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Grill-Seared Scallops with Pistachio-Tarragon Butter

Serves 4

Scallops are so sweet, meaty, and delicious – when they're grilled right. A little too long over the flames and they become tough and rubbery. Grill-searing scallops calls for a little trust and bravery on your part. Trust that the scallops will keep on cooking, even though they don't look done all the way through when you take them off the grill. If the scallops really aren't done enough, you can always put them back on the grill for 30 seconds or so. But if they're overcooked, there's nothing you can do.

Grill-searing outdoors replicates a chef's technique of searing over high heat indoors. Some gas grills come equipped with a drop-in griddle, which is perfect for grill-searing. You'll get that fabulous contrast of dark sheen on the exterior and pale white scallop inside. You have to pay attention, however. Large sea scallops are usually about 2 inches thick, but you might be grilling sea scallops that are smaller or larger. Once they are darkened on both sides and look almost opaque in the midsections, don't hesitate – pull them off the grill.

INGREDIENTS:

Pistachio-Tarragon Brown Butter

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
2 tablespoons chopped pistachios
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh tarragon
Kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

2 pounds large sea scallops

METHOD:

1. Prepare a hot fire in a grill. Oil 2 cast-iron skillets or a cast-iron grill griddle and preheat on the grill.
2. To make the brown butter, melt the butter in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Keep cooking until the butter starts to bubble and turn a medium brown and has a nutty aroma, 3 to 5 minutes. (Do not let the butter get too dark). Remove from the heat and stir in the pistachios and tarragon. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour 1 to 2 tablespoons of the melted pistachio butter into a ramekin to use on the raw scallops while grilling. Reserve the rest of the butter mixture as a serving sauce; keep warm.
3. Brush the sea scallops with the melted butter mixture from the ramekin and place on the prepared grill rack or griddle. Grill for about 3 minutes before turning. If the scallops stick, cook them a little longer, until they turn easily. After turning, grill long enough to heat through, 1 to 2 more minutes.
4. Drizzle the seared scallops with the reserved warm pistachio-tarragon brown butter and serve.