



# Hoppin' John II

*serves 6*

- 8 ounces black-eyed peas, soaked overnight in cold water
- 1 smoked ham hock
- 1/2 cup small dice Spanish onion
- 1/2 cup small dice carrot
- 1/2 cup small dice celery
- 1 jalapeño, stemmed and sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cayenne
- 1 cup Carolina Gold rice (or other long-grain white rice)
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cubed
- Sliced chives or scallions, for garnish
- Hot sauce (Crystal or Tabasco)

Drain black-eyed peas and combine them with ham hock, onion, carrot, celery, jalapeño, thyme and bay leaf in a large pot. Cover the mixture with cold water and bring to a simmer. Cook, partially covered, for about one hour, stirring occasionally. When peas are tender, remove hock and bay leaf. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste, then keep warm on the very lowest flame while you make the rice.

Preheat oven to 300°F. In a large saucepan, bring 4 cups water, 1 teaspoon coarse sea salt and cayenne to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium, add the rice, stir once, and bring to a simmer. Simmer gently, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the rice is al dente, about 15 minutes. Drain the rice in a sieve and rinse under cold water.

Spread the rice out on a rimmed baking sheet. Dry the rice in the oven, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Scatter the butter evenly over the rice and continue to dry, stirring every few minutes, for about 5 minutes longer. All excess moisture should have evaporated and the grains should be dry and separate.

To serve, put the rice in the bottom of a bowl. Using a slotted spoon, ladle peas over the rice (should not be soupy), then drizzle a little of the cooking liquid on top. Garnish with chives or scallions. Pass hot sauce.