

Hoppin' John

Serves 8 as a side dish

2 cups dried black-eyed peas, picked over and rinsed
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ large green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
½ large red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
1 large onion, chopped
4 ounces salt pork
1 Turkish bay leaf
1 cup long grain white rice
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/8 teaspoon hot red "cayenne" pepper

Add the dried peas to a medium saucepan and cover with 2 inches of water. Bring to a boil and let boil for 2 minutes. Cover the saucepan and remove it from the heat. Let sit, covered, for one hour. Drain the black-eyed peas and set aside.

Melt the butter in a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the chopped bell peppers and onions and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until just beginning to soften. Stir in the salt pork, bay leaf, and drained black-eyed peas. Add 3 cups of water to the saucepan. If the water does not cover the ingredients, add a little more until all of the ingredients are covered. Bring to a simmer. Cover the saucepan and simmer gently for 45 minutes to 1 hour until the peas are tender.

Stir in the long grain white rice and 1/2 cup of water. Add the salt, freshly ground black pepper, and cayenne. Bring to a boil. Cover the pot and reduce the heat to a simmer. Let simmer for 20 minutes or until the rice is cooked through. Remove the salt pork and discard. Add more salt and pepper, if needed. Serve with your favorite hot sauce.