

# Hints for Homemakers

by **SONDRA REID**

The first rice in America was brought into the Charleston, S. C., harbor by a ship which put in for repairs in 1686.

Cultivation of rice spread rapidly through the South and became a staple of the diet. Rice still is almost daily food in



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thousands of southern homes and a key ingredient of many of the South's most beloved dishes.

Even names of some of these dishes are a picturesque fragment of southern Americana. Gumbo, Dirty Rice, Hopping John and Jambalaya.

Gumbo, a soup-stew of Creole origin, features okra and or file powder with chicken, ham or shellfish served over mounds of rice in large soup bowls. File (pronounced fee-lay) powder, ground sassafras leaves, can be omitted, but gives a distinctive tang to gumbo.

Dirty Rice is a chicken giblets pilaf named obviously for the speckles of giblets scattered through the rice. It may be served as a main dish or as one of the many hot dishes for a large dinner or buffet.

Hopping John is rice and black-eyed peas, dried in the original version. It is served as the filling main dish for a modest meal, as an accompaniment to baked ham or other meat for a lavish dinner.

Jambalaya, another Creole iron pot specialty, combines ham, sea food or other meats with rice, tomatoes and seasonings cooked slowly to a savory blend of flavors. This, too, is a one dish meal, perfect for a take-it-easy supper.

Shelled shrimp, crab or other sea food can be substituted for chicken and ham in the gumbo, but the soup should be simmered a half hour or longer to blend flavors, then shellfish added to simmer 10 to 15 min.

### CHICKEN GUMBO

- 2 1/2-lb. broiler-fryer
- 1/4 lb. ham, diced
- 2 tbsp. butter or margarine
- 1-lb. can tomatoes
- 5 cups water
- 1 lb. okra, sliced
- 1 cup sliced onion
- 3/4 cup chopped green pepper
- 1 tsp. minced parsley

- 1 tbsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 small bay leaf
- 3 tsp. file powder
- 4 cups hot, cooked rice

Brown chicken and ham in melted butter. Add tomatoes, water, okra, onion, green pepper, parsley, salt, pepper and bay leaf. Cover and simmer 1 to 1 1/2 hr., until chicken is tender. Remove chicken from bones, leave meat in large pieces. Return meat to soup. Discard bay leaf. Sprinkle file powder lightly over soup, stirring constantly. Heap hot rice in individual soup bowls. Ladle gumbo over rice. Makes 8 servings.

### DIRTY RICE

- 1 lb. chicken giblets
- 1 qt. water
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 1/8 tsp. thyme
- 1 slice onion
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 1 cup rice

Place chicken giblets (except livers) in sauce pan with water, salt, pepper, thyme, onion and celery. Simmer 45 min. to 1 hr., or until tender. Add livers last 15 min. of cooking. Remove giblets and chop fine. Strain broth through coarse sieve to remove onion and celery. Measure 2 1/2 cups broth into same saucepan. Add giblets and bring to a boil. Add rice, turn heat very low, cover and simmer 20 to 25 min., until rice is tender and liquid absorbed. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

### HOPPING JOHN

- 1 cup dried black-eyed peas
- Water
- 1 small chile or dried red pepper pod
- 1/4 lb. diced bacon or salt pork
- 3 cups cooked rice

Soak peas overnight in water to cover generously. Add chile and simmer peas about 30 min. Add bacon and simmer until tender, 30 to 45 min. Add water if needed, but liquid should be thick when peas are done. Remove chile pod. Stir in rice and simmer 15 to 20 min. longer, until liquid is absorbed. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

### SHRIMP JAMBALAYA

- 1 1/2 lb. shrimp
- 1 tbsp. shortening

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# Rice Still Staple in the South



**CREOLE SPECIAL**—Rich-flavored Chicken Gumbo is typically served over fluffy rice in large soup bowls in Louisiana. Hot herb bread is a savory accompaniment.

- 2 cups diced ham
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1-lb. can tomatoes
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 2 tbsp. chopped parsley
- 2 cups rice
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. thyme
- 1/8 to 1/4 tsp. cayenne

pepper  
 Shell and clean shrimp and set aside. Melt shortening. Add ham and green pepper and cook until ham is lightly browned. Add onion and garlic and cook until onion is tender but not browned. Stir in tomatoes, water and parsley. Bring to a boil and add

rice, salt, thyme and cayenne. Arrange shrimp over top. Cover, turn heat very low and cook 20 to 25 min., until rice is tender and liquid almost absorbed. Fluff with a fork before serving. Makes 8 servings.



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