

Soft Shell Chargrilled Oysters

Makes 2 dozen

Ingredients

24 to 48 raw oysters, depending on size

1 long loaf French bread, enough to slice 24 1-1/2- to 2-inch-thick pieces

For sauce

3/4 pound butter

6 garlic cloves, minced

1 tablespoon hot sauce, or to taste

3 teaspoons white vinegar

3 tablespoons molasses

1/2 teaspoons paprika

3 teaspoons Worcestershire

1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

Salt, to taste

Pepper, to taste

To top and assemble

1 pound to 3/4 pounds cheese, grated

Creole seasoning, to taste

4 to 6 green onions, coarsely chopped

4 or 5 fresh lemons

Shuck oysters, or buy them unshucked.

Slice French bread on an angle, or bias, into 1/2-inch slices.

Make sauce:

Combine butter, garlic, hot sauce, vinegar, molasses, Worcestershire in a bowl and cook over low heat just until the butter is melted. Wait



5 minutes, then add parsley, salt and pepper. Taste and adjust seasoning.

Pour sauce into a shallow side pan or bowl. Allow sauce to cool for about 10 to 15 minutes.

Place bread slices on sheet pans. Dip one side of bread slice into the sauce. Place it dry side down on the sheet pan. Continue until all slices are dipped. (Only dip one side, so that the bottom of the bread can get crisp and firm, making the oysters easier to manage.)

Lift oysters out of oyster liquid and allow to drip for a few seconds. Place an oyster on top of each bread slice. If oysters are small, put 2 on each slice.

Sprinkle Creole seasoning on each oyster, to taste. Top each with a generous tablespoon of grated cheese. Sprinkle chopped green onions on top.

Preheat grill or oven to 350 degrees.

If using oven, slide sheetpans into oven and bake about 30 minutes, checking after 15 minutes.

If grilling, use indirect heat by pushing coals to other side of grill; then place bread directly on the grill. Close grill and allow to cook for about 30 minutes, checking after 15 minutes.

Oysters are done when bread just starts to brown and cheese bubbles.

Oysters will be hot, so allow to sit for about 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

Squeeze a bit of fresh lemon juice on top and serve.