

Slow & Simple

88 Easy & Delicious Crockpot Meals

MELISSA GRIFFITHS



INTRODUCTION

SLOW & SIMPLE

Welcome to our family cookbook!

This cookbook is a collection of our favorite slow cooker recipes, the ones that have stood the test of time, fed hungry kids, and made life a little easier on busy days. These are the meals we turn to when we want something warm, filling, and dependable.

You won't find fancy ingredients or complicated techniques here, just simple, tried-and-true recipes that bring comfort to the table. From weeknight dinners to weekend gatherings, these are the dishes that have filled our kitchen with good smells and happy memories.

I hope this cookbook helps make your mealtimes a little simpler and a lot more delicious, and that it becomes part of your own family's story, one slow cooker meal at a time.

Melissa



I'm Melissa, the creator of [Bless This Mess](#), a food blog I started over twelve years ago to help busy moms make meals that are simple, delicious, and stress-free.

As a mom of five, I know firsthand how chaotic dinnertime can get, and how good it feels to have a plan and a pot of something comforting ready to go. My goal has always been to help make dinner doable, so that everyone (even Mom!) can sit down and enjoy it.

After years of living in the desert and building our dream home from the ground up, my family and I traded the red rocks of Southern Utah for the green hills of Vermont. These days, we're settling into small-town life, raising kids, baking sourdough, and finding joy in the slower pace and beauty all around us.

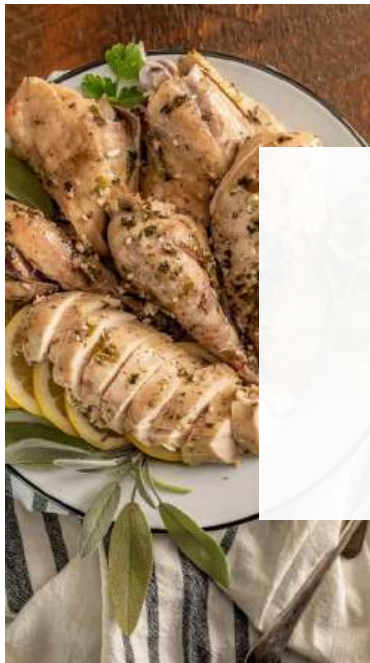
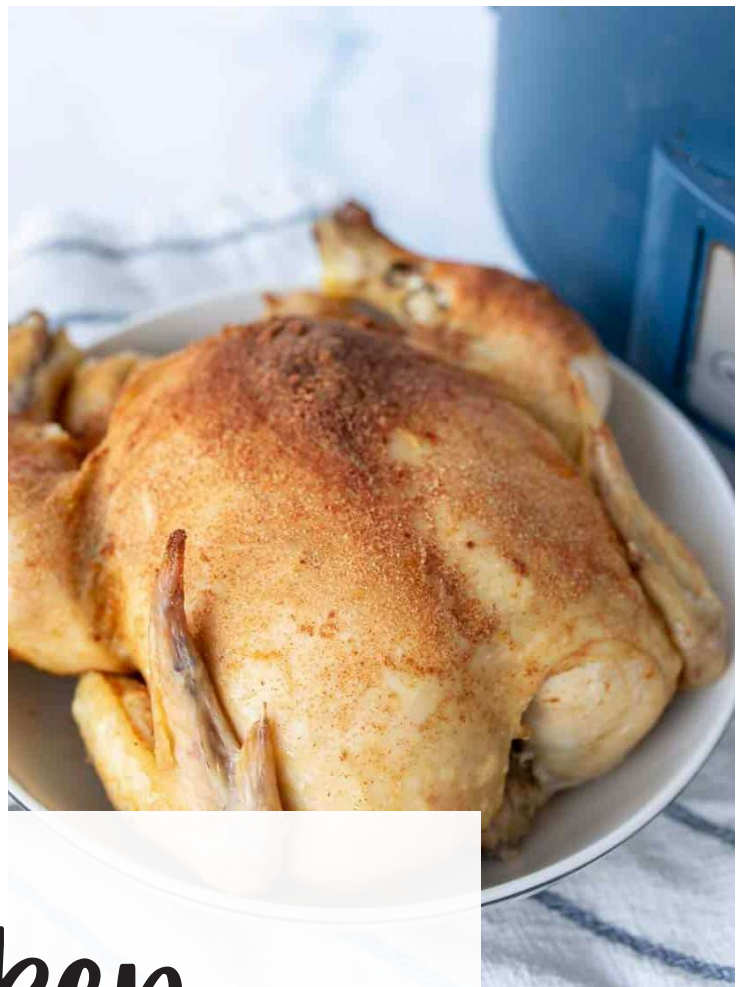
When I'm not testing recipes, you'll usually find me reading aloud to the kids, walking our dogs through the maple trees, or planning our next meal together.

