

Scallop Shucking guide for recreational scallop divers and free divers.

Foraging for food is a rewarding experience, providing adventure and unique culinary rewards for the careful collector. Scallops, as with any foraged food, comes with their own set risks and precautions must be taken to safeguard against injury or death. This advice sheet is intended for anyone who scuba dives or free dives for scallops intended for their own consumption and to act as a guide on their safe preparation and consumption.

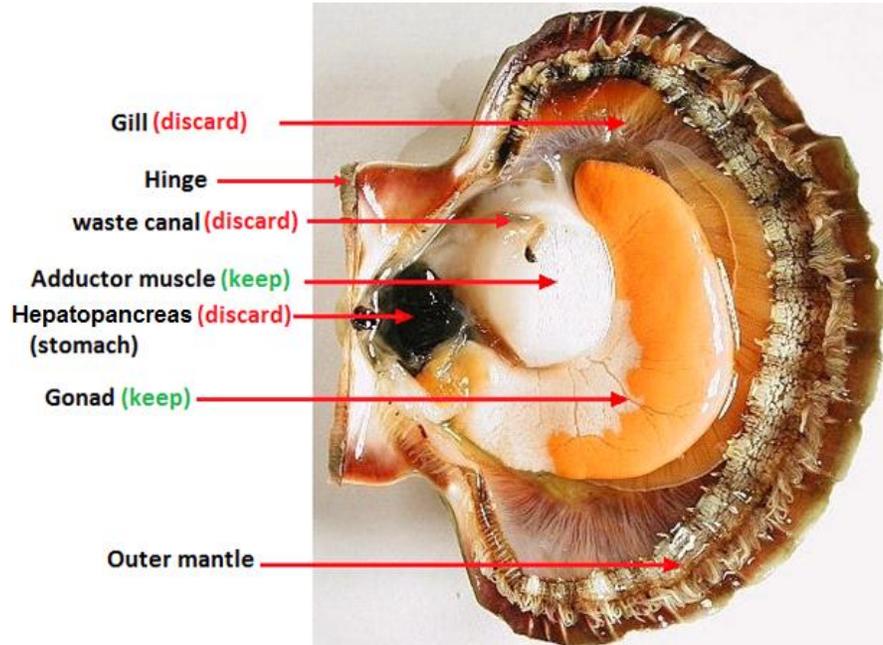
Our planets seas and oceans contain a living soup of planktonic organisms which forms the base of the food chain for all other ocean going animals, including scallops. A few of these micro organisms are poisonous or produce toxins which can accumulate to dangerous levels within the guts of shellfish, particularly scallops who retain the toxic material for longer periods relative to other shellfish species. These toxic microorganisms become more prevalent as sunshine hours and water temperatures increase and can form blooms so large that they can be seen from space.

Types of algal biotoxins;

- **Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning (ASP)** – This toxin is produced by a species of marine diatom which grows in abundance during the summer months. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach cramps and the loss of short term memory. In severe cases this memory loss is irreversible.
- **Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP)** – Associated with Algal blooms, once ingested, this toxin is quickly absorbed into the body causing symptoms to occur in as little as 30 minutes. Symptoms range from numbness in the mouth and fingertips which may spread to other parts of the body. In high doses PSP can cause limb paralysis and respiratory distress which can be fatal. There is no antidote and survivors may require supportive therapy to aid a full recovery.
- **Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning (DSP)** – Caused by micro-organisms known as dinoflagellates. DSP toxins cause an inflammation of the intestinal tract leading to nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea abdominal pains and fever. The onset of symptoms occurs within a few hours of consumption with recovery normally occurring within 3 days.

Anyone collecting scallops for personal consumption must, as a precaution, assume that their scallops contain toxin. Fortunately, in scallops, the toxin is well contained within the digestive tract and does not affect the desirable white meat and gonads of the scallop which means that it can be safely removed in the shucking process.

Scallop anatomy identifying inedible parts;



Shucking:

Shucking is the removal of meat from the shell and serves as critical control in the removal of ASP, PSP and DSP from the scallop.

method:

1. Hold the scallop in the palm of the left hand and insert a blunt, flexible knife, such as a butter knife, through the small opening between the shells and tease the muscle away from the flat or curved shell (depending on preference) keeping the knife as close to shell as possible to minimise wastage. Once the muscle is separated, remove and discard the clean half of the shell.



2. Reach towards the leading edge of the shell, grip the outer mantles and gills between your thumb and the knife held in the right hand, and peel them back towards you, as you pull you will feel them naturally separate from the rest of the scallop leaving the black stomach, gonad and muscle attached to the shell.

- Using a sharp knife; make a long cut between the black stomach and the adductor muscle. Don't worry about losing some of the white meat but it is important to ensure that you don't rupture the black sack. Remove the black sack and dispose of it. This is where the majority of toxins are held so it is



important that you avoid contaminating other shucked scallops or foods. Remove the discoloured tube running around the edge of the adductor muscle this is the waste tube leading to the anus and will contain a small amount of undesirable waste. At this stage you should be left with the adductor muscle and the gonad (see picture; left). Rinse under running fresh water to remove any remaining contamination from the surface of the scallop.

Further information

Scallop law

There is no limit to the number of dived or free dived scallops collected for personal consumption. All scallops intended for commercial consumption MUST be shucked by a local authority registered and approved processor.

All scallop collectors must adhere to strict catch size limits which are legally enforceable and were introduced for conservation purposes. Scallops should be measured to ensure that they comply or exceed minimum size limits, any under sized scallops must be returned to the water. Size limits will vary slightly depending on where the scallops are landed. Anyone caught landing undersized scallops, no matter how few, may be liable to a significant fine.

Local catch size limits are as follows.

- If East of St Albans Head then Scallops must be over 110mm wide at the narrowest point across the shell.
- If West of St Albans Head then scallops must be over 100mm wide at the narrowest point across the shell.

Please contact the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA) for information on size limits or visit <http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/>

Scallop recipe

Pan seared scallops with balsamic glaze dipping sauce.

1 cup balsamic vinegar
3 tablespoons butter, divided
12 large sea scallops
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Bring the balsamic vinegar to the boil in a small saucepan. Reduce the heat, and simmer about 15 to 20 minutes or until reduced to 1/2 cup. Stir in 1 tablespoon butter and set aside.

Sprinkle both sides of scallops with salt and pepper. Heat the remaining butter in a large non-stick skillet until bubbling. Add scallops, and cook 3 minutes on each side or until golden crust begins to form. Serve scallops with balsamic reduction dipping sauce.