

# PAN SEARED SEA SCALLOPS WITH CREAMY BASIL PESTO

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Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

### FOR THE CREAMY BASIL PESTO

- 1 cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
- 2 cups packed basil leaves
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 tablespoon red miso
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice (1-2 limes)
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- Coarse sea salt
- 1 cup rice milk

### FOR THE POLENTA

- 7 cups water
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil and more for frying
- 1 1/2 teaspoons coarse sea salt
- 2 cups polenta

### FOR THE SEA SCALLOPS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 scallops per person

### FOR GARNISHING

- 1/2 pint cherry tomatoes, quartered

### FOR THE CREAMY BASIL PESTO

- In a food processor or blender combine the pine nuts, basil, garlic, miso and lime juice. Purée, while slowly adding the olive oil, until smooth. Blend in 1 1/2 teaspoon sea salt and more to taste, if needed.
- In a small saucepan over medium heat, add the pesto and slowly mix in the rice milk until it reaches a creamy consistency, about three minutes. It should easily pour off of a spoon. (Any leftover should be covered and refrigerated for up to 1 week.)

### FOR THE POLENTA

- In a large saucepan over high heat, bring 7 cups water to a boil. Add the 3 tablespoons olive oil and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt. Slowly whisk the polenta into the water until smooth.
- Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 15-25 minutes (until the polenta pulls from the side of the saucepan), stirring every 5 minutes with a wooden spoon.
- Pour polenta into a 13 X 18 inch rolled edge baking sheet until it reaches the top. Smooth out and refrigerate for at least 1 hour, or until it is firm.
- Remove from refrigerator. Using a cookie cutter, cup or small mug, cut polenta into small circles about 2 to 2 1/2 inches in diameter. Set aside.
- In a large sauté pan over medium heat, warm enough olive oil to lightly cover the bottom.
- Fry polenta in batches until crispy and golden brown on each side. Drain on paper towels and keep warm in the oven.

### FOR THE SCALLOPS

- In a large nonstick pan over high heat, warm 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Add the scallops and cook them for 1 minute on each side. Reduce the heat to medium, add the creamy pesto and cook for 2 minutes, making sure that each scallop is well covered with pesto.

### TO SERVE

- On each guest's plate, spread some creamy pesto. Artfully place four polenta cakes and top with scallops. Drizzle with more pesto and garnish with cherry tomatoes to add color. Enjoy.

Fresh basil, unmistakable in its fragrance and flavor, is ubiquitous in Italian cooking. When it's in season, I buy it every time I go to the farmer's market. As soon as I come home, I cut off several sprigs and set them aside to tear, chiffonade, and mince as a garnish for soups, salads and vegetables for that week. Next, I make enough pesto to last me for a few days. I freeze the rest of the leaves so that I have plenty to use during the winter months when I can't buy fresh, local basil. By late November, my freezer is full of bags of green and purple basil.

