

Quick red beans and rice, in time for Mardi Gras



**Bonnie S.
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**DINNER IN
40 MINUTES**

Mardi Gras draws nigh, igniting a hankering for red beans and rice. The vegetables for this Creole dish are typically long simmered with some type of pork product, so we consulted an expert —

Washington chef-restaurateur and New Orleans native David Guas — for a quicker remedy and a couple of tips.

He suggested shortcuts such as canned/cooked kidney beans, which are widely available, rather than Camellia brand's dried red kidney or pink beans, and smoked pork sausage for the meaty component, because a ham hock might not be on hand. The "trinity" of green bell pepper, onion and celery that figures in so many Crescent City recipes is modified just a tad, swapping in scallions for the latter.

The simmer's reduced to a mere 25 minutes, with a key

step: mashing some of the beans against the side of pot, to thicken the brew. Long-grain white rice is the standard accompaniment, with a bottle of Louisiana-style hot sauce at the ready. At some point in his childhood, Guas says, somebody told him that a pop of yellow mustard was even better than the hot sauce, and that's how he tops his red beans and rice to this day. We tried it, and approve!

Speaking of endorsements, Guas admits to a favorite type of red beans and rice: the signature side at Popeyes. "And I don't care who knows it," he says. We get that. *Laissez les bons temps rouler.*

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Bonnie S. Benwick tested this recipe. Questions? Email her: food@washpost.com. Have a quick dinner recipe that works for you? Send it along, too.

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DEB LINOGEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Red Beans and Rice

4 to 6 servings (makes about 6 cups)

Authentic versions of this New Orleans staple simmer for hours; here, you can achieve good depth of flavor in less than 1 hour, thanks to the know-how of a New Orleans native.

From David Guas, chef-owner of Bayou Bakery Coffee Bar and Eatery in Arlington.

Ingredients

- 8 ounces smoked, cooked pork sausage
- Two 15-ounce cans no-salt-added kidney beans
- 1 tablespoon canola or vegetable oil
- 1 medium green bell pepper
- 1 medium sweet onion
- 6 or 7 scallions
- 2 cloves garlic
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- Leaves from 3 full stems fresh thyme (may substitute 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves)
- 3 bay leaves
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- Leaves from 2 or 3 stems fresh parsley
- 1 to 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- Cooked long-grain rice, for serving
- Hot sauce, for serving

Steps

- Cut the sausage lengthwise in half, then invert and cut into ¼-inch thick half moons. Drain and rinse the beans.
- Heat the oil in a soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the sausage and cook for 6 to 8 minutes, stirring a few times, so some of its fat renders.

Use a slotted spoon to transfer the sausage to a plate.

- While the sausage cooks, cut the flesh of the green bell pepper into ½-inch dice, discarding the stem and seeds. Dice the onion. Trim the scallions and then coarsely chop (enough to yield ½ cup). Mince the garlic. Add those ingredients to the pot (after the sausage has been removed) and stir to coat. Increase the heat to medium-high; cook for 2 minutes, stirring, until just softened, then add beans, broth, thyme, bay leaves and the black and cayenne peppers. Reduce the heat to medium; cover and cook for 25 minutes.
- Uncover; use a slotted spoon to fish out and discard the bay leaves. Use the back of a wooden spoon to mash about a cup's worth of the beans against the side of the pot; this will thicken the mix a bit. Coarsely chop the parsley.
- Return the reserved sausage to the pot, as soon as it's heated through, turn off the heat and stir in the parsley. Taste, and add the salt, as needed. Serve hot, with white rice; pass the hot sauce at the table.

Nutrition | Per serving (based on 6): 320 calories, 16 g protein, 26 g carbohydrates, 18 g fat, 5 g saturated fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 530 mg sodium, 7 g dietary fiber, 2 g sugar