

HOPPIN' JOHN

I've got a feeling you're going to love Chef Kurt's twist on this traditional dish.

by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski

Featured Food: Black-Eyed Peas

Yield: Serves 5-7

Ingredients

2 T. olive oil (divided)	1 c. small diced carrot
2 T. butter (divided)	3 cloves of garlic, minced
2 c. long-grain rice	1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced
5 c. chicken broth (divided)	3 cans black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed well (divided)
1 bay leaf	1 t. apple cider vinegar
1 t. kosher salt	1 T. chives, finely chopped
2 bacon strips, cut into ½-inch pieces	1 T. fresh thyme
1 ½ c. small diced onion	Salt and pepper to taste
1 c. small diced celery	

Preparation

Preheat your oven to 350°F.

For the rice: In an oven-proof sauce pan or Dutch oven over medium heat, warm 1 T. olive oil and 1 T. butter. Add rice; stir while cooking for 3-5 minutes or until you smell a light nutty aroma. Add 2½ c. of chicken broth, bay leaf, and kosher salt and lightly stir; bring to a boil and then cover the pot and put in preheated oven to finish cooking for 15-20 minutes. Remove from the oven and keep warm.

For the beans: In a sauté pan over medium heat, warm 1 T. olive oil; add bacon and cook until rendered. Remove bacon from pan and set aside (for gravy). To the rendered bacon fat in the pan add onions, celery, and carrots and sauté for 5 minutes. Add garlic and jalapeno pepper; sauté for one minute. Deglaze pan with ½ c. of chicken broth. Add 2 cans of black eyed peas. Warm over low heat.

For the gravy: In a blender or food processor, add one can of black-eyed peas, 2 c. of chicken broth, and 1 T. of butter; blend until smooth. Add cider vinegar. Transfer to a sauce pan; simmer over low heat for 15 minutes. Stir in chives, fresh thyme, and reserved bacon. Taste; add salt and pepper as needed.

To serve, add rice pilaf with a scoop of beans in a bowl. Offer gravy on the side.