Thanks for being here,

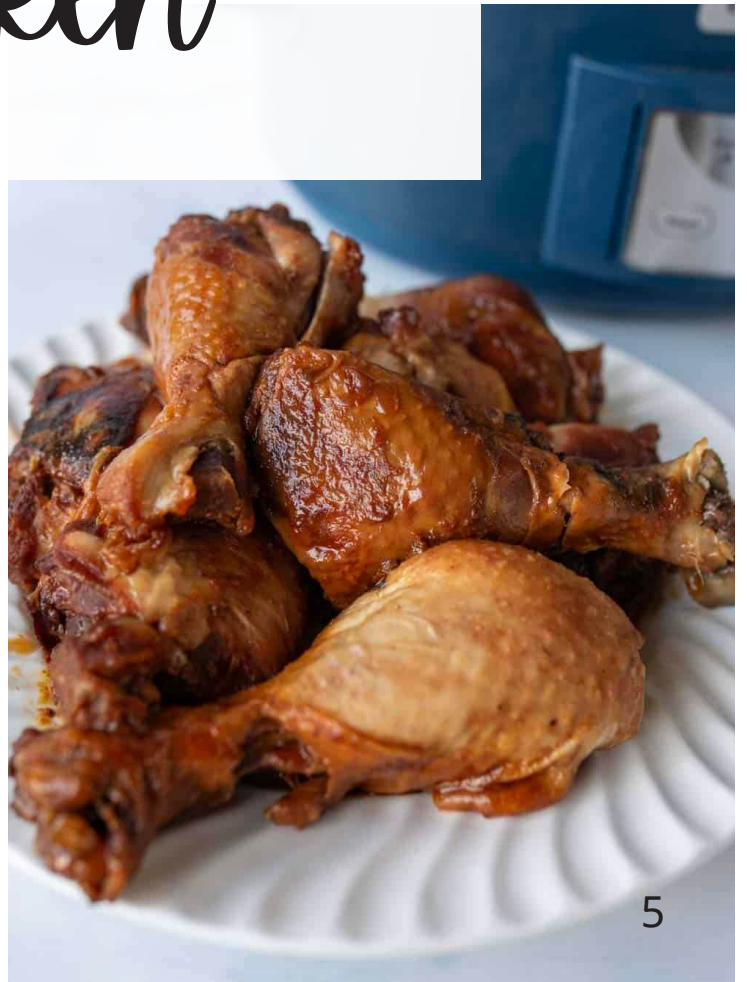
*Melissa
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chicken





MAPLE CHICKEN LEGS

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 5 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup pure maple syrup
- ½ cup BBQ sauce
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 3 pounds chicken legs, bone-in, skin-on

DIRECTIONS

- In a small bowl, whisk together the maple syrup, BBQ sauce, soy sauce, onion powder, and garlic powder.
- Place the chicken legs in the slow cooker.
- Pour the sauce mixture over the chicken and toss to coat evenly.
- Cover and cook on Low for 5–6 hours or High for 3–4 hours, until the chicken is tender and cooked through (165°F internal temperature).
- Optional but recommended: Transfer the cooked chicken to a baking sheet, brush with extra sauce from the slow cooker, and broil for 2–3 minutes until caramelized.
- Serve warm with the extra sauce spooned over the top.

