

HOPPIN' JOHN RECIPE

Ingredients:

1/3 pound bacon, or 1 ham hock plus 2 Tbsp oil (may omit pork and substitute)
1 celery stalk, diced
1 small yellow onion, diced
1 small green pepper, diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
½ pound dried black-eyed peas, about 2 cups
1 bay leaf
2 teaspoons dried thyme
1 heaping teaspoon Cajun seasoning
Salt
2 cups long-grain rice
Scallions or green onions for garnish

Method

1. If you are using bacon, cut into small pieces and cook slowly in a medium pot over medium low heat. If you are using a ham hock, heat the oil in the pot. Once the bacon is crispy (or the oil is hot), increase the heat to medium-high and add the celery, onion, and green pepper and sauté until they begin to brown, about 4-5 minutes. Add the garlic, stir well and cook for another 1-2 minutes.

2. Add the black-eyed peas, bay leaf, thyme and Cajun seasoning and cover with 4 cups of water. If you are using the ham hock, add it to the pot and bring to a simmer. Cook for 30 minutes to an hour, or longer if needed, until the peas are tender (not mushy).

3. While the black-eyed peas are cooking, cook the rice separately according to package instructions.

1. When the peas are tender, strain out the remaining cooking water. Remove and discard the bay leaf. Taste the peas for salt and add more if needed. If using the ham hock, remove it from the pot, pull off the meat and return meat to the pot.

Serve the dish either by placing a ladle-full of black-eyed peas over steamed rice, or by mixing the two together in a large bowl. Garnish with chopped green onions. Serve with collard greens, kale, beet or turnip greens.

Yield: Serves 4-6 as a side dish