

# New Year's Day Traditions

Serves 6

Spicy Fried Chicken

Mustard Greens

Slow-Cooker Black-Eyed Peas

Pecan Wild Rice

Celebration Chocolate Cake

With the new year, many people vow to make changes to their lives and do things differently. My New Year's resolution is to never change the family favorites that we eat on this special day! With this menu, I know that my family will start off the new year happy—and full.

## Spicy Fried Chicken

*If you don't like spice, stay out of the kitchen!*

**2 eggs**  
**1 cup whole milk**  
**2 tbsp. hot sauce, or to taste**  
**1½ tsp. salt**  
**1 tsp. pepper**  
**2½ lbs. chicken, in pieces**  
**1½ cups self-rising flour**  
**3 cups vegetable shortening**

In a large bowl, beat the eggs; add milk, hot sauce, salt, and pepper. Place chicken in the mixture; let sit for 30 minutes. Put the flour in a large bowl or paper bag. Coat chicken with the flour. Melt the shortening in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium and fry chicken in batches, being sure not to overcrowd the chicken. Cook, covered, until good and crispy, about 25 minutes depending on the thickness of the pieces. Turn halfway through cooking.

## Mustard Greens

*This Southern dish is another must on New Year's Day. Greens will bring you green money for the new year, so eat up!*

**3 lb. Boston butt**

**10 bunches mustard greens, washed, stems removed**

**2 tsp. sugar**

**2 tsp. salt**

**2 tsp. pepper**

Place pork in large pot with enough water to cover meat. Cook over medium heat until meat falls apart, about 3 hours. Shred meat into the water and add greens slowly, letting them wilt. Add the sugar, salt, and pepper, and continue to cook over medium-low heat for 2 hours or until tender. After greens are cooked, taste and add more seasonings as needed. Serve with hot pepper sauce for a real Southern tradition!

## Slow-Cooker Black-Eyed Peas

*Black-Eyed peas are a year-round part of the Southern dining table, often paired with a bottle of hot sauce. On New Year's Day, eating your peas will bring luck in the new year.*

**2 cups dried black-eyed peas, soaked overnight in water**

**1 ham hock**

**1 tbsp. salt**

**1 tbsp. pepper**

Drain peas and place in a slow cooker with ham, salt, and pepper. Cover with water and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours until tender.

## Pecan Wild Rice

*What a tasty combination of the nutty flavor of the wild rice and the pecans! This is also delicious stuffed in a bell pepper and topped with a sprinkle of parmesan.*

**2 tbsp. butter**

**4 cups cooked long-grain wild rice, not instant**

**Salt and pepper to taste**

**1 cup chopped, toasted pecans**

Melt butter in a skillet. Add the rice and stir to coat. Add salt and pepper as desired. Mix in pecans and serve.

## Celebration Chocolate Cake

*Cakes don't have to have elegant designs, but they have to taste wonderful. This cake fits the bill on both counts!*

### For the Cake:

1/2 cup butter  
1/2 cup vegetable oil  
1 cup water  
2 cups sugar  
2 cups flour  
3 tbsp. cocoa powder  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1/2 cup buttermilk  
2 extra-large eggs  
1 tsp. almond extract

### For the Icing:

1/2 cup butter  
3 tbsp. cocoa powder  
1/3 cup half-and-half  
3 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted  
1 tsp. almond extract  
1 1/4 cup toasted, chopped pecans

To make the cake, melt butter, oil, and water in a sauce pan. Place sugar, flour, cocoa powder, and baking soda in a mixing bowl, and add butter mixture, blending well. Add buttermilk, eggs, and almond extract, blending well. Pour into a greased 9" x 13" sheet pan and bake at 400 degrees for 25 minutes. Allow cake to cool slightly before frosting, but cake should still be a little warm when frosted.

To make the icing, melt butter, cocoa powder, and half-and-half together in a saucepan. In a mixing bowl, combine the powdered sugar, almond extract, and chocolate mixture, beating well; stir in pecans. Spread over slightly warm cake.

## Wine Pairing

Champagne is our most popular celebratory wine, and there's no need to shy away from its use as a primary beverage. Winston Churchill reportedly drank it with every meal. Dom Pierre Pérignon, at the moment he discovered champagne, is said to have exclaimed, "Come quickly, I am drinking the stars!" What a way to begin the year! Bubbly has many counterparts, and if you haven't tasted the sparkling wine from Wolf Mountain Vineyards in Dahlonega, Georgia, you have lots of excitement in store. Another delicious choice is the wonderful sparkling wine Gruet Blanc de Noirs from New Mexico.



For Love of Family  
and Friends—  
Valentine's Feast

Serves 6-8

Grilled Lamb with Rosemary  
Orzo Salad  
Grilled Pound Cake with Raspberry Sauce