

Cooking in the Cabin

With Benjamin Banneker in the
Patapsco Valley



For Young Cooks

Exploring Patapsco Valley's Culinary History
And
Celebrating One of Our Nation's First Great
Scientists

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Recipes from 1790, Benjamin Banneker and
Maryland's Patapsco Valley

Adapted for preparing in a modern kitchen



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Hoppin' John

**1/4 pound bacon
1 large onion, coarse chopped
1 cup cooked rice
1 cup cooked black-eyed peas
1/2 cup chicken broth
Salt and black pepper to taste
Hot pepper sauce, cooked collard greens (optional)**

Chop the bacon and fry until fat begins running; add the onions. Cook until onions darken. Add cooked peas, rice, and broth; bring just to a boil. Add salt and pepper to taste. To add collards, cut out the tough stems and veins and pre-cook them until almost done.

The recipe for Hoppin' John has many variations, and eating Hoppin' John has become a New Year's tradition in many places. The hearty dish is good year round, but especially welcomed on a cold winter's day.

Hoppin' John was also a favored winter dish because most of the ingredients could have been saved from the autumn harvest. Onions were stored in the root cellar. Beans and rice were dried and kept in sacks where the mice couldn't get them. Bacon was smoked to make it last. Hoppin' John used ingredients that were on hand.



Oyster Chowder

1/4 pound salt pork (or bacon)
3 potatoes
3 cups water
1 pint oysters with liquid
Salt and black pepper to taste
Hot pepper sauce (optional)

Chop the salt pork into small pieces and fry; add peeled and cubed potatoes and water. Simmer until potatoes begin to dissolve. Mash a few potato cubes against the side of the pot as thickening. Add oysters and liquor; cook until the oysters begin to curl. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Even in westernmost Baltimore County, Chesapeake Bay oysters were available from autumn through mid-spring, relatively inexpensive, and a ready food source. They were eaten raw, roasted, steamed, fried, in stews and chowders, and even in pies.

A hand-written receipt from Mr. Banneker's time explains: *Put a bushel and a half of oysters in a big tub, the biggest one you ever saw. Pour scalding water over the oysters to make them shuck easily. When the oysters open, cook them in the frying pan, and stew them until boiling hot. Serve with beaten biscuits.*