

Our State eats

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Field Pea Soup With Cornmeal Dumplings

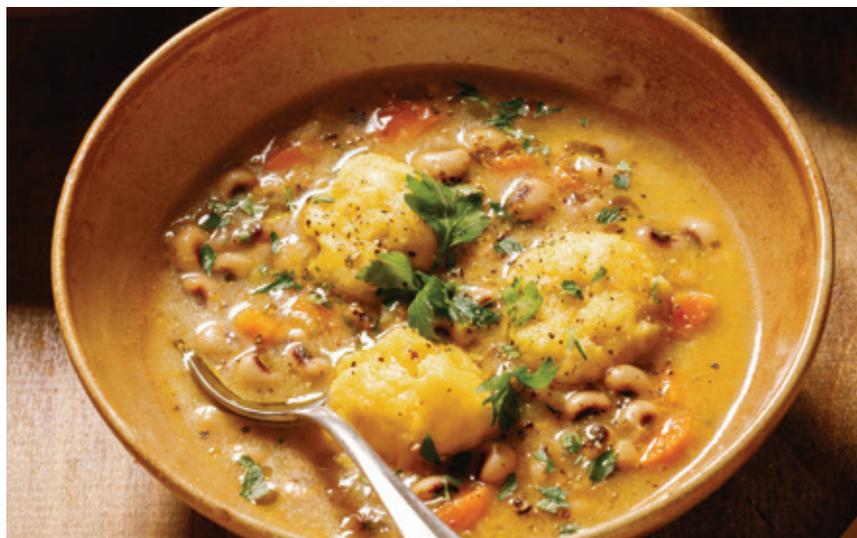
Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

For the Soup:

- 3 cups (1 pound) field peas, freshly shelled or thawed from frozen
- 3 tablespoons bacon fat or olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped (about 2 cups)
- 1 large carrot, chopped (about ½ cup)
- 1 celery rib, chopped (about ½ cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 4 cups chicken or golden vegetable stock
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- Water, as needed
- 1 large or 2 small bay leaves
- 4 thyme sprigs
- 1 wide strip fresh lemon peel
- Parsley, chopped (for garnish)

For the Dumplings:

- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup fine cornmeal
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons salted butter, cut into small bits and chilled
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- ½ cup finely chopped green onions, white and tender green parts
- ½ cup whole buttermilk, well-shaken



For the soup: If using fresh peas, rinse them several times to remove any bits of hull and stickiness. Drain well and set aside. (Thawed peas do not need to be rinsed, as long as they were washed well before they were frozen.)

In a large soup pot over medium-high heat, warm the bacon fat or oil. Stir in onion, carrot, celery, and garlic. Cook for 3 minutes, stirring often. Add tomato paste, stir to coat vegetables, and cook for 1 minute. Add chicken stock and stir well. Add peas and salt. Peas should be submerged to a depth of 1 inch, so add water as needed. Drop in bay leaf, thyme, and lemon peel.

Bring to a boil, then reduce heat so that the liquid simmers gently. Cover the pot, and cook until peas are tender, 15 to 45 minutes, depending on their size and freshness. Stir occasionally.

Taste peas for salt. If they need more seasoning, remove the pan from the

heat, add another large pinch of salt, and let stand for 15 minutes to allow peas to absorb the seasoning.

Discard bay leaf, thyme stems, and lemon peel. Keep peas warm over very low heat while preparing the dumpling dough.

For the dumplings: In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cornmeal, baking soda, baking powder, sugar, salt, and pepper. Work in butter and shortening until mixture is crumbly. Stir in scallions. Stir in buttermilk to make a soft but not sticky dough that holds its shape on a spoon.

Bring peas to a low boil. Drop heaping tablespoons of dough over the surface of the peas, spacing them evenly. (An ounce scoop is ideal for this.) Cover and cook without lifting the lid until dumplings are set, about 10 minutes. Remove pot from heat, uncover, and let stand for 5 minutes before serving warm. Garnish with parsley.

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