

Dried Beans: Cultural Resistance and Environmental Resilience

HANDOUT: Akara from Africa (p.3)

AKARA RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup dried black-eyed peas
- 1 small red onion
- 1 bunch parsley
- 4 cups water
- 1 cup flour
- 1-2 cups lard or vegetable oil



Photo Credit: Johnny Shryock

PREPARATION

- 1) Crush the black-eyed peas into very small pieces using a mortar and pestle or food processor. It's okay if the mixture is uneven, but the largest pieces should be no bigger than a grain of rice.
- 2) Set aside in a large bowl. Mince onion and parsley and mix together.
- 3) Measure 1/4 cup of the onion and parsley mixture and add it to the crushed peas.
- 4) Boil the water. Add the boiling water to the peas, onions, and parsley and stir well.
- 5) Let sit for 45 minutes, or until the peas have softened and fallen to the bottom of the bowl and the water is thick and cloudy.
- 6) Add in the flour gradually, until the mixture looks like a thick pancake batter and holds its shape in a spoon.
- 7) Add lard or oil to a cast-iron skillet until it is 1/2-inch deep, and heat until the surface shimmers.
- 8) Drop the batter into the skillet using a spoon. You can make the fritters whatever size you like, but 1/4 cup works well.
- 9) Cook until the fritters are brown and crispy and have loosened from the bottom of the pan; flip and repeat browning.
- 10) Remove and allow the fritters to drain on paper towels.

Akara is delicious right out of the pan, but you can also eat it with salt, herbs, and spices sprinkled on top, hot sauce, or all of the above.

This recipe was developed by Michael W. Twitty for the Folger exhibition, *First Chefs: Fame and Foodways from Britain to the Americas* (on view Jan 19–Mar 31, 2019), produced in association with *Before 'Farm to Table': Early Modern Foodways and Cultures*, a Mellon initiative in collaborative research at the Folger Institute.