

SEA SCALLOPS WITH MUSHROOMS AND SHERRY

20 large sea scallops (1 1/2 lb), tough ligament removed if attached
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 stick (1/4 cup) unsalted butter
1 lb cremini mushrooms, quartered
1/3 cup finely chopped shallots
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2/3 cup medium-dry Sherry
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon soy sauce

Pat scallops dry and sprinkle with pepper and 1/4 teaspoon salt.

Heat oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then cook scallops, turning over once, until browned well and just cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes total. Transfer to a platter and loosely cover.

Heat 2 tablespoons butter in skillet over moderately high heat until foam subsides, then sauté mushrooms, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 4 minutes. Add shallots and garlic and sauté, stirring, 2 minutes. Add Sherry, vinegar, soy sauce, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, 2 minutes. Cut remaining 2 tablespoons butter into small pieces.

Remove skillet from heat and stir in butter until incorporated. Spoon sauce over scallops.

Makes 4 servings.

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