

Seared Sea Scallops with Gingered Pea Purée and Cilantro Gremolata

By TasteFood

Food52 Editors' Comments: WHO: TasteFood is a seasoned traveler and food blogger living in the Bay Area. WHAT: A noble destination for your fresh spring peas (but if you use frozen, we won't tell). HOW: Whiz up your pea puree, sear your scallops, mix up your gremolata, and assemble. WHY WE LOVE IT: This pea puree is unlike any pea puree we've had; it's punchy, it's gingery, it's exciting. Topped with a couple of perfectly-cooked scallops and a lemony, herbaceous gremolata, you've got a dish that's fit for a dinner party.

At this time of year, whenever I go the market English peas always accompany me home. They are nature's superior answer to fast food, preferably eaten straight from the shell, with no need for cooking. When I do get around to cooking them, a favorite preparation is as an accompaniment to shellfish. The briny sweetness and pearly coral colors of the fish perfectly compliment the sweet, vividly green peas. In this recipe, crispy seared scallops are served on a bed of puréed peas spiced with fresh ginger and topped with cilantro gremolata. It's a beautiful presentation, either as individual amuse-bouches, an appetizer or an entrée. A variation of this recipe even made an appearance at the Bay area Food52 potluck. - TasteFood

Serves 8 as an appetizer, 4 as a main course For the Scallops and Pea Puree:

- 2 cups shelled English peas
 - salt
 - 1 large garlic clove
 - 1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger
 - 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 - 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
 - freshly ground black pepper
 - pinch cayenne (optional)
 - 16 large sea scallops, about 1 1/2 pounds
 - Cilantro Gremolata (see below)
1. Prepare the Pea Purée: Bring 4 cups water to a boil in a large saucepan. Add 2 teaspoons salt and the peas. Cook until peas are tender. Remove from heat and drain peas, reserving 1 cup cooking liquid.
 2. Combine peas, 1/4 cup reserved water, garlic, ginger, 2 tablespoons olive oil, lemon juice, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon black pepper and cayenne in bowl of food processor. Purée until smooth. Add more water as necessary to achieve desired consistency; the purée should not be too thin. Transfer to a bowl and keep warm.
 3. Prepare scallops: Pat scallops dry and sprinkle all over with salt and pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in skillet over medium-high heat. Add half of the scallops, taking care not to overcrowd in the pan. Cook, turning once, until brown on both sides and just cooked through, about 4 minutes. Transfer to plate and keep warm. Repeat with remaining scallops.

4. To assemble, spoon pea purée on serving plates. Top with scallops. Sprinkle scallops and purée with gremolata. Drizzle lightly with extra-virgin olive oil. Serve immediately.

For the Cilantro Gremolata:

- 1 cup cilantro leaves, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons finely grated lemon zest
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Combine all the ingredients together in a small bowl and mix well.