

Seasonal Eating
Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

Herbs Make Scallops Sing in a Summer Supper
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I have a pot of chives on my back porch that my Dad gave me many years ago. It has had the most beautiful lavender blooms on it this month against the dark green chives. I don't have much of a green thumb but herbs are the one thing I do like to grow and luckily they don't take much care. In high school my brother had a foil bread pan with chives and parsley that he grew in the laundry room window – that's how easy they are to grow.

Whether you grow them yourself or purchase them in the store, chives, with their mild oniony flavor, are a favorite herb. They are especially useful in sauces where their flavor can shine and they add a green, fresh fleck that makes dishes appealing visually.



So the other night I made scallops with a Dijon Lime Sauce flecked with fresh chives. Scallops are an easy seafood to make with a slightly sweet and mild flavor. I purchase frozen sea scallops so that I can take out as many as I need and let them thaw overnight in the refrigerator. Drain off any liquid that accumulates in the bowl and rinse off the scallop. Check to see if it still has the side muscle attached. This will be a little piece along one side that pulls easily from the rest of the scallop. It is the muscle that was attached to the shell and is very tough. Some of mine had this piece and some did not.

To sear scallops successfully, they need to be dry or else they will steam instead of create a crust. Pat them on a paper towel before cooking and season with a little salt and pepper. Heat a thin layer of oil on medium high heat. Add the scallops and let them sit without moving for about 4 minutes for sea scallops (as opposed to bay scallops which are smaller and take a little less time). They should sizzle when you add them or else the oil isn't hot enough and don't crowd the pan too much or they will lower the temperature and steam instead of sear. Turn the scallops over and sear on the other side for 3-4 more minutes or until opaque through. Don't overcook or they will turn tough and chewy.

The sauce uses olive oil and Dijon mustard with sautéed garlic, lime juice and chives for a tangy counterpart. The mustard and lime juice are whisked together like a vinaigrette with olive oil drizzled in and then the cooked garlic and fresh chives are added. If the sauce is cooked together in the pan, it tends to separate into an oily mess.

So give growing herbs a try this summer and use those to make your dishes sing with flavor!

Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating (bedford.tennessee.edu).

Seared Scallops with Dijon Lime Sauce

12 frozen sea scallops, thawed
kosher salt
black pepper
1/4 cup + 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided
Juice of 1 lime
2 teaspoons Dijon style mustard
2 cloves garlic, pressed or minced
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

Drain scallops of any liquid, rinse and remove side muscle if still on the scallop. Pat dry on paper towels and season with salt and pepper on both sides. In a medium skillet, heat 1 teaspoon of olive oil over medium high heat. Add the seasoned scallops and cook, without moving, for 4 minutes. Turn over and cook for another 3-4 minutes until browned and sides are opaque. Remove to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm. Add the garlic to the pan and sauté for a minute. In a medium bowl, whisk together the lime juice, mustard and a pinch of salt and pepper. Add the sautéed garlic. Slowly whisk in the remaining 1/4 cup olive oil and add the chives. Pour the sauce onto 2-3 plates and add several scallops to each plate. Serve immediately.