NOTES

- For a sticky glaze, transfer the cooked chicken to a baking sheet, brush with extra sauce from the slow cooker, and broil for 2–3 minutes until caramelized (optional but recommended). Use maple syrup instead of BBQ sauce for the caramelization and you've got a pretty yummy maple glazed chicken meal.
- Use your favorite BBQ sauce to change the flavor profile—smoky, spicy, or sweet all work great.
- These pair wonderfully with mashed potatoes, rice, roasted vegetables, or a simple green salad. They're also good served alongside coleslaw and cornbread for the perfect comfort food spread.



LEMON CHICKEN

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 2 HR

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 to 2.5 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 3-4 lemons, zested and juiced
- ½ cup salted butter, cut into pieces
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon chicken bouillon, powder or granules
- 1 to 2 cups chicken broth, start with 1 cup, add more if needed
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 to 2 tablespoons cornstarch

DIRECTIONS

- Place the chicken breasts in the bottom of the slow cooker.
- Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and Italian seasoning.
- Add the lemon zest, garlic, butter pieces, chicken bouillon, lemon juice, and 1 cup chicken broth.
- Cover and cook on Low for 4 hours or High for 2 hours, until the chicken is tender and cooked through.
- About 30 minutes before serving, whisk together the heavy cream and 1 tablespoon cornstarch.
- Stir the mixture into the slow cooker. (Add an extra tablespoon of cornstarch if you prefer a thicker sauce.)
- Cover and let the sauce thicken for the remaining cook time.
- Serve hot over rice, pasta, or mashed potatoes, spooning the creamy lemon sauce over the chicken.

NOTES

- If your slow cooker runs hot, check the chicken after 3 hours on low or 1.5 hours on high. The internal temperature should reach 165°F.
- If you prefer shredded chicken, simply shred the breasts in the sauce before serving.
- We like it over rice the best to help soak up all the sauce.



CREAMY CHICKEN AND VEGETABLES

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 2 HR

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 to 2.5 pounds chicken breasts, boneless, skinless
- 1 can cream of chicken soup, 22.6-ounce family-sized can
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1-2 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, about 4 ounces
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 package 10-ounce bag frozen California-blend mixed vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, carrots)
- 1 package 12-ounce package wide egg noodles

DIRECTIONS

- Add the chicken breasts to the bottom of the slow cooker.
- Add the cream of chicken soup, sour cream, 1 cup of the chicken broth, cheddar cheese, salt, garlic powder, onion powder, and black pepper. Stir gently to combine.
- Cover and cook on Low for 3-5 hours or High for 2-4 hours, until the chicken is cooked through and tender.
- About 20-30 minutes before serving, stir in the frozen vegetables and cover. If the mixture is too thick, you can add as much of the additional remaining 1 cup of broth as you would like. Stir to combine.
- Cook the egg noodles according to the package directions.
- To serve, place a portion of noodles on each plate, top with a chicken breast, and spoon the creamy cheese sauce and vegetables over the top.

NOTES

- Swap the frozen California blend for mixed peas and carrots or green beans if that's what you have on hand.
- You can shred the chicken into the sauce before serving if you prefer bite-sized pieces instead of whole chicken breasts.
- Serve with a simple side salad or warm bread to round out the meal.



GARLIC HONEY CHICKEN

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 4

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pounds boneless chicken thighs, or breasts
- ½ cup honey
- ½ cup soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sriracha
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch

DIRECTIONS

- Add the chicken, honey, soy sauce, rice vinegar, sriracha, red pepper flakes, ginger, and garlic to your crock pot. Give everything a quick stir and make sure the chicken is coated in honey and soy sauce.
- Put the lid on your crockpot and cook for 4 hours on high heat.
- After 4 hours, whisk the cornstarch together with ½ - 1 tablespoon of water. Pour the cornstarch slurry into the crock pot and stir continually until the sauce begins to thicken.
- Serve the chicken thighs whole or shred them.

