

Fettucine with Scallops in a Lemony Cream

from *The Four Seasons of Pasta* by Nancy Harmon Jenkins and Sara Jenkins

NOTE: Look for untreated fresh scallops, called “dry scallops,” as opposed to wet ones. Wet scallops have been treated with phosphates to extend their shelf life; they have no flavor and moreover will not cook properly. Sweet little bay scallops are best in this recipe but if you can only find big sea scallops, cut them in quarters before cooking. If scallops are unavailable, you could substitute fresh shrimp, cutting them in half the long way, head to tail, if they are very large.

Chervil adds a wonderful slightly anise-like flavor to scallops but it is not always easy to find. If unavailable, use flat-leaf parsley.

Serves 6.

1 pound scallops
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons finely minced shallots (1 or 2 plump shallots)
About 1 pound (500 grams) fettucine or linguine
¼ cup cream
½ cup pasta cooking water
2 tablespoons grated lemon zest
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
2 tablespoons finely minced chervil, if available; otherwise use flat-leaf parsley
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Prepare the scallops, if necessary, as indicated in the head note, cutting large sea scallops in quarters. Dry the scallops thoroughly with paper towels.

Set a sauté pan over medium-high heat with 2 tablespoons of oil. Let the oil get very hot, add the scallops and sear on both sides, turning once. As the scallops finish cooking, remove and set aside in a warm place.

Turn the heat down to medium-low and add the remaining oil to the pan along with the minced shallots. Cook, stirring, until the shallots are soft and melting but do not let them brown. Add the cream, stirring it in, and bring to a simmer. Set aside but keep warm while you make the pasta.

Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil and cook the pasta according to package directions. While the pasta is cooking, bring the shallot cream to a simmer once again. Add the lemon zest, lemon juice, and chervil or parsley, and a ladleful of pasta cooking water. Cook just long enough to thicken the sauce, then stir in the scallops. Add salt and pepper to taste.

When the pasta is al dente, drain it and transfer to a warm serving bowl. Combine with the scallop sauce, mixing and turning the pasta to coat it with the lemon cream. Serve immediately.