

Scallops, Crispy Prosciutto, Carrot Puree & Basil Oil

Looking for that impressive dinner party starter? Look no further! Pan seared scallops.....crispy and caramelised on the outside, melt in your mouth in the middle. Sweet, creamy carrot puree, the salty crunch of prosciutto and the gorgeous pungency and freshness of basil make this simple and YES! economical dish an absolute showstopper!!

Serves 4

12 large scallops (roe removed)
3 medium carrots, peeled and chopped into chunks
1 small garlic clove, peeled and roughly chopped
1/3 cup of salt reduced chicken stock
2 tbs of pure cream
1 tsp of butter
4 slices of prosciutto
1 cup of basil leaves
1/2 cup of extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp of lemon juice
Extra basil leaves (preferably the baby ones from the tops of the stalks)
Sea salt and cracked pepper

Place the carrots, garlic and stock in a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer, pop the lid on and allow to cook for approximately 12-14 minutes or until the carrots are very tender. Place the mixture into a blender and add the cream and butter. Season with a little salt and pepper, pop the lid on the blender and pulse a couple of times before allowing to run until you have a nice thick, smooth carrot paste. Have a taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary. I make this ahead and reheat briefly in the microwave just before serving.

Pre heat the oven to 180 degrees. Lay the prosciutto out on a lined baking tray and bake in the oven for 10 minutes or until crisp and golden. Keep your eye on it as it can burn quite quickly. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.

To make the basil oil, I use a mortar and pestle. You can use a blender or your knife and board and finely chop if you wish. Place the basil leaves in the mortar and pestle with a pinch of salt. Start to pound away until the leaves begin to break down and the natural oils are released. Add the lemon juice and half the olive oil and continue to grind away until you have a bright green oil with flecks of basil through it. Add the rest of the oil, season with pepper, give a stir and set aside.

Heat a non stick fry pan slowly until it is nice and hot. Place the scallops on a couple of sheets of paper towel, fold it over and pat them really well until they are nice and dry. Season with a little salt and pepper and place

them in the pan. The natural sugars in the scallops will give you that nice golden crust. Cook on each side for approximately 2 minutes. You don't want them to overcook and become rubbery.

To plate up, put three nice dollops of the carrot puree on each plate and top each mound with a scallop. Take a piece of prosciutto and crumble one over each plate before drizzling over the basil oil. Sprinkle a few basil tips over the plate and serve unless you have eaten them all yourself!