

Hoppin' John

Across the South, many people are familiar with a dish called Hoppin' John, a mix of rice, black-eyed peas and ham hocks or bacon. Though eaten throughout the year, this meal is usually served on New Year's Day because many southerners believe that eating black-eyed peas on the first day of the year will bring good luck. Cabbage is also often served with Hoppin' John because some people believe that those who eat cabbage on the first day of the year will earn more money than those who don't.

Nobody knows the true origin, or beginning, of the name Hoppin' John, but some believe it may have originated in Louisiana from the French Creole name for pigeon peas, a pea similar to a black-eyed pea. The French Creole term for pigeon peas is "pois a pigeon," which is pronounced "pwah peeJon." This may have sounded like "Hoppin' John" to English speaking Southerners. The dish has been called Hoppin' John ever since the early 1800s.

Hoppin' John

3 pounds small dried black-eyed peas
 8 cups water
 2 pounds of ham hocks or bacon
 2 medium onions, chopped
 3 cups long-grain white rice
 Salt and pepper to taste
 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)

Directions:

1. Wash and sort the peas. Place them in a saucepan, add the water, and discard any pebbles or peas that float
2. Gently boil the peas with the ham hock and onion until tender but not mushy – about 1 1/2 hours - or until 2 cups of liquid remain. Remove the meat from the ham hock bone and return the meat to the pot.
3. Add the rice to the pot, cover, and simmer on a very low setting, for about 30 minutes, never lifting the lid.
4. Remove from the heat and allow to sit, still covered, for another 10 minutes. Remove the cover, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Fluff the rice and peas with a fork and serve immediately. Makes eight servings.

1. Where did the name Hoppin' John come from?

- A. A one-legged man named John invented the dish.
- B. It came from the French Creole word pois a pigeon.
- C. It brings good luck to those who eat it, so they hop with joy.
- D. Many who eat it hop about because it burns the tongue.

0% _____ 100%

Confident

Confident

2. What does the word simmer mean in this passage?

- A. Cook on a high setting.
- B. Boil until all liquid disappears.
- C. Broil on a medium setting.
- D. Cook on a low setting.

0% _____ 100%

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3. The main idea of this passage is to:

- A. Explain Creole culture
- B. Describe a traditional Southern dish
- C. Describe the French Creole language
- D. Explain Southern New Year traditions

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Confident

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4. Why are red pepper flakes optional in the Hoppin' John recipe?

- A. All Southerners like hot, spicy food.
- B. French Creole people only eat hot, spicy food.
- C. Some people may not want their food to be hot and spicy.
- D. Some of the spicy flavor disappears as the food simmers.

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5. In what order should the Hoppin' John ingredients be placed in the pot?

- A. Salt and pepper, rice, and black-eyed peas.
- B. Black-eyed peas, ham hocks, and onion.
- C. Onions, salt and pepper, and ham hocks.
- D. Rice, black-eyed peas, and onion.

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Confident

On a scale between 1 and 10 with 1 being low and 10 being how well did you like this passage?

Didn't

Like It

At All

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

I Really
Liked It

**Connections: Does your family eat any traditional holiday foods like Hoppin' John?
Describe a traditional holiday meal at your home? What is your favorite part of the meal?**