

# *New Year Food Traditions Around the World*

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**January is a time when many think about new health goals for the year, but when it comes to food, it's not always only about that. Food is equally important for nourishing our souls via culture, traditions and connection. Here is a fun look at some New Year food traditions that people enjoy around the world. How will you balance eating for your body vs eating for your soul this year?**

**American South** - In the south, dishes made with black-eyed peas and pork, served with greens and cornbread symbolize good luck and prosperity for the new year. Black-eyed peas symbolize coins, the greens represent the colour of money, and cornbread is the colour of gold. Pork is thought to be a sign of prosperity because they root forward. A common dish made with these ingredients is called Hoppin' John (see next page).

**Mexico** - Tamales are a staple for special occasions in Mexico. They are made of corn dough, stuffed with meat, cheese or other ingredients, then wrapped



in banana leaf or corn husk and steamed. Families will gather to make large batches to hand out to friends and family. Street vendors and restaurants sell them during New Years. Other common food and drinks during new years celebrations also include bacalao (dried salted codfish), ponzo (pork/chicken soup), and ponche (hot Mexican punch made with fruits and cinnamon).

**Spain** - On New Year's Eve, families will gather around the TV to watch the celebrations from Puerta de Sol in Madrid. At the stroke of midnight, there is a tradition to eat one grape at each chime of the clock. The 12 lucky grapes in total represent the 12 months in a year and this tradition is thought to bring good luck for the year. This tradition is also practiced in Mexico.

**Turkey** - Pomegranates symbolize abundance and prosperity and some carry the tradition of smashing this fruit in the doorway of their homes at midnight on new years eve to bring good fortune.

**Japan** - A bowl of soba noodles is traditionally eaten on New Year's Eve, symbolizing longevity for the upcoming year. Kagami Mochi is a traditional Japanese cake where two rice cakes, representing the old and new year, are stacked and topped with a tangerine. Over the new year holidays, the cake is broken up and fried or added into soups.





## *Classic Hoppin' John*

6 SERVINGS

### Ingredients:

- 6 Thick-cut bacon slices, chopped
- 4 Celery stalks, sliced
- 1 Medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 Small green bell pepper, finely chopped
- 3 Garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tsp Fresh thyme, chopped
- 1/2 tsp Black pepper
- 1/4 tsp Cayenne pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp Salt
- 8 cups No salt added chicken broth
- 4 cups Fresh or frozen black-eyed peas
- 2 tbsp Olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups Long grain rice
- Fresh scallions, sliced

### Directions:

1. Cook bacon in a small pot over medium-high heat. Stir occasionally, until starting to crisp (about 10 minutes).
2. Add celery, onion, bell pepper, garlic, thyme, black pepper, cayenne, and 1 tsp of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is tender (about 8 minutes).
3. Add broth and black-eyed peas, and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until peas are tender, about 40 minutes.
4. Drain pea mixture, saving cooking liquid on the side. Return pea mixture and 1 cup of cooking liquid to pot. Cover and set aside.
5. In a medium saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add rice and cook, stirring often, until fragrant and lightly toasted (3-4 minutes).
6. Stir in 3 cups of the cooking liquid. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to medium low, and cook until rice is tender (15-18 minutes).
7. Fluff rice with a fork and gently stir in pea mixture. Stir in 1/4 cup of remaining cooking liquid at a time until desired consistency is reached. Sprinkle with sliced scallions.
8. Serve with a side of collard greens and cornbread to follow the New Year's tradition in the American south.

### Sources:

1. Recipe by Grandjean, Paige. Classic Hoppin' John from Southern Living, 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.southernliving.com/recipes/classic-hoppin-john-recipe>
2. Recipe Photo by Stacy K. Allen, Food Stylist: Ruth Blackburn, Prop Stylist: Christina Daley. Retrieved from <https://www.southernliving.com/recipes/classic-hoppin-john-recipe>
3. Images on page 1 in respective order by Gonzalo Guzmán García and Rajesh TP in Pexels.