

Oysters Rockefeller

SERVES Serves 4

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

For a rich, refined oysters Rockefeller recipe with layers of complex flavor, we chose large Atlantic or Pacific oysters, which gave us enough surface area to hold the spinach puree. For the spinach puree, we sautéed the vegetable in butter before pureeing; otherwise the puree tasted harsh and bitter. As for the bread crumbs for our oysters Rockefeller, we liked the sweet flavor and absorbent texture of freshly processed sandwich bread, while rejecting the traditional inclusion of bacon because we found the smoky pork taste only bullied the fine flavor of the oysters. Finally, Gruyère paired well with the oysters while helping the puree cling to the oysters in the oven.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups rock salt
- 12 large oysters, well scrubbed (preferably Atlantic or Pacific oysters)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 large shallots, minced (about 1/4 cup)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- Pinch hot red pepper flakes
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 4 ounces baby spinach (5 cups loosely packed)
- 1 slice high-quality white sandwich bread, such as Pepperidge Farm, crusts removed, torn into 4 pieces
- ¼ cup loosely packed fresh parsley leaves
- 2 tablespoons Pernod
- 2 tablespoons grated Gruyère cheese
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- ✳ We found that the oysters were easy to manage and looked attractive when broiled in two 9-inch pie plates. They can also be cooked all together in a shallow dish large enough to hold the 12 oysters with ample space between (roughly 9 by 13 inches). Depending on your broiler, cooking times may vary.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Adjust one oven rack so that it is 6 inches from the broiler element. Spread 1/2 inch of rock salt into two 9-inch pie plates or cake pans or other appropriate dish (see note). Shuck the oysters, reserving the oyster liquor in a small bowl. Gently nestle 12 half-shells holding one oyster each into the rock salt.
- 2 Heat the butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat until the foaming subsides. Add the shallots, salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes and sauté until the shallots soften, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the spinach and sauté, tossing occasionally, until the spinach has fully wilted, about 1 1/2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and set aside.
- 3 Pulse the bread in the workbowl of a food processor fitted with a steel blade until it turns to coarse crumbs (resembling Grape-Nuts), about ten 1-second pulses. Add the reserved spinach mixture, the reserved oyster liquor, parsley, Pernod, and Gruyère. Pulse, scraping the sides of the workbowl down as necessary, until the mixture forms a smooth paste, about ten 1-second pulses. Spoon 1 tablespoon of the spinach mixture on top of each oyster.
- 4 Broil the oysters until spotty brown, about 10 minutes. Allow the oysters to cool for several minutes before serving them straight from the hot, salted dish with lemon wedges.