

Scallops with Saffron Braised Fennel, Pancetta & Yogurt

Serves 4:

Ingredients

1/3 pound Italian pancetta, diced
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 medium fennel bulbs, tops removed, cut into wedges, leafy fronds reserved
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 large shallot, minced
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 thyme sprig
1 large pinch of Spanish saffron
1/2 cup chicken or vegetable stock
1 tablespoon grapeseed or vegetable oil
16 sea scallops, muscle removed
1 tablespoon good quality unsalted butter
1 cup 0% or 2% plain Greek yogurt, stirred
1 teaspoon sea salt, or to taste

Preparation

Add olive oil to large sauté pan over medium heat.

Add pancetta and cook to caramelize, stirring frequently, for about 5 minutes.

When pancetta is nicely browned, remove from pan using a slotted spoon and drain on paper towel.

Season fennel wedges with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Turn heat down to medium-low and add fennel to fat in pan.

Sauté until nicely browned, about 3 to 4 minutes on each side.

Stir shallot and garlic in with fennel, add thyme sprig and large pinch of saffron.

Sauté until shallot is softened, about 1 minute.

Add chicken or vegetable stock, cover pan, and simmer over low heat for 5 to 6 minutes.

Turn fennel over and cook for another 5 to 6 minutes, until tender.

In a large skillet, heat grapeseed oil over medium-high heat.

Rinse scallops and, using a small paring knife, remove tough muscle that's attached to side of scallop.

Dry them on paper towel, season with salt and pepper, and add to skillet.

Sauté until golden brown on one side, 1 to 2 minutes, then turn scallops over.

Add butter to pan and continue to cook, basting scallops with butter, another 2 minutes.

Mix Greek yogurt with crunchy sea salt and spoon onto plates, making a bed for other ingredients.

Top with the scallops, braised fennel and juices, and sprinkle on diced pancetta.

Garnish with fennel fronds.

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