

Remember to ring in new year with black-eyed peas

Black-eyes came to us from Africa. Because of their distinctive flavor, low cost and "stick to your ribs" characteristic, black-eyes were and continue to be the preferred pea of the South. An old Southern legend claims that eating black-eyed peas on New Year's Day will bring good luck for the entire year. You be the judge...real truth or simply superstition?

One thing is for certain, black-eyed peas have impressive nutritional attributes. For example they are low in fat, high in fiber and folic acid, and good sources of protein, iron, and carbohydrates. Plus, they are cholesterol-free.

Because they are actually peas, they do not require pre-soaking. However, to cut cooking time, black-eyes should be "hot washed."

For each pound of dry black-eyes, add 10 cups of cold water in a pot and heat to boiling on high, set aside for two to three minutes, then pour off water. They have now been "hot washed." For



**LIZ
BUCKNER**
Extension Agent

recipes that require cooking the black-eyes with other ingredients, merely pour off the "hot wash" water and follow the cooking instructions in the recipe. For other recipes that call for "cooked black-eyes," add enough chicken, beef or vegetable broth, or water to cover black-eyes with 2 inches of liquid. Cook at a simmer until tender, approximately 30-45 minutes. Do not add salt.

Helpful hints:

At a gentle boil, black-eyes usually cook in 20-40 minutes, test for doneness several times during cooking, black-eyes are best firm when used for salads and when they will be cooked further in casseroles, soups or stews, store black-eyes in a moisture-proof container and keep in a cool, dry place,

Southern-Style Black-eyes

1 lb. dry black-eyes
1/2 medium onion, diced
1 medium carrot, thinly sliced
1 Serrano Pepper, seeded and thinly sliced (optional)
4 oz. smoke-flavored lean ham, visible fat removed, diced
5 cups water or stock (beef, chicken, or vegetable)

First prepare black-eyes according to "hot wash" method.

Crock Pot Directions:

Place all ingredients in crock pot. Cook on low setting for 8-10 hours or until black-eyes are tender.

Stove Top Directions:

Place all ingredients in a large pot. Add water or stock, bring to a boil and then reduce heat to medium. Cook for 1 hour or until beans are tender. If necessary, add more water to keep the mixture well covered.

May be served over hot rice or a la carte. Makes 8, 1 cup servings.

Nutrition Analysis per Serving: calories, 211; fat, 2 g; fiber - 11g; folate, 83 percent of RDA.