

Blackeyed Peas

Blackeyed peas are Oklahoma's number one vegetable crop. Cowpea is another name for blackeyed peas. They are native to Asia and Africa and are one of the most widely dispersed beans in the world. They are grown in Oklahoma and throughout the southern US as a hay crop and for human consumption. Blackeyed peas have a scented aroma and creamy texture. They are characterized by their kidney shape, their white skin, their small black eyes and very fine wrinkles. Blackeyed peas are legumes, like beans, but they are really a type of pea. Unlike most beans, no pre-soaking is required before cooking. In the southern United States it is traditional to eat blackeye peas on New Year's Day for good luck throughout the year.

Hoppin' John (Traditional Black-eyed Peas)

(serves 4)

1 cup dried black-eyed peas	diced ham	1 onion, chopped
1 cup raw rice	2 teaspoons salt	1 clove of minced garlic
1 bay leaf	minced fresh parsley	a little thyme black pepper

1. Pick over the black-eyed peas carefully, removing any bits of rock and unsavory-looking peas.
2. Rinse well and cover with five cups of water. Soak overnight.
3. Strain out the beans, and bring the water to a boil.
4. Return the beans to the pot, with the diced ham, bay leaf and a teaspoon of the salt, and let them simmer for about 45 minutes.
5. At the end of 45 minutes, taste the beans for doneness; if they are soft but not mushy, they are just right.
6. Pour in the rice and mix in all the other seasonings including the second teaspoon of salt and the diced ham.
7. Stir the mixture well, and bring the liquid up to a simmer.
8. Let them cook for another 20 minutes.
9. Turn off the heat, and let the dish rest for 10 minutes. Taste. The beans should be just a little more tender, the rice perfectly cooked.

WRITING ACTIVITY

1. After preparing and taste this dish, students will write friendly letters describing how they made the dish and what it tasted like. Don't forget the heading, greeting, body, closing and signature.

P.A.S.S. Writing—Grade 3: 2.4; Grade 4: 2.3; Grade 5: 2.4

Blackeyed Pea Spread

1 can (16 ounces) black-eyed peas, drained	3 green onions, chopped with tops
1/2 cup sour cream	1 teaspoon garlic salt
	1/2 cup salsa
	4 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled

1. Reserving 1/3 cup, place peas in a blender. Process until smooth.
2. Blend in onions, sour cream and garlic salt.
3. Transfer to a bowl, and stir in salsa, reserved peas and bacon.
4. Serve with tortilla chips, bagel chips or corn chips.

Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom is a program of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry and the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

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