NOTES

- Chicken thighs stay incredibly tender in the slow cooker and have more flavor than breasts. They also won't dry out if you accidentally cook them a little too long.
- Use fresh garlic and ginger if you prefer. Substitute with 4 freshly minced garlic cloves and 1 tablespoon fresh minced ginger.
- Toasted sesame seeds, sliced green onions, and extra red pepper flakes are great garnishes for this dish.
- Serve over a bed of warm rice alongside some stir fry veggies. It's also great on toasted buns or even wrapped up in tortillas.



CHICKEN LEGS AND BAKED POTATOES

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

For the Chicken:

- 3 to 3.5 pounds chicken legs or drumsticks
- 1 cup jam or jelly, (see notes)
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons garlic, minced (or 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder)

For the Potatoes:

- Foil or parchment paper, about 18 inches long
- 6 to 8 medium potatoes, scrubbed clean (about 5-ounce potatoes)

For Serving:

- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 bunch green onions, thinly sliced
- Salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS

- Place the chicken legs in the bottom of the slow cooker.
- In a small bowl, add the jam or jelly, ketchup, soy sauce, and garlic. Whisk to combine well.
- Pour the sauce over the chicken legs.
- Place a large piece of foil or parchment paper over top of the chicken legs to create a barrier between the chicken and potatoes.
- Place the potatoes on top of the foil or parchment paper.
- Place the lid on the slow cooker, and cook on high for 4 hours or low for 5 to 6 hours, or until the chicken is cooked through and the potatoes are soft in the center.
- Enjoy the chicken hot with a “baked” potato on the side. Serve the baked potato with sour cream, sliced green onions, and salt and pepper.

NOTES

- Use grape, apple, apricot, or peach jam for a nice sweet flavor without being too fruity, and avoid jams with seeds like blackberry.
- Customize the flavor by adding a tablespoon of Sriracha for spice, a teaspoon of Montreal Steak Seasoning for smokiness, or your favorite spices like onion powder, cumin, or ginger.
- You can “bake” sweet potatoes alongside regular potatoes—just cut them in half around the middle so they’re smaller in size, and if your family prefers, remove the meat from the bone before serving since it comes off easily.
- Serve with fresh green beans boiled with salt and onion, sautéed zucchini, a green salad, or cantaloupe, and save time by scrubbing potatoes and mixing the sauce ahead of time.



WHOLE CHICKEN

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 3.5 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole chicken, 4-5 pounds
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons poultry seasoning
- 2 teaspoons paprika, smoked preferred
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup water

DIRECTIONS

- In a small bowl, combine salt, pepper, poultry seasoning, paprika, onion powder, and garlic powder.
- Remove giblets and neck if they are included.
- Sprinkle the seasoning all over all of the chicken.
- Pour 1 cup water into the slow cooker. Place chicken in slow cooker breast-side up.
- Cover and cook on Low for 6-7 hours or High for 3 ½ – 4 ½ hours, until the thickest part of the thigh reads 165°F and juices run clear.
- Optional for crisping skin: Transfer chicken to a foil-lined sheet pan and broil 2-5 minutes, watching closely, until the skin is browned and crisp.
- Let rest 10 minutes, carve, and spoon slow-cooker juices over servings.

HOMEMADE GRAVY & STOCK

- **Gravy:** Bring 2 cups strained cooking juices to a simmer. Whisk 2 tablespoons cornstarch with 2 tablespoons cold water, then stir into the juices to thicken. Season to taste.
- **Stock:** Add bones, skin, neck, and giblets back to the slow cooker (no need to wash). Cover with 6-8 cups water, add veggie scraps and a splash of vinegar. Cook on high for 6-8 hours or low for 10-12 hours. Strain and freeze extras.

