

Oysters Gregory with Grilled Leeks, Bacon and Paprika

Recipe adapted from "The New England Kitchen: Fresh Takes on Seasonal Recipes," by Jeremy Sewall

Yield: 12 Oysters

Ingredients

12 medium oysters (such as Wellfleets)
1 small leek, white part only, split lengthwise
2 tablespoons canola oil
½ cup finely diced uncooked slab bacon
1 tablespoon sweet paprika
1 large garlic clove, minced
⅓ cup panko bread crumbs
1 tablespoon finely chopped tarragon
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
Salt and white pepper, to taste
1 cup kosher salt, for baking

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°. Shuck the oysters over a bowl to catch their liquid. Save the bottom shells; discard the top shells. Place the shucked oysters in the bowl with their liquid; cover and refrigerate until ready to use.
2. Place a grill pan over medium-high heat. Brush the leeks with some of the canola oil and place both halves, flat side down, on the grill pan. Grill until lightly charred on both sides, 4 minutes. (Note: The leek should not be fully cooked but get just a little bit of color from the grill.) Remove the leeks from the heat and slice into half circles.
3. In a medium sauté pan over medium heat, brown the bacon until the fat has rendered, about 4 to 5 minutes. Drain off all but 2 tablespoons of the fat and add the paprika, leeks and garlic. Cook, stirring frequently, until the leeks have cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and fold in the bread crumbs, tarragon, lemon zest and lemon juice. Season with salt and white pepper.
4. In a medium bowl, stir the salt with ¼ cup water until a paste forms. Form the paste into a long, flat mound on the middle of a baking sheet. Place the reserved oyster shells on top of the mound. Place an oyster into each shell and, using a small spoon, place the leek-and-bacon mixture on top of each oyster.
5. Bake the oysters for 8 minutes, then turn on the broiler and cook for another 2 minutes. Serve warm.