

SEARED SCALLOPS WITH CELERY ROOT-MASHED POTATOES

You can make this dish with your go-to recipe for mashed potatoes, but when serving succulent, sweet (and expensive) scallops, why not up your game? If you can find fresh horseradish root, substitute a 3-ounce piece, peeled and grated, for the prepared horseradish. Add the fresh grated horseradish to the potatoes and celery root as they're cooking.

Richards likes a mix of potatoes in his mashed potatoes, but you can use whatever you have on hand. If you can find large Sicilian capers, packed in salt, use those in place of the small nonpareil capers packed in a jar with brine. Soak the Sicilian capers in water for about 20 minutes before using.

Sea scallops are the large members of the scallop family, reaching up to 2 inches in diameter. There could be between 10 and 40 scallops in a pound. Do not try this recipe with bay scallops, the smaller member of the family with between 70 and 120 scallops to the pound.

Murphy notes that only "dry" scallops will sear to a beautiful brown. "They're referred to as 'dry' meaning they haven't been soaked in sodium tripolyphosphates, known as STP in the seafood business. A large percentage of scallops are soaked and when cooked will only create bubbles and produce liquid rather than searing." Check with your fishmonger to be sure you are getting the right scallops.

Some of your scallops may have a narrow ribbon of ligament attached. Remove



STYLING BY CHEF CRAIG RICHARDS / CONTRIBUTED BY RENEE BROCK

it before cooking as it will become tough and ruin the texture of your beautiful seared scallops.

1 ¼ pounds mixed russet, Yukon Gold, and white-skinned potatoes, peeled, cut into 2-inch cubes

½ pound celeriac (celery root), peeled, cut into ¾-inch cubes

Kosher salt and pepper

1 ½ cups sour cream

3 tablespoons Dijon mustard

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided

1 tablespoon prepared horseradish

1 ½ pounds sea scallops

2 tablespoons olive oil, divided

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

½ cup capers

Juice of ½ lemon

¼ cup Italian parsley leaves

2 lemons, cut in half, cut surface charred

Parsley sprigs, for garnish

In a large saucepan, combine potatoes and celery root and add lightly salted water to cover by 1 inch. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-high and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 25 minutes.

Drain, reserving 1 cup

cooking liquid.

Use a potato ricer to mash cooked vegetables back into saucepan. Add sour cream, mustard, 2 tablespoons butter and horseradish. Adjust consistency by adding reserved cooking liquid if needed. Season to taste and keep warm while cooking scallops.

Pat scallops dry and sprinkle with ½ teaspoon salt and pepper to taste.

In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking. Saute half the scallops, turning once, until browned and just cooked through, about 5 minutes total. Use tongs to transfer scallops to a plate. Keep warm.

Wipe out skillet, heat remaining tablespoon oil until hot but not smoking, and saute remaining scallops. Add them to the other scallops and keep warm.

Do not wipe out skillet. Add remaining 2 tablespoons butter and melt over medium-high heat until it begins to bubble. Add capers and cook until capers begin to crisp and butter turns brown and smells nutty. Remove from heat and squeeze in lemon juice. Stir in parsley, taste and adjust seasoning with salt. Divide mashed potatoes between warm serving plates, top with scallops and drizzle with caper-butter sauce. Serve with charred lemon to squeeze over scallops. **Serves: 4**

Per serving: 703 calories (percent of calories from fat, 55), 36 grams protein, 44 grams carbohydrates, 4 grams fiber, 44 grams fat (23 grams saturated), 141 milligrams cholesterol, 698 milligrams sodium.