NOTES

- If you cook the chicken just until it is cooked through (165°), you can remove it from the slow cooker whole and cut it into pieces (2 thighs, 2 legs, 2 breasts) and served the sliced meat. If it cooks longer it will start to be extra tender and fall apart and you can pick the chicken from the bones and serve it as shredded chicken or just in chunks.
- Refrigerate leftovers up to 3 days. Use the shredded meat for tacos, chicken salad, pasta dishes, or soups.
- I like the smoked paprika because it gives it a bit of a rotisserie chicken flavor. Feel free to use any seasoning mixes or blends that you like or have on hand.



CHICKEN KORMA

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 4

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken thighs
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- 1 ½ cups unsweetened coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons curry powder
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

- Add all of your ingredients to a slow cooker. Stir to combine and make sure your chicken is evenly covered.
- Cook your korma on high heat for 3 hours. After 3 hours, use two large forks to shred your chicken and give the korma a quick stir. (For a longer, gentler cooking method, you can prepare this korma on low heat for 6 hours instead.)
- Serve over rice or veggies and enjoy!

NOTES

- If you prefer a thicker sauce, remove the lid during the last 30 minutes of cooking to allow excess liquid to evaporate and concentrate the flavors.
- This curry pairs perfectly with fluffy basmati rice and warm naan bread. Fresh cilantro makes an excellent finishing touch as a garnish.
- Leftover korma stays fresh in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.
- When reheating in the microwave, warm for approximately one minute and place a paper towel or plate over the bowl to avoid messy splattering.



CHICKEN & STUFFING CASSEROLE

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts, (about 2.5 pounds)
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup, 10.5 ounces each
- ½ cup sour cream
- ½ cup diced white onion
- 10 ounces frozen peas and carrots
- 1 box chicken stuffing mix, 6 ounces
- ¼ cup salted butter, melted
- salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Place the chicken breasts in a 6-quart slow cooker.
- Pour the condensed soup over the chicken. Add the sour cream and gently swirl it together with the soup (no need to fully mix).
- Sprinkle the frozen peas and carrots over the top.
- Sprinkle the diced onion over the top.
- In a small bowl, toss the dry stuffing mix with the melted butter. Sprinkle evenly over everything.
- Cover and cook on Low for 6–7 hours or on High for 3–4 hours, until the chicken is cooked through and tender.
- If you'd like the stuffing a bit firmer, uncover for the last 45 minutes. It won't get crispy like oven stuffing, but it will set up a little.
- Season to taste with salt and pepper. Garnish with fresh parsley and serve.

NOTES

- Prefer thighs? Use 2 to 2 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs—same cook time.
- If you'd like the sauce to be a little looser, stir in 1/4 to 1/2 cup chicken broth with the soup.
- You can switch up the veggies for other things that you liked. I feel like the peas and carrots make it feel a bit like chicken pot pie and I really like those but lots of things like corn, a variety of mixed vegetables, or green beans would all be great.
- You can use a variety of stuffing mixes. I just used chicken but you can use what you like or have on hand.



CRANBERRY CHICKEN

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds chicken thighs, boneless, skinless
- 1 can whole berry cranberry sauce, 15 ounces
- ½ cup barbecue
- 3 tablespoons white vinegar
- 1 onion chopped, large
- 2 cups wild rice blend

DIRECTIONS

- Add the chicken to the slow cooker.
- Add the cranberry sauce, barbecue sauce, vinegar, and onion to the slow cooker and stir a bit to combine and break up the cranberry sauce.
- Cook on Low for 4-5 hours or High for 3-4 hours.
- Cook the wild rice according to package instructions.
- Add salt and pepper to taste to the chicken. It's also really good with a squeeze of fresh lemon over the chicken before serving. Serve over a bed of wild rice.

