


An Irving restaurant serves free black-eyed peas on New Year's Day: 'We could all use some good luck'

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At Po Melvin's, owner Mel LeMane is hoping 2021 brings better times for the restaurant industry.



With New Year's Day approaching, a bowl of black-eyed peas beckons. In 2021, you can get some for free at Po Melvin's in Irving.

The past year has been tough for longtime Irving restaurant Po Melvin's.

And owner Mel LeMane knows it has been tough for just about everyone.

So LeMane decided he would do his part to deliver some good luck in 2021. On New Year's Day, he will cook massive amounts of black-eyed peas and hand them out for free, drive-through style, at his restaurant at 4070 N. Belt Line Road.

"We are trying to survive a pandemic that just won't end," LeMane said. "I figured we could all use some good luck in 2021."

Eating black-eyed peas for luck on New Year's Day is a longtime Southern tradition. For LeMane, the peas launched his family into the restaurant business.

LeMane said his late father, also named Melvin, won best in show in the early 1980s at the State Fair of Texas' cooking competition with his black-eyed peas recipe. The elder LeMane continued to serve the dish at the fair for years until opening a stand-alone restaurant, Po Melvin's, in 1988.

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The elder Melvin LeMane, pictured here at the State Fair of Texas, sold his black-eyed peas at the fair for years before opening his own restaurant in Irving. His son will serve free black-eyed peas at Po Melvin's in an effort to start 2021 off with some much-needed good luck. (Photo Courtesy of Melvin LeMane)

Po Melvin's still serves black-eyed peas, prepared simply with hickory-smoked bacon, green onions, beef bouillon, Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper.

On Friday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., each car will receive a 24-ounce container of free black-eyed peas. Additional peas will be available to purchase, as will jalapeño cornbread, another Po Melvin's staple.

LeMane said he hopes the peas will bring the restaurant — and all of us — some good luck.

“We are trying to fight, fight, fight to stay alive, but this has been brutal for mom-and-pop restaurants,” he said. “Let’s hope things turn around soon for all of us.”

Restaurant News

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