

## Sapphire's Black-Eyed Peas

*from In Our Grandmothers' Kitchens*

### *Ingredients:*

1 pound dried black-eyed peas  
a small amount of extra virgin olive oil or bacon fat for sautéing  
1 large onion, chopped  
3 cloves garlic, chopped  
2 stalks celery, chopped  
1 10-to-14 ounce can tomatoes with green chiles  
2 ham hocks or 1 good-sized pig's knuckle  
extra smoked sausage, chopped and lightly sautéed (optional)  
4 cups chicken stock  
1 cup water  
2 teaspoons chili powder  
a few sprigs of fresh thyme  
salt and pepper to taste

### *Instructions:*

Wash and sort the peas, and soak them in cold water. Ideally, they should soak overnight, but if a couple of hours will do if you're in a rush! Drain them when they have finished soaking.

In a 4-quart Dutch oven heat the oil or bacon fat, and use it to sauté the onion, garlic, and celery over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add the beans, tomatoes, pork, stock, water, and seasonings.

Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring to make sure it is well blended. Skim off as much of the bean scum as you can.

Reduce the heat, cover the pot, and simmer the mixture for at 1 to 1-1/2 to 2 hours, or until the peas are tender. (The best way to determine this is to taste them!)

Remove the ham hock or knuckle. Tear its meat into shreds and add the meat to the pot of peas, discarding the fat and bone.

Serve with rice. This is best served the day after it is made. Serves 8 to 10 generously.