

SCALLOPS WITH MUSHROOMS IN WHITE WINE SAUCE

This is a delicious recipe that is also very versatile. It was originally intended as an appetizer or first course, but can easily be adapted for a main course. Either way, it's worth all the dishes it'll make!

INGREDIENTS:

1/3 Cup Bread Crumbs
1/3 Cup grated Parmesan Cheese
1 1/4 Cup Dry White Wine
1/2 Cup Water
1/2 small Onion, sliced
1/2 Bay Leaf
1 clove Minced Garlic
1/2 teaspoon Salt
1/4 teaspoon Black Pepper
1/2 Tablespoon White Vinegar
2 Tablespoons Olive Oil
1 pound Sea Scallops (Bay Scallops will do)
1/2 pound small Mushrooms, cut in half, then sliced lengthwise
3 Tablespoons Butter
1/2 Cup Cream (half and half is OK, and is lower in fat)
1 large Egg Yolk
1 Tablespoon Flour
1 1/2 Tablespoons fresh minced Parsley

Bring to a boil the wine, water, bay leaf, onion, garlic, salt and pepper in a 2 1/2 to 3 quart sauce pan, then reduce temperature and simmer for 5 minutes. If you wish to poach your scallops (very French, and keeps scallops quite tender) add them to the liquid, stirring occasionally until just cooked through, about 2-3 minutes. Transfer the scallops to a platter to cool. Add 1/2 Tablespoon vinegar to the sauce, bring it to a boil and reduce to 1 cup of liquid. Pour liquid through a sieve into a bowl.

The alternative to poaching the scallops is to braise them. Put 2 Tablespoons olive oil into a frying pan over medium heat. Place scallops into hot oil and check every 30 seconds or so. When they are golden brown, turn them over and cook the other side. Remove from heat and place on a paper towel to drain and cool. I like this method best because I like the little bit of extra texture and the color is very nice too. You can even throw a clove of minced garlic in the oil for a little extra flavor.

Cook the mushrooms in 1 Tablespoon of butter in a 10 - 12 inch heavy skillet over moderate heat, stirring occasionally until most of the liquid the mushrooms give off is evaporated, about 5 minutes. Season with a bit of salt and pepper.

In a heatproof bowl, whisk together the cream and egg yolk. In a cleaned 2 ½ - 3 quart sauce pan, melt 2 Tablespoons butter over medium heat, then add flour to make a roux. Whisk for 2 minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat. Add the reduced cooking liquid into the saucepan in a stream, whisking constantly. Return the saucepan to the heat and simmer while whisking for 1 minute. Now slowly pour the sauce into the bowl with the cream and egg mixture while whisking constantly. This is called tempering. If you were to just pour it all together, the yolk would turn into scrambled eggs (Yuck). Now pour all the sauce into the saucepan and simmer while whisking for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and taste it. Season with salt and pepper as necessary.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine the scallops, mushrooms parsley, and sauce, and divide among 8 small ramekins for appetizers, 4 large ramekins for a main course, or pour into a greased 9 by 9 pan if you would like to serve this with pasta.

Combine the bread crumbs and the parmesan cheese and sprinkle over the top of the scallop mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 -15 minutes or until bubbly. If you would like to brown the top, turn the broiler on low, and check every 30 seconds. DO NOT GET DISTRACTED! It will brown and then burn quite quickly if you don't pay close attention.

The consistency of this dish as it is written is perfect to serve with or on pasta. A great accompaniment is some sautéed garlic and spinach mixed with angel hair pasta and tossed with Parmesan cheese. If you are planning on serving this as an appetizer and you would like the sauce a bit thicker, consider using 1 ½ or 2 Tablespoons of flour when you are making the roux. If it comes out too thick, you can slowly add milk until it is the desired consistency.