

Pan-Seared Scallops with Wilted Spinach, Watercress, and Orange Salad

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Sea scallops can vary dramatically in size from 1 to 1 ½ ounces each. A dinner portion, therefore, can range from 4 to 6 scallops per person. To ensure that the scallops cooks at the same rate, be sure to buy scallops of similar size. To remove the small, firm tendon from the scallop, gently tug at it -- it should easily peel away, (see illustration in last page).

Serves 8 as first course, 4 as main course

1. Prepare salad greens

4 ounces baby spinach (about 5 1/3 cups lightly packed)	Wash and dry spinach and watercress. If using arugula, cut crosswise to the length of the baby spinach.
4 ounces watercress (or arugula), washed, dried, and stemmed (about 4 cups lightly packed)	Toss the spinach and watercress together in a large bowl.
	Set aside.

2. Prepare almonds

3/4 cup sliced almonds	Toast the almonds in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat, shaking the pan occasionally, until fragrant and lightly browned, about 3 minutes.
	Transfer them to the bowl with the greens.
	Wipe out the skillet using a wad of paper towels.

3. Prepare oranges

2 large oranges	Cut thin slice from top and bottom, stand on end, and slice away rind and white pith.
	Cut in half from end to end, remove stringy pith, cut each half into three wedges, and cut crosswise into 1/4-inch pieces.

4. Prepare onion

1/2 medium red onion, sliced thin	Peel. Cut in half lengthwise.
	Trim root and stem ends. Lay cut side down on flat surface.
	Cut lengthwise in small intervals to produce thin strips..

5. Prepare scallops

1 1/2 pounds large sea scallops, (16 - 24 scallops) (see note), tendons removed (see illustration below)	Place the scallops on a paper towel-lined plate or baking sheet.
table salt and ground black pepper	Season the scallops with salt and pepper.
	Lay a single layer of paper towel over the scallops.
	Set aside.

6. Heat oil

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Add 2 tablespoons of the vegetable oil to the empty skillet.

Return to high heat until just smoking.

7. Brown dry side of first half of scallops

Meanwhile, press the paper towel flush to the scallops to dry.

Add half of the scallops, dry-side facing down.

Cook until evenly golden, 1 to 2 minutes.

8. Transfer half-browned scallops

Using tongs, transfer the scallops, browned side facing up, to a large plate.

Set aside.

9. Brown dry side of second half of scallops

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Wipe out the skillet using a wad of paper towels.

Repeat with the oil and the remaining scallops.

10. Brown second side of all scallops

Once the first side is golden, reduce the heat to medium.

Turn the scallops over with tongs.

Return the first batch of scallops to the pan, golden side facing up.

Cook until the sides on all the scallops have firmed up and all but the middle third of each scallop is opaque, 30 to 60 seconds longer.

Transfer all the scallops to a large plate. Set aside.

11. Prepare dressing

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
red onion, sliced thin
1 teaspoon fresh thyme, minced
½ teaspoon salt

Wipe the skillet clean with a wad of paper towels.

Add the olive oil, onion, thyme, and salt to the skillet.

Return to medium-high heat.

Cook until the onions are slightly softened, about 1 minute.

orange pieces
2 tablespoons sherry vinegar

Add the oranges and vinegar to the pan. Swirl to incorporate.

Remove from the heat.

Pour the warm dressing over the salad mixture.

Gently toss to wilt.

12. Plate and serve

Divide the spinach salad among four plates.

Arrange the scallops on top.

Serve immediately.

STEP BY STEP: Remove the Muscle From the Scallop



The small, rough-textured, crescent-shaped muscle that attaches the scallop to the shell is often not removed during processing. You can readily remove any muscles that are still attached. If you do not, they will toughen slightly during cooking.

STEP BY STEP: Sauté Scallops



When sautéing scallops, make sure not to overcrowd the skillet or they will not brown properly. Use tongs to turn the scallops in the sauté pan.

STEP BY STEP: Cut Oranges

Step 1: Cut thin slice from top and bottom, stand on end, and slice away rind and white pith.



Step 2: Cut in half from end to end, remove stringy pith, cut each half into three wedges, and cut crosswise into 1/4-inch pieces.

