



## West African Black-Eyed Pea "Akara" Fritters + Quick Pickled Carrots

By Erin Fletter

**Prep Time** 20 / **Cook Time** 10 / **Serves** 4 - 6

### Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**pan-fry:** to fry in a pan in a small amount of fat.

**pickle:** to preserve or flavor a food by covering it with a salty and/or sweet liquid brine.

### Equipment

- Medium bowl
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- Grater
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Can opener
- Colander
- Small saucepan
- Liquid measuring cup
- Large bowl + immersion blender (or a food processor)
- Nonstick skillet
- Paper towels

### Ingredients

West African Black-Eyed Pea "Akara" Fritters + Quick Pickled Carrots

- Pickled Carrots:
- 1 green onion
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 C coarsely-grated carrots (about 2 carrots)
- 1 tsp salt
- black pepper to taste
- 1/4 C honey/agave nectar
- 1/4 C vinegar
- Black-Eyed Pea Fritters:
- 1 to 2 green onions
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 pinch salt + more to sprinkle on top
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp honey/agave nectar
- 2 T all-purpose flour **\*\* (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free flour)\*\***
- 1 C canned black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed **\*\* (for LEGUME ALLERGY follow Legume-Free "Akara" Fritters recipe)\*\***
- vegetable oil, for frying
- pita bread, corn tortillas, or French bread **\*\* (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free pita bread or corn tortillas)\*\***

## Food Allergen Substitutions

### West African Black-Eyed Pea "Akara" Fritters + Quick Pickled Carrots

**Gluten/Wheat:** Substitute gluten-free/nut-free flour. Substitute gluten-free/nut-free pita bread or corn tortillas.

**Legume:** Follow the Legume-Free West African "Akara" Fritters recipe.

## Instructions

### West African Black-Eyed Pea "Akara" Fritters + Quick Pickled Carrots

## pickling intro

We will be learning about Pickling first today! Pickling is the process of preserving or expanding the lifespan of food by either anaerobic fermentation in brine or immersion in vinegar. The resulting food is called a pickle. Pickling can preserve perishable foods for months. Pickling began 4,000 years ago using cucumbers native to India. This was used as a way to preserve food for out-of-season use and for long journeys, especially by sea. The term pickle is derived from the Dutch word "pekel," meaning "brine."

## chop + grate + toss

We'll start with the pickled carrots. Have your kids chop up **1 green onion** and **1 garlic clove** and add them to a medium bowl. Next, grate about **2 carrots** to measure 1 cup. Toss the carrots with the onion, garlic, **1 teaspoon salt**, and **black pepper** to taste.

## boil + dissolve + pour

Pour **1/4 cup honey** and **1/4 cup vinegar** into a small saucepan on your stovetop and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring until the honey dissolves. Once the mixture is at a rapid boil, turn off the heat. Carefully pour the hot vinegar mixture over the seasoned carrots, let cool, and enjoy atop your fritters!

## fritters + frying intro

We are also making "akara" (ah-KAR-ah), or West African fritters and will be frying them today. Frying is the cooking of food in oil or another fat. Chemically, oils and fats are the same, differing only in melting point, and the distinction is only made when needed. Fats can reach much higher temperatures than water at normal atmospheric pressure. Through frying, one can sear or even carbonize the surface of foods while caramelizing sugars. The food is cooked much more quickly and has a characteristic crispness and texture.

## chop + measure + combine

Have your kids chop **1 to 2 green onions** and add them to a large bowl (for use with an immersion blender) or a food processor. Measure and add **1/2 teaspoon baking soda**, **1 pinch of salt**, **1/4 teaspoon black pepper**, **1/2 teaspoon honey**, and **2 tablespoons flour**. Add **\*\*1 cup of black-eyed peas\*\***, drained and rinsed, into the bowl.

## blend + heat + drizzle

Process the mixture with your immersion blender or food processor until a smooth batter forms, adding a little water if necessary. When finished, the batter should be similar to the consistency of light hummus. Next, heat a nonstick skillet on your stovetop and drizzle some oil to lightly coat the pan's bottom.

## drop + fry

Using a spoon, carefully drop 1/2 to 1 tablespoon of batter onto your skillet and fry until golden brown, about 3 to 5 min, turning the fritters once. Repeat until you use all of the batter.

## drain + sprinkle + serve

Remove the fritters, drain on a paper towel, and keep warm. Sprinkle them with salt (if you wish). To serve, split open 1/2 of a **pita bread** and fill it with 1 to 2 fritters and a generous spoonful of **pickled carrots**. Alternatively, you can arrange the "akara" fritters with the pita bread on a platter and serve with the pickled carrots.

## Featured Ingredient: Black-eyed Peas!

Hi! I'm Black-eyed Pea!

"But don't worry, I haven't been in a fistfight. My black eye isn't a bruise but more of a black circle where I was connected to my pod. Besides, we get along well with others, especially rice, veggies, and pork!"

### History

The black-eyed pea or bean is a subspecies of the cowpea and part of the family of legumes that includes beans and peas. Although called a pea, it is actually a bean.

Black-eyed peas originated in Africa thousands of years ago. Enslaved Africans brought them to the American colonies in the 17th century.

There is a legend that Sherman's Union army raided the Confederate army's food supplies during the Civil War but ignored black-eyed peas and salted pork because they thought they were only for animal feed. Instead, these rejected foods came to represent good luck for the South because they would survive on them during the winter.

On New Year's Day, in the American South, they traditionally eat a black-eyed pea dish called Hoppin' John with collard greens and cornbread to ensure a prosperous new year. The peas symbolize coins, the greens represent paper money, and the cornbread symbolizes gold.

### Anatomy

Black-eyed peas are small beans with a black circle, or eye, in their slight curve. This spot is where the bean is attached to the pod. They grow in narrow pods, about 3 to 6 inches long, and each pod contains an average of 6 to 13 beans.

A black-eyed pea plant can be either a bush or a vine and likes to grow in warm soil.

There are several varieties of black-eyed peas, including heirlooms. The common type found in stores is the California Blackeye, a greenish-white bean with a black spot. Others may have a pink, red, brown, or green eye.

### How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

The correct harvest time for black-eyed peas is determined by how you will use them. If you want to add whole pods with beans to a stir-fry or snap them like green beans, pick green and immature pods. If you prefer to shell and cook the beans, wait until the pods have matured, start to turn yellow, and the beans inside look plump. For dried beans, pick the pods when they are dry and have turned brown.

Refrigerate fresh black-eyed pea pods for up to two weeks.

Shell the beans by pulling open the pods and using your thumb to pop them into a container.

You can add black-eyed peas to salads, soups, stews, and fritters.

For Hoppin' John, a Southern black-eyed pea and rice dish often served on New Year's Day. In addition to the beans and rice, other ingredients may include onion, bell pepper, celery, garlic, salt, black pepper, cayenne or pepper sauce, water or chicken broth, and bacon or ham hock.

Texas Caviar is the name of a black-eyed pea dish created in Texas around 1940. The black-eyed peas are marinated in a vinaigrette dressing and served with tortilla chips.

## Nutrition

Black-eyed peas are high in protein, fiber, folate (B9), vitamin A, manganese, phosphorus, and iron.

The fiber in black-eyed peas aids digestion, and their protein content makes them a good meat substitute, like other beans.