.

Step 3

Flip the scallops and add another tablespoon of butter to the pan. Stir in garlic and thyme, and cook until the garlic is fragrant, about 1 minute longer.

Step 4

If you took any of the scallops out of the pan to cook them in batches, put them back in now. Pour lemon juice on top of all the scallops, sprinkle with the lemon zest, and toss everything gently to combine.

Step 5

Transfer scallops to serving plates and sprinkle red-pepper flakes on top. Garnish with chopped soft herbs and lemon wedges, and serve immediately.