

A recipe from

DAD'S CHILE COOKBOOK



Heat Rating:



Hoppin' John Texas Style

New Year's means black-eyed peas, if you want good luck. But why settle for bland beans? This stuff has a kick, and great flavor...

1 lb dried black-eyed peas, sorted, rinsed
1½ lb collard greens (or turnip greens)
2 smoked ham hocks
1 large yellow onion, chopped
1 Tbsp minced garlic
2-3 bay leaves
½ tsp ground black pepper

½ tsp crushed red pepper flakes
¼ tsp cayenne powder
½ lb smoked dry sausage, sliced (venison if you can find it)
2 jalapeño chiles, sliced across
2 tsp salt
1 cup white rice, uncooked

Rehydrate peas: Cover peas with cold water in a large pot; have at least 2 inches of water above the peas. Bring to a slight boil, then remove from heat. Let stand 1 hour; drain and rinse.

While beans are hydrating, clean greens and remove tough center ribs. Stack leaves and slice into strips, about ½ inch wide. Set aside.

Put 8 cups of water in a large soup pot or Dutch oven. Add ham hocks, onion, garlic, bay leaves and seasonings. Bring to a boil; skim off any foam. Reduce heat to simmer, cover and cook for 1½ hours. Stir in soaked peas, greens, sausage, ½ the jalapeño pepper slices, and the salt. Simmer, uncovered, for an hour or so, until peas are tender. Remove bay leaves (discard) and ham hocks. When hocks are cool enough, chop off any meat and return to pot.

Ladle off 2 cup pot liquid into a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil and stir in rice. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, or until rice is tender and water is absorbed. (Refrigerate here if making a day ahead.)

To finish: Add rice to big pot and cook until liquid is absorbed but dish is not dry. To serve, add 1-2 cup water, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for about 10 minutes. Serve with hot cornbread and remaining chile slices.

You can try mustard greens or kale as your leafy green, if you want. (Not Swiss chard, though.) Add garnishes such as grated cheese (Cheddar, Parmesan), olives, green onions, ...

Yield: About six to eight servings

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: Nearly 3 hours; take your time...

