

Slow Cooker Comforts

Why Use a Slow Cooker?

Feeling overwhelmed this holiday season? Allow a slow cooker to take away some of the stress! It is a great option because it uses less oil than other methods (meaning less calories), saves time and money, and can be used to prepare meals ahead of time with batch cooking, a method in which food is prepared in advance and heated for each individual use. It also helps limit consumption of processed and less nutritious foods. In our area the winter months are all about family, food, and football. A slow cooker makes it easy to combine all three and still enjoy a hearty meal.

What to Cook?

Now that you're ready to start cooking using a slow cooker, what should you cook? The options are endless! Some ideas include beef stew, soups, pulled pork, steel cut oats, mac-n- cheese, and applesauce. You can prepare appetizers, dinners, desserts, drinks, or anything you would like! As with other meals, aim to include vegetables and protein sources into your slow cooker meals to keep you feeling full and satisfied. Look for recipes that call for vegetables and fruits that are in season as these will be less expensive than those that are out of season. Most recipes will give options for a low and slow cook time or high heat with less time. The method to choose is based on preference and time constraints; either way, it still comes out delicious!

Cooking Times:

- ❖ Beef roast (3-4lbs): 8 hours on low, 6 hours on high
- ❖ Beef stew meat (3lbs): 6 hours on low, 5 hours on high
- ❖ Large Pork Roast(6-7lbs): 9.5 hours on low, 7.5 hours on high
- ❖ Chicken(6lbs): 7.5 hours on low, 6.5 hours on high
- ❖ Fish(3lbs): 3.5 hours on low, 1.5 hours on high

How to Layer a Slow Cooker

Meats and hard root vegetables should be put at the bottom. This is an important step when cooking a meal in a slow cooker, as these foods require more heat for cooking and will be closest to the heat source on the bottom. Next grains should be added, followed by delicate vegetables such as broccoli. Lastly, the liquid should go on top to be poured over all the ingredients. Final touches such as grated parmesan cheese or parsley should go in when the dish is almost finished cooking to keep their structure.



Recipes to Try:

❖ Slow Cooker Baked Apples:

Ingredients:

6 tablespoons butter, softened

1/4 cup chopped pecans

1/4 cup old-fashioned oats

1/4 cup brown sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

Pinch kosher salt

4 apples

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, mix butter, pecans, oats, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, and salt.
2. Slice off the top of each apple and use a melon baller to scoop out core.
3. Stuff the butter mixture into apples, then place in slow cooker.
4. Cook until apples are tender, on high for about 2 hours or on low for about 5 hours. Serve warm with ice cream and caramel.

❖ Chicken Noodle Soup:

Ingredients:

1 ½ pound boneless skinless chicken breasts

1 large onion, chopped

3 carrots, peeled and sliced into coins

2 stalks celery

4 teaspoons fresh thyme sprigs

4 teaspoons fresh rosemary sprigs

3 cloves minced garlic

1 bay leaf

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

10 cups low-sodium chicken broth

8 ounces egg noodles

Directions:

1. In a slow cooker, combine chicken, onion, carrots, celery, thyme, rosemary, garlic, and bay leaf. Pour in broth.
2. Cover and cook on low, 6 to 8 hours. Remove chicken from slow cooker and shred with two forks. Discard herbs and bay leaf. Return chicken to slow cooker and add egg noodles.
3. Cook on low, covered, until al dente, or about 20 to 30 minutes

Need a Dietitian?

Registered Dietitians are here to help you with your nutrition questions. To make an appointment call 412.692.4497 (Oakland location) or 412.623.2421 (Shadyside location).

References:

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