NOTES

- I like to use a barbecue sauce with a little spice for this recipe.
- I also like to cut up the onion really small so that it kind of disappears as it cooks.
- Make sure you are finding the whole berry cranberry sauce, it's a little different than the jellied kind.
- I like to make sure I don't over cook this chicken. If you do it will just shred apart and it's still great, but I like the texture a lot better when the chicken is still intact when serving.
- Spoon the extra sauce in the slow cooker over the chicken and rice, so delicious!



YELLOW CHICKEN CURRY

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 2 HR 20 MIN

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can coconut milk, 15-ounce can
- ½ cup chicken broth, or water
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 limes
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger
- 1 tablespoon yellow curry powder, or regular curry powder
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 pounds chicken breast, skinless skinless
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 1/2 cups)
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 red bell pepper, julienned
- Fresh diced cilantro, for serving
- ¼ cup salted roasted peanuts, for serving

DIRECTIONS

- Whisk the coconut milk, broth, soy sauce, juice from 1 lime, garlic, ginger, curry powder, turmeric, black pepper, and salt in the bottom of a 6-quart slow cooker.
- Add the chicken, sweet potatoes, carrots, and onion to the slow cooker. Stir to combine.
- Cover and cook on Low 4–5 hours or High 2 – 3 hours, until the chicken is tender and the sweet potatoes are soft.
- Remove the chicken, shred or chop, and return it to the slow cooker.
- Stir in the peas along with the red bell pepper, and let cook for another 20 or so minutes to warm up the peas and soften the peppers just a bit.
- Taste and adjust salt or pepper. Spoon over hot cooked rice and top with cilantro, lime juice, and peanuts.

NOTES

- Want it thicker? Stir in a cornstarch slurry (1 tablespoon cornstarch + 1 tablespoon cold water) during step 5 and simmer on High until glossy.
- Add greens by stirring in a couple handfuls of baby spinach during step 5.
- You can use regular potatoes instead of sweet potatoes if that's what you like or have on hand.
- I find that the slow cooker dulls the spices quite a bit so I'll often add a good sprinkle of all of them again at the end of the cook time to help with potency.
- The lime juice, cilantro, and peanuts really add a lot to this dish, don't skip them, they aren't a garnish, they are part of the recipe!



CHICKEN SATAY

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 4 HR

SERVES: 4

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ½ – 3 pounds boneless skinless chicken thighs
- ½ cup unsweetened coconut milk
- ½ cup creamy peanut butter
- ½ cup soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon red curry paste, Thai Kitchen is one I can usually find in most markets.
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 tablespoon sriracha sauce
- ½ teaspoon ground marjoram

DIRECTIONS

- Add all of the ingredients to your slow cooker. Give everything a quick stir and make sure the chicken is coated in the spices and liquid.
- Place the lid on your slow cooker and cook for 4 hours on high heat. Alternatively, you can cook your chicken on low heat for 6-7 hours.
- Use two large forks to shred your chicken. Serve and enjoy!

NOTES

- If you can't find red curry paste, substitute with 1 teaspoon of curry powder mixed with ½ teaspoon of paprika for similar flavor depth.
- Natural peanut butter is ideal due to its thinner consistency and more robust nutty taste, though any creamy variety will produce delicious results.
- This satay pairs beautifully with jasmine rice, naan bread, fresh cilantro, and a squeeze of lime juice for an authentic experience.
- Keep leftovers refrigerated in a sealed container for up to four days.



CRACK CHICKEN

PREP: 5 MINS COOK: 6 HRS 15 MINS SERVES: 6 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds chicken breast, about 3 large breast, boneless and skinless
- 2 tablespoons dry Ranch seasoning mix
- ⅓ cup chicken broth
- 12 ounces cream cheese, 1.5 blocks, room temperature
- 5 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
- ¾ cup shredded Colby Jack, divided
- ¾ cup shredded Mild Cheddar, divided
- salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Unpack the chicken breasts. Pat dry with a paper towel and cut off all excess fat. Place in the slow cooker.
- Sprinkle the top with dry Ranch seasoning. Pour the chicken broth and add the cream cheese.
- Cover and cook on low for 6 hours. The chicken's internal temperature will be around 165 degrees F. If it has not reached this temperature, cook until the chicken is fully cooked.
- Uncover and using 2 forks, shred the chicken. Mix well so you will have the shredded chicken in a cream sauce.
- Add ¼ cup shredded Colby Jack and Mild Cheddar. Add half of the crumbled bacon. Mix well.
- Spread evenly and sprinkle on top remaining of the cheeses and crumbled bacon.
- Cover and cook for an additional 15 minutes or until the cheese on top is all melted.

