

BLACK-EYED PEAS

A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE



Growing up in Georgia, it was a tradition to eat black-eyed peas on New Year's Day. I was taught that for every pea I ate, I would be a dollar richer in the New Year. Some legends say the practice of eating peas in the New Year date back to ancient Egypt when it was believed that eating a meager food like the black-eyed pea showed humility before the gods and one would receive the blessing of prosperity in return. The Babylonian Talmud, compiled around the year 500 AD, instructs Jews to include black-eyed peas on their tables in the New Year for good luck. By the 1700s this humble pea was brought to the West Indies and America on the ships of slave traders. After General Sherman's March to the Sea during the Civil War, soldiers left the peas—considered to be animal food—in the field. At the end of the Civil War the leftover protein-rich black-eyed peas, or "cowpeas," saved many people from starvation. Today, the pea has gone "haute" making appearances in trendy restaurants from Malibu to Manhattan.

My wish for 2016 is for us to remember the black-eyed pea. Let's go about our daily work with humility and lots of love. And, in return, we might just become a bit more prosperous!

Happy New Year!

MARNIE DUKE MITZE
Associate Vice President and Chief of Staff
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Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.
James 4:10