



JUNETEENTH

RECIPES *from the* SWEET HOME CAFÉ

LOUIS ARMSTRONG'S RED BEANS AND RICE



CREOLE COAST

SERVES

6

ACTIVE TIME

45 MINS



TOTAL TIME

5 HRS

PLUS

OVERNIGHT

SOAKING OF

THE BEANS

RED BEANS AND RICE IS A classic Monday-night dinner in New Orleans. Monday was traditionally washday, and the cook could put a pot on the stove to cook slowly while the washing was done. Louis Armstrong was such a fan of the dish that he signed his letters “red beans and ricely yours.” His family recipe, a typewritten version of which is in his archives at Queens College in New York City, uses tomato sauce, which is not an ingredient in the traditional recipe.

CHEF'S NOTE

If pork is off your menu, you can substitute chicken fat for the salt pork and corned beef or tongue for the ham hock. This is Louis Armstrong's family recipe as originally published.

BEANS

- 1 pound dried kidney beans
- 8 ounces salt pork, or 2 slab bacon slices
- 6 small ham hocks, or 1 smoked pork butt
- 2 yellow onions, diced
- ¼ green bell pepper, diced
- 1 garlic clove, chopped

- 1 large or 2 medium dried hot peppers

Salt

- 1 (6-ounce) can tomato sauce (optional)

RICE

- 2 cups white rice
- 3 cups cold water
- 1 teaspoon salt

TO MAKE THE BEANS

Wash the beans thoroughly, then cover with cold water and soak overnight. When ready to cook, pour the water off the beans, put them in a large pot, and add fresh water to cover. Add the salt pork or bacon. Cover the pot and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 1½ hours. Add the onions, bell pepper, garlic, dried peppers, and salt to taste and cook for 3 more hours. Stir in the tomato sauce (if using), then cook 1½ hours more, adding water as needed. The beans and meat should always be just covered with liquid; don't let the mixture get dry.

To prepare with ham hocks or pork butt, wash the meat, add water to cover, and bring to a boil in a covered pot over medium heat. Cook for 1½ hours. Then add the presoaked beans (first pour the water off) and the remaining ingredients. Cook for 4½ hours. Add water as needed.

TO MAKE THE RICE

Rinse the rice thoroughly under cold running water.

Bring the water and salt to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add the rice to the boiling water. Cook until the rice swells and the water is almost evaporated. Then cover, turn the heat to low, and cook until the rice is grainy. To ensure grainy rice, use 1½ cups water to 1 cup rice.