



Here's a great recipe for January 1 or any day of the year! In about an hour, you'll have a hearty side dish of creamy peas and salty bacon in a rich broth. It's black-eyed peas at a whole new level.

Lucky Black-Eyed Peas

Eating black-eyed peas on January 1 is good luck. I'm covered! I'll even make them a few more times during the year as a kind of booster shot! Black-eyed peas are under-used and underrated, perhaps because - too often - they are simply boiled or poured from a can. Follow my recipe, and with just a little time and attention, you'll transform this humble legume's flavor from blah to bangin'. Guaranteed. And who knows – you might luck into a new favorite!

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 1.25 cups dried black-eyed peas (Goya recommended)
- 4 – 5 cups low sodium chicken stock
- 4 pieces (or ¼ pound) thick cut bacon or pancetta, diced
- ½ large onion cut into 2 – 3 wedges
- 1 large carrot cut in half
- 1 stalk of celery cut in half
- 1 jalapeno pepper left whole, with a slit cut in the side (optional)
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- Crushed red pepper
- Canola oil
- Salt & pepper

Notes to start: The black-eyed peas do not have to be soaked overnight. They will be tender after simmering for 60 – 75 minutes. If you wish to speed up the process, you may soak them overnight, but you'll get vastly better flavor with the low-and-slow method. Also, do not salt the black-eyed peas until the dish is completely done.

Rinse the black-eyed peas and check for (and remove) any stones. I've never found a stone, but every recipe for dried beans tells you to do this, so just do it.

Put a thin drizzle of canola oil in the bottom of your pot (small Dutch oven or medium soup pot). Heat on medium high and add your diced bacon or pancetta. I like to use pancetta. Cook until it is almost crispy (about 4 minutes depending on thickness).

Drain most of the oil / grease from the pot. Leave the bacon in the pot, and over medium heat add the onion, carrot, celery, jalapeno, garlic, a shake of crushed red pepper, and black pepper to taste. Cook for 2 – 3 minutes.

Next, add the black-eyed peas and mix with the veggies / bacon. Then cover with 4 cups of low sodium chicken stock.

Bring to a boil and then reduce to a low simmer. Let the stock gently bubble. Don't cover the pot. Stir occasionally, and keep an eye on the level of your chicken stock.

If your chicken stock gets low (and your peas are thick), add half a cup or up to one cup of reserved stock. Continue to adjust as needed. You can make the broth as thick or thin as you want by controlling the stock; just be sure not to make it so thick that you risk burning your peas.

After 45 minutes, check your peas for tenderness, and your stock level. The black-eyed peas usually take 60 to 75 minutes to become tender. Cooking time will vary with simmering strength.

When the peas are tender, remove the celery. It's past its prime. Serve the black-eyed peas with or without the broth. (The broth is quite good!) I include the carrots, jalapeno, and some of the onion, but that's personal preference. If you wish to serve only the peas, it's fine.

Taste for salt. Now is when you add it, if needed. There are two reasons for waiting until now: First, the salt will change the texture of the peas if included in the cooking process. Next, the bacon or pancetta will add saltiness to the dish. I usually find that no salt is needed.

May this dish bring you good luck on New Year's Day and every day that you fix it! Enjoy!

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