

Seared Scallops

Learn to make perfect pan-seared scallops with golden crust and tender centers. Ready in 10 minutes with garlic butter sauce. Restaurant-quality results at home.

5 min

PREP

5 min

COOK

10 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Seared Scallops

Ingredients

- 1 lb scallop
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 clove garlic
- 1 tbsp fresh oregano
- 1 tbsp parsley
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the scallops**

Remove 1 lb scallops from refrigerator and pat completely dry with paper towels. Pull off the side muscle (a small rectangular flap) if still attached. Season both sides generously with salt and pepper, then let sit at room temperature for 10 minutes.
- 2** Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large stainless steel or cast iron skillet over high heat until the oil shimmers and begins to smoke lightly, about 2-3 minutes.
- 3 Sear the scallops**

Carefully place scallops in the hot pan, leaving at least 1 inch of space between each one. Do not move them for 2-3 minutes until a golden-brown crust forms on the bottom.
- 4** Flip scallops using tongs and sear the second side for 1-2 minutes until golden brown and the internal temperature reaches 120°F (49°C). Transfer scallops to a warm plate.
- 5 Make the garlic butter sauce**

Reduce heat to medium and add 1 tablespoon butter to the same pan. Swirl the pan and let the butter melt and turn light brown, about 30-45 seconds until it smells nutty.
- 6** Add 2 cloves minced garlic to the browned butter and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant but not burned. Stir in 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1 teaspoon fresh thyme, and 1 tablespoon chopped parsley.
- 7** Swirl the pan for 30 seconds to combine all sauce ingredients. Immediately spoon the garlic butter sauce over the scallops and serve.

Tips

Pat scallops completely dry with paper towels and let them air-dry for 10-15 minutes before cooking. Any surface moisture will prevent the golden-brown crust from forming properly.

Remove the side muscle from each scallop—this small, tough piece remains chewy even when properly cooked. Simply pull it away with your fingers before seasoning.

Heat your pan until the oil shimmers and just begins to smoke before adding scallops. This high heat creates the immediate sear needed for proper browning.

Don't move or flip the scallops for the first 2-3 minutes. Let them develop a proper crust before turning—they'll release naturally when ready.

Cook scallops in batches if necessary to avoid overcrowding the pan. Crowded scallops will steam rather than sear, preventing proper browning.

Use tongs or a thin spatula to flip scallops gently. They're delicate and can break apart if handled roughly during cooking.

Let the butter brown slightly before adding garlic and herbs to the sauce—this creates a nutty flavor that complements the scallops perfectly.

Serve immediately after saucing. Scallops continue cooking from residual heat, so prompt serving prevents overcooking and maintains the perfect texture.