

## **CHARLESTON RED RICE - Naomi Williams**

### **INGREDIENTS:**

- 6 slices of bacon
- 16oz smoked sausage, finely cut
- 1 medium onion
- 1 green bell pepper
- 2 celery stalks
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 2 cups uncooked Carolina rice (you can use long grain rice instead, i.e., Uncle Ben's)
- 2 6oz cans of tomato paste
- 2 tablespoon crushed red pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- 1 3/4 cup low-sodium chicken stock

### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Pre-heat oven to 350°.
2. Spray baking dish with non-stick spray, set aside.
3. In a large, deep skillet over medium heat, add bacon, and cook until crispy.
4. Remove bacon from pan onto paper towel, leave bacon drippings in skillet.
5. Add the diced sausage, onions, bell peppers, and celery to the skillet, sauté, stirring occasionally for 4 or 5 minutes, add garlic and stir, continue sautéing for another minute.
6. Rinse rice under cold water until water runs clear.
7. Add rice to the skillet, stir and continue cooking for 1 minute.
8. Crumble bacon and add to skillet along with the tomato paste, chicken stock crushed pepper, salt, black pepper, sugar, and bay leaves; stir until well combined.
9. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes.
10. Transfer contents of skillet to the prepared baking dish, cover tightly with foil, and bake for 30 minutes.
11. Remove dish from oven, fluff rice with a fork, recover with foil and continue baking for 10-12 minutes.

### **NOTE:**

There is always a noticeable African flare in Lowcountry cooking. This Red Rice dish, for example, the tomato paste is what gives this recipe its name, Jollof rice, a common West African dish, also calls for tomato paste. Many Lowcountry recipes from South Carolina are also closely related to Cajun recipes from Louisiana, as rice is common in both, and that makes sense, as rice was one of the biggest trade commodities of this region. I remember my mother making this dish and all of us waiting anxiously to dig in.