

Oysters With Fennel-Lemon Mignonette

You can get your fishmonger to shuck oysters and lay them out nicely on ice for you but you'll pay a premium and miss out on an integral part of the experience. Much of the joy in eating such a delicious, sexy, luxurious thing as an oyster is putting in the effort — and displaying the skill — it takes to open one. Oysters with fennel-lemon mignonette is the perfect way to enjoy the fruit of your labor. Watch the video and read our tips below in the Cook's Notes and learn for yourself. Then rock the raw bar.

Ingredients

1/2 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

6 tablespoons white wine vinegar

3 tablespoons small-diced fennel

Freshly ground (or crushed) black pepper, as much and as coarse or fine as you like

A few fennel fronds, for garnish

3 dozen oysters, shucked

Special Ingredients

oyster knife, towel or oyster shucking gloves

Directions

Mix the lemon juice, vinegar, fennel and black pepper in a small bowl. You should get about 1/3 cup. Refrigerate while you shuck the oysters. Drop some of the mignonette onto each oyster and slurp it down.

Cook's Notes

Shucking Oysters

The key is to securely wrap the oyster with a towel (or alternately a very fancy oyster glove, if you're really into accessories), locate the hinge with the tip of your knife and work your way in between the bottom and top shells with the tip. Once you've got a little leverage (you'll know when you do), push forward with the knife to separate the two shells slightly, then slide the knife along the miniscule slit across the side of the oyster while twisting the knife ever so slightly, and the two shells will pry open. Once

you're in, use the knife to detach the oyster from the top shell and then do the same to release it from the bottom shell. Mind the liquid — you don't want to lose that precious liqueur. It's the briny sauce that comes with the oyster. Flip the oyster to the smooth "presentation side" and serve on ice with the mignonette, or lemon, or hot sauce, or however you enjoy them.

total time: 20 minutes

active prep: 20 minutes

serves: 4 to 6 servings

difficulty: easy