



Roots

Farm to Table Recipes from the Black Swan,
a Restaurant in the English Countryside

TOMMY BANKS



RIZZOLI
NEW YORK



Shell-baked Scallops

with Spruce

3 / SERVES 4

½ cup butter (1 stick), plus 4 tablespoons for the scallops
1 tablespoon vegetable oil, plus extra for deep-frying
1 pound celeriac, peeled and cut into ½-inch dice, plus ¼ pound celeriac, peeled
sea salt
⅔ cup whipping cream
4 extra-large, hand-dived, live king scallops
2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons fresh Granny Smith apple juice (page 277)

For the spruce sauce:

3½ tablespoons Granny Smith apple juice (page 277)
pinch sea salt
1 tablespoon butter, chilled and diced
1 tablespoon spruce butter (page 69), diced
¾ ounce Granny Smith apple, diced
20 pickled spruce tips (page 69)

A fresh hand-dived scallop is not remotely the same as the flabby scallop flesh that is sold in the supermarkets, so a fishmonger or a fish market is where you need to head. It is, of course, important for the environment that our scallops are hand-dived and not from a trawler that destroys the sea bed as it harvests the scallops and everything else as it goes. Secondary to that, hand-dived scallops are a beautiful thing, so sweet and meaty—a roast scallop really takes some beating. This dish has been on the menu in many different guises, but I believe this is the best one yet. Cooked simply in its shell, the scallop has a texture that is better than any other way I have prepared it. The combination of succulent scallop with astringent spruce tips is one I will never tire of, and the creamy celeriac brings the whole dish together perfectly.

Heat the ½ cup butter with the oil in a deep saucepan and add the diced celeriac. Season with salt and sweat down gently for about 30 minutes. When it is soft and translucent, add the cream and bring to a simmer until the mixture has thickened and reduced by half. Purée thoroughly in a blender, pass through a fine sieve, and keep warm if using immediately.

Next, shred the ¼ pound piece of celeriac very finely, preferably with the angel hair blade on a mandoline with safety guard. Sprinkle with salt and mix together thoroughly.

After 5 minutes, it should have gone very limp. Rinse quickly in cold water and drain. Wrap in a clean kitchen towel and squeeze tightly to wring out as much water as you can. Remove the cloth and gently break up the ball in your fingertips.

Deep-fry the celeriac shreds at 320°F, stirring carefully until they all turn an even golden brown. Drain the crisps well on paper towels and keep warm.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Open the scallop shells, taking care not to burst the black gut sack. Ease a thumb between the meat in the center and the small, firm adductor muscle to the side. Run your thumb around the whole of the meat to free it from the membrane, which should fall away from the meat in one intact piece. Quickly rinse each scallop in very cold, lightly salted water, picking off any bits of membrane you might have missed. Clean the shells (be sure to keep the matching halves together) and place the scallops back inside.

To cook the scallops, add a knob of butter and 2 teaspoons apple juice to each shell and place the shell “lid” on top. Put the four scallop shells in an ovenproof dish and cook for 6 minutes. Remove the scallops from their shells and sear them in a hot pan. Carve each scallop into four even slices.

While the scallops are in the oven prepare the sauce. Heat the apple juice in a small saucepan with the salt. Add the plain butter a little bit at a time. When the butter has melted and the sauce has thickened, remove the pan from the heat. Add the spruce butter, piece by piece, swirling the pan to incorporate it into the sauce gradually. Finally, swirl in the diced apple and pickled spruce tips. The sauce will split if you boil it after the spruce butter has been added.

To serve, pipe the celeriac purée into the bottom of each scallop shell and arrange the scallop slices on top. Spoon over the spruce butter sauce and finish with the celeriac crisps.