

SEA SCALLOPS WITH MUSHROOMS AND SHERRY

SERVES 4

Active time: 30 min Start to finish: 30 min

- 20 large sea scallops (1½ lb), tough ligament removed if attached (see Kitchen Notebook, page 244)
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ stick (¼ cup) unsalted butter
- 1 lb cremini mushrooms, quartered
- ⅓ cup finely chopped shallots
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ⅔ cup medium-dry Sherry
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce

► Pat scallops dry and sprinkle with pepper and ¼ teaspoon salt. ► Heat oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then cook scallops, turning over once, until browned well and just cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes total. Transfer to a platter and loosely cover. ► Heat 2 tablespoons butter in skillet over moderately high heat until foam subsides, then sauté mushrooms, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 4 minutes. Add shallots and garlic and sauté, stirring, 2 minutes. Add Sherry, vinegar, soy sauce, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, 2 minutes. Cut remaining 2 tablespoons butter into small pieces. ► Remove skillet from heat and stir in butter until incorporated. Spoon sauce over scallops.

SKIRT STEAK WITH RED-WINE SAUCE

SERVES 4

Active time: 15 min Start to finish: 20 min

Skirt steak is an incredibly flavorful cut of meat that cooks in minutes. And since this recipe calls for just ¾ cup wine, you'll have plenty left over to serve with dinner.

- 1½ lb skirt steak, cut into 4 pieces
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ¾ cup dry red wine
- 4 fresh thyme sprigs
- 1 Turkish or ½ California bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

► Pat steak dry and sprinkle all over with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then cook steaks, turning over once, 5 to 7 minutes total for medium-rare. Transfer to a platter.

► Pour off fat from skillet, then add wine, thyme, bay leaf, sugar, and Worcestershire sauce and bring to a boil, scraping up brown bits. Continue to boil until reduced by half, about 3 minutes. Add any meat juices on platter, then remove from heat and discard bay leaf and thyme. Stir in butter and salt and pepper to taste and serve with steaks.

SUGAR-GLAZED PRUNE TARTLETS

MAKES 9 SMALL PASTRIES

Active time: 10 min Start to finish: 35 min

Sprinkled with cinnamon sugar, these little prune tartlets (made with just five ingredients) are so delicious, they'll have everyone at the breakfast table begging for more.

- Butter for greasing baking sheet
- 1 frozen puff pastry sheet (from a 17¼-oz package), thawed
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten
- 27 pitted prunes (sometimes called dried plums; ½ lb)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

► Put oven rack in upper third of oven and preheat oven to 425°F. Butter a baking sheet.

► Unfold pastry sheet and cut into 9 (3-inch) squares, then arrange squares on baking sheet. Lightly brush squares with some of egg white. Toss prunes in remaining egg white. Arrange 3 prunes in center of each square, letting excess egg drip off and leaving about a ½-inch border around edge. Stir together sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over tartlets.

► Bake until pastry is puffed and golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer tartlets to a rack and cool to warm, about 10 minutes.

For more EVERY DAY recipes, see page 172.

Mushrooms, Sherry, and scallops are a perfect combination; add a bit of balsamic and a dash of soy and you end up with something extraordinary.

