

Courtesy of The Americano

MAINS The Americano

Seared scallops with cauliflower and pancetta from The Americano

By Sarra Sedghi · Rough Draft Atlanta, 3/3/2026

Serves 2 people

Ingredients

CAULIFLOWER PUREE

- [ ] 4 shallots, thinly sliced
- [ ] 2 cauliflower heads, cut into small pieces
- [ ] Water, as needed
- [ ] 1/4 cup olive oil
- [ ] Kosher salt, to taste

CAULIFLOWER MIX

- [ ] 1/4 cup pancetta, diced and rendered
- [ ] 1/4 cup leeks, melted in butter
- [ ] 1/2 Tbsp sliced chives
- [ ] 1/2 Tbsp chopped parsley
- [ ] Olive oil, to taste

Directions

1. **Make the puree:** Caramelize the shallots in a saute pan. Add half the cauliflower to the pan, saving the nicer florets for the cauliflower mix. Sweat the cauliflower, but do not allow it to brown.
2. Cover with water. When cauliflower is tender, remove solids, reduce the liquid, and place in a Vita-prep blender. Puree and emulsify the olive oil. Pass through an ultra-fine strainer and chill immediately.
3. **Make the cauliflower:** Season remaining cauliflower with salt. Sear until golden. Flip, then add pancetta and melted leeks and saute. Finish with herbs and reserve.
4. Season the cauliflower with salt and sear until golden. Flip and then add in the pancetta and melted leeks and saute. Finish with the herbs and reserve.
5. **Make the chimichurri:** Warm the olive oil and add garlic. Slowly cook until sweet, about 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from heat. Add remaining ingredients and season to taste. Add fresh parsley in advance of serving to maintain color.

- [ ] Kosher salt to taste

CHIMICHURRI

- [ ] 4 cloves microplaned garlic
- [ ] 1 tsp. chopped parsley
- [ ] 1/4 cup cipollini onion, pickled, brunoised, and drained
- [ ] 4 Tbsp red wine vinegar
- [ ] 1 cup olive oil
- [ ] 1 1/2 tsp. Calabrian chili oil
- [ ] 1 tsp lemon zest
- [ ] Kosher salt, to taste

SCALLOPS

- [ ] 4 U-10 (jumbo) scallops
- [ ] 2 Tbsp cauliflower puree
- [ ] 1/4 cup cauliflower pancetta mix
- [ ] 1 Tbsp chimichurri sauce

6. **Cook the scallops:** Pat scallops very dry with a paper towel. Season with salt and pepper. Heat oil and butter in a large skillet until hot, then place the scallops in with space between them.Cook for 1-2 minutes until there's a golden crust on the bottom. Flip over and repeat on the other side.
7. Sear scallops in olive oil over high heat until golden, 2 to 3 minutes on each side. (Scallops will naturally release from the pan when ready.)
8. Remove from heat. Plate dish starting with cauliflower puree, seared scallops, and cauliflower.
9. Drizzle with chimichurri.

The story

This week, we're sharing a recipe for the seared scallops with cauliflower and pancetta from Buckhead Italian restaurant The Americano.

Chef de Cuisine Jason Kohl created this dish as part of his job application for the Buckhead restaurant. To apply, Kohl prepared a tasting course for owner and chef Scott Conant.

"I like showing different ways to prepare the same ingredient," Kohl said of utilizing cauliflower as both a puree and sautéed florets.

Incorporating herbaceous chimichurri sauce brightens up the vegetables and shellfish, while pancetta makes a clever substitution for bacon. The end result is a dish that balances flavors and textures.

Kohl recommends sourcing ingredients from local businesses and farmers markets. "Make sure you locate the best possible ingredients and take the time to prepare them properly," he said.

Look for U-10 scallops at a specialty grocer, such as Whole Foods, Your DeKalb Farmers Market, Buford Highway Farmers Market, or a local fishmonger such as Kathleen's Catch.

You can adjust the recipe to serve more people by adding two scallops, shallots and microplaned garlic cloves, and one cauliflower head per person.

Serves 2 people

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