

## **Lime Seared Scallops Over Baby Spinach**

These plump white scallops are presented in a nest of bright green barely cooked spinach leaves. Crispy sweet caramelized walnuts create sharp contrast to the tender mollusks, which have been marinated in tart lime zest and tarragon. You may substitute peeled fresh shrimp for the sea scallops if you prefer. Marinate the scallops for only 30-45 minutes to flavor, otherwise the acid in the lime will "cook" the scallops much like ceviche.

### **Marinade for Scallops:**

- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1 small minced shallot
- 2 sprigs fresh minced tarragon or 1/2 teaspoon dried tarragon leaves
- 1 teaspoon lime zest
- juice of 1 lime
- 2 pounds sea scallops

### **For the Garnish:**

- 1/4 cup walnut pieces
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons olive oil

### **For the Spinach:**

- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 clove minced garlic
- 1 1/2 pounds baby spinach leaves
- salt and pepper to taste

### **To prepare the marinade:**

Combine the olive oil, garlic, shallot, tarragon, lime zest and juice. Toss the scallops with the marinade and set aside in the refrigerator to marinate for no longer than 30-45 minutes.

Meanwhile, caramelize the walnuts by placing them in a dry nonstick pan on medium heat. Sprinkle them with the sugar and cook until shiny and brown, about 4-5 minutes, shaking the pan continuously. Reserve these for the garnish.

### **To cook scallops:**

Heat a heavy-bottom pan over moderate heat for about 2 minutes. Add the 2 teaspoons olive oil to the pan and heat. Drain the scallops from marinade and rest them on a paper towel for a moment to dry. Gently add them to the pan, try not to crowd them together. Do not move them, as that makes the searing process more difficult. Cook them on one side for 2-3 minutes until the scallops are browned. Turn them over and repeat the process.

When cooked through and opaque, deglaze the pan by squeezing a lime over the scallops. Remove the scallops and the accumulated pan juices, and place on a covered plate to keep warm until the spinach is sautéed.

**To cook the spinach:**

Heat the olive oil in a hot pan, add the garlic and lightly brown. Immediately add the spinach and cook briefly until the leaves are wilted. Season with the salt and pepper.

**To assemble:**

Form a nest with the sautéed spinach on each plate. Place a portion of the cooked scallops over the spinach, add a little of the pan juices, and top with the caramelized walnuts.