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## CHOW



## Peace and hominy

Posole

### Choose a warm pot of good luck for New Year's

**I** used to think the symbolism behind my traditional Hoppin' Johns New Year's Day meal went deep—beans (coins), pork (prosperity), greens (money), rice (abundance), cornbread (gold), plus a dime in the pot to be discovered for extra luck. Then, I read about the history of Mexico's traditional hominy stew: posole. ... Oh my.

by  
**Jason Cassidy**

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In pre-colonial Mexico, hominy (corn) was sacred, and many also believed it was the stuff humans were made from, so of course those kernels of community were added to the pot. In addition, to really drive the metaphor home, they threw in some actual humans—no one important, just those whose hearts had already been sacrificed to the gods.

OK, you win, Aztecs.

Thankfully, for centuries now, like many other good-luck meals, the celebratory Mexican dish has stuck with pork as its symbolic meat. And when I found out my officemate, Calendar Editor Nate Daly, makes posole the centerpiece of his family's New Year's Day open house, I asked him to pass along his recipe so I could share two options for ringing in the new year with bowls of comfort.

Happy New Year!

#### Nate's Posole

(Adapted from Rancho de Chimayó restaurant in New Mexico)

2 cups dried hominy  
1 pound pork shoulder, fat trimmed, cut into 1-inch chunks  
4 celery stalks, finely chopped  
1/2 cup yellow onion, finely chopped  
6 cloves garlic, minced  
5-6 dried red New Mexico chiles, stemmed, seeded and rinsed  
radishes and cabbage (for topping)  
chile sauce

The day before, soak the dried hominy in a bowl with water (cover by at least 2 inches) overnight.

After soaking, drain hominy and place in a large pot and cover with 8 cups water. With lid on, bring to a boil. Remove lid, reduce heat to medium-low, simmer for 2 hours. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for another 90-plus minutes. Stir occasionally and add more hot water as needed to keep posole covered. Cook until corn puffs up and pork is fork-tender.

Serve with chile sauce, sliced radishes and chopped cabbage.

#### Jason's Hoppin' Johns

4 slices bacon, chopped  
2 ham hocks  
1 cup onion, chopped  
1/2 cup celery, chopped  
1/2 cup red, yellow or orange bell pepper, chopped  
1 tablespoon chopped garlic  
1 pound black-eyed peas

1 quart chicken stock  
Bay leaf  
Black pepper, to taste  
Cayenne (optional), to taste  
12 oz. ham, chopped  
1 dime (cleaned)  
Salt, to taste  
Green onions (or chives), finely chopped  
Tapatio, or other hot sauce

The day before, soak the black-eyed peas in fridge with at least double their amount in water (8-12 hours). After soaking, drain and rinse the beans and set aside. Cook bacon in a large pot, then remove with slotted spoon and set aside. Add onion, celery, bell pepper and garlic to the bacon drippings; cook until onions are clear. Add the black-eyed peas, stock, ham hocks, bay leaf, black pepper and, if desired, cayenne (but *not* the salt—it'll make the beans mushy/chalky if added beforehand). Bring to a boil, then reduce to medium-low and simmer for 40 minutes. Add ham, cooked bacon and dime, simmer for another 5 minutes, or until the peas are creamy and tender, stirring occasionally. When beans are done, remove bay leaf and add salt to taste.

Serve beans over white rice and greens (spinach, collards), garnish with green onions, add hot sauce if desired, and don't eat the dime. Cornbread is the traditional side, but cheesy cornbread muffins with green onions, corn and cheddar added to the batter are even better. □