

The Letter B: Black-Eyed Pea



Black-Eyed Pea Fritters

Black-eyed peas are types of legumes, or beans. They are often used in Southern and African cooking.

Known as “Accara” in West Africa, these fritters will likely become your kids’ new favorite “tenders” —a protein-rich main dish, without the meat. The key to this recipe is keeping your stove on a medium, steady heat—to make the fritters golden brown and cooked through.

MAKES: 4-6 servings (24 fritters)

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

COOK TIME: 15-20 minutes

NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS: Calories: 263, Fat: 1g, Saturated Fat: 0g, Sodium: 145mg, Carbohydrate: 47g, Fiber: 8g, Sugars: 5g, Protein: 17g

INGREDIENTS

2 cans black eyed peas, drained and rinsed

1/2 cup cornmeal, or all-purpose flour

1 medium-sized yellow onion or two small shallots, minced

5 garlic cloves, minced

1 teaspoon sea salt

Ground pepper

1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil, plus more if necessary

DIRECTIONS

1. In a bowl, mash the drained and rinsed black-eyed peas with a large spoon, until they are all crushed.
2. Add the flour or cornmeal and about half a cup of water.
3. Stir the mashed peas, flour or cornmeal, and water together to make a paste (about as thick as cookie batter). Add more water as needed while stirring to get it to the right consistency —not too runny, not too thick.
4. Add the shallots or onion and garlic, and stir those in well, so that they are evenly spread throughout the batter. Add more water if needed.
5. Season with salt and a pinch of black pepper.
6. Brush a non-stick or cast-iron skillet with enough olive oil to cover the surface.
7. Heat the pan over medium-low heat until it is hot.
8. Spoon the mixture into golf ball sized balls in your hand and flatten them, so that they are like little discs.
9. Pan-fry the fritters in the oil in small batches of 3 or 4, flipping the fritter over once or twice, until golden brown on both sides. It usually takes 5-7 minutes on medium heat. Add more oil as needed.
10. Once the fritters turn golden brown, remove them from the oil with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Serve at room temperature.

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RECIPES

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To promote a rich learning experience as you cook with your children, we encourage you to ask a variety of questions throughout the process. Provide plenty of encouragement and give them a chance to show off what they know as they help out with the preparation of the dish!

CULTURE AND GEOGRAPHY

- Ask your children to find Africa on a map (paper or electronic). Is your family of African descent? If you know which country or tribe your family originated from, share personal pictures and discuss with your child.
- Identify and explore places and events in your community such as cultural centers, festivals, stores, and restaurants that reflect African heritage. Discuss with your children similarities between your family's favorite foods and traditions and the foods and traditions that are popular throughout Africa.
- Did you know that in many cultures, eating black-eyed peas on New Year's Day symbolizes prosperity and good luck in the coming year? What are some family traditions of your own? Discuss these traditions with your children and have them help you come up with a few new ones that you can start with your family.

MATH

- Have your children count the number of garlic cloves, onions, and cans of black-eyed peas needed for the dish.
- Once you are finished cooking the fritters, allow your children to count the total number of black-eyed pea fritters.

SCIENCE

- Explain to your child that black-eyed peas are seeds. Help them think of other types of seeds that your family eats.
- Black-eyed peas are very easy to grow and produce quick growing seedlings. Ask your children if they would like to grow their own plants. There are many online resources and how-to videos on the internet that will help you get started.

WANT TO DO MORE?

- **Oldways "Red Red" Recipe:** A Ghanaian, West African **black-eyed pea**, tomato and okra stew
- **Oldways Black-eyed Pea Salad Recipe:** for when you don't feel like cooking!

OR, TRY THESE!

- Steam up halved **Brussels sprouts**, followed by a quick sauté in garlic, olive oil, and small scoop of mustard (1/2 teaspoon or so).
- **Bok choy** is extra delicious chopped lengthwise into thick slices and sautéed with yellow onions, olive oil, and sea salt
- Small, tree-shaped **broccoli** can be a kid's favorite vegetable when it is cooked with some great flavors. The next time you roast or sauté **broccoli**, squeeze the juice from half of a lemon over it and let it sizzle, to lightly brown the ends of the leaves. Sprinkle red pepper flakes or paprika along with sea salt for a hint of spice.
- Try steaming **butternut squash** (halved) with a dash of your favorite dried herb or spice—sage, rosemary, thyme or even cinnamon. Another yummy method is to chop this winter squash into 1" cubes, leaving the skin on, and sauté with leeks and olive oil.