

"Me, sexy? I'm just plain ol' beans and rice."

- PAM GRIER



BITE by BITE

Conquering My Culinary Bucket List One Dish at a Time

By Emily Banks Wooten

"Red beans and rice didn't miss her."

- SIR MIX-A-LOT



Cajun country cooking

Several years ago we were visiting the Southern Food and Beverage Museum in New Orleans and there was a delightful exhibit on red beans and rice, a quintessential Southern dish with a long history in New Orleans.

In addition to a framed, oversized graphic titled "How to Make Red Beans and Rice" that gives simple, step by step instructions, there is a big display decorated with three large cast iron skillet that asks the question, "What's the secret to your

Red Beans?" A couple dozen answers – that run the gamut – are given. Roy H. said, "lots of onions, garlic and cayenne pepper." "Trinity, green onions, parsley and a bell pepper, all chopped, plus tasso, smoked sausage (brown it first) and a half stick of grassfed butter," recommends Heather H. While Randy S. prefers "a Chisesi ham hock and a healthy dose of Tabasco," Martha F. goes with "crawfish and alligator sausage," and Teara M. likes "pickled pig tails and cooking oil at the end." My favorite, from Bobby S., is "lots of love and killer cornbread on the side."

Long a staple in Louisiana culture, southernliving.com said that red beans and rice was tradition-

ally served on Mondays, which was wash day. The beans could simmer unattended while the cook was busy with the laundry and other chores. It was a perfect fit, easily feeding a crowd and being versatile enough to tailor according to what was in the pantry. It has been widely documented that Louis Armstrong, one of New Orleans' favorite sons, always signed his personal correspondence "Red beans and ricely yours."

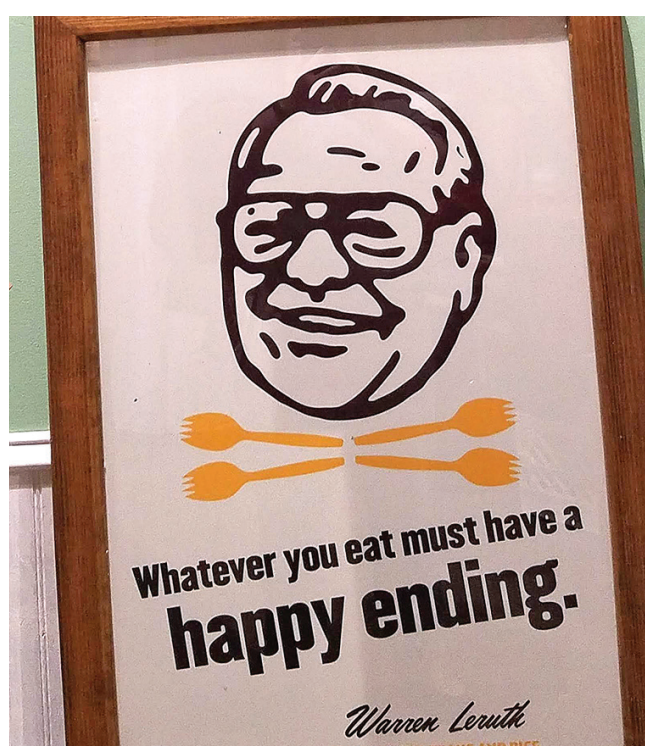
Not long ago, I ran across a recipe for it that is made in the slow cooker, making it suitable for dinner any night of the week. I made it as a nod to Mardi Gras, or "Fat Tuesday." It couldn't have been easier and we thought it was excellent. ■

New Orleans Red Beans And Rice

From southernliving.com

- 1 lb. dried red beans
- 7 cups water
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium white onion, chopped
- 3 celery stalks, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- ½ lb. andouille sausage, sliced
- 3 tablespoons Creole seasoning
- Hot cooked rice
- Sliced green onions, for garnish

• Place first eight ingredients in a 4-quart slow cooker. Cook, covered, on high for 7 hours or until beans are tender. Serve with hot cooked rice. Garnish with sliced green onions if desired.



"New Orleans food is as delicious as the less criminal forms of sin."

- MARK TWAIN