NOTES

- You can cook on high for around 4 hours instead, and bring the cream cheese to room temperature before adding for a smoother, creamier texture.
- Use 1½ blocks of cream cheese for the perfect creamy ratio without overpowering the dish, and add chicken broth while cooking to keep the chicken moist and tender.
- Cooking times may vary depending on the chicken cut you use, so adjust as needed.
- Reheat in the microwave or for best results, place your portion in a ramekin and air fry for 3-4 minutes at 350°F, and add red pepper flakes and cayenne with the broth for a spicy kick.



CHICKEN TIKKA MASALA

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced (1 tablespoon)
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger, or 1 teaspoon dried ground ginger
- ¼ cup water
- 1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoon garam masala
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika

- 1/2 salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne, optional
- 1/4 teaspoon cracked pepper
- 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken thighs
- 1/3 cup heavy cream

For Serving:

- 6 cups cooked rice, made from 2 cups uncooked rice
- 1/4 bunch fresh cilantro

DIRECTIONS

- Add the diced onion, minced garlic, and grated ginger to the bowl of your slow cooker. Add ¼ cup of water. Stir to combine. Add the tomato sauce, and stir again to combine.
- In a small bowl, combine the garam masala, cumin, turmeric, smoked paprika, salt, cayenne, and pepper. Sprinkle the spice mix over both sides of the chicken thighs, coating them liberally.
- Place the seasoned chicken on top of the tomato mixture.
- Place the lid on the slow cooker, and turn the slow cooker on. Cook on high for 3 hours or low for 6 hours.
- After the cook time is finished, the chicken should be fall-apart tender. Use a fork to break up any large pieces.
- Turn the slow cooker off, then add the heavy cream. Stir gently to combine the cream with the tomato sauce.
- Taste the sauce and add salt if needed. I also like to adjust the garam masala to taste after the cooking time. (I generally add an additional 1 to 2 teaspoons after the chicken has cooked, before serving.)
- To serve, spoon the chicken and tomato sauce over cooked rice and top with fresh cilantro.

NOTES

- Use fresh garam masala for best flavor, substitute coconut milk for cream if desired, and serve over sautéed zucchini instead of rice.
- This works with high or low cooking times—start it at lunch or after naps and let it cook while you're out.
- Serve with warm naan and simple green veggies, and prep ahead by mixing spices, coating chicken, and chopping onions and garlic.



CHICKEN POT PIE

PREP: 30 MINS

COOK: 6 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 to 1 1/2 pounds boneless skinless chicken, (thighs or breast meat)
- 4 cups cubed potatoes
- 2 cups peeled and diced carrots
- 2 cups green beans, (raw, canned, or frozen all work)
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 onion diced, (about 1 cup)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon rubbed sage
- 1 cup cream
- prepared biscuits, I recommend this easy biscuit recipe

DIRECTIONS

- In the bowl of your slow cooker add the chicken, potatoes, onions, carrots, green beans, stock, onion, and spices.
- Add the lid and allow to cook until the vegetables are tender and the meat is cooked through, 4-6 hours on high or 6-8 hours on low.
- Towards the end of your cooking time make your biscuits.
- When the meat is cooked remove it from the slow cooker and shred it well. Return the meat to the slow cooker and stir to combine.
- Add the cream and stir well.
- Add salt and pepper to taste and serve with fresh biscuits on top.

NOTES

- Swap in whatever vegetables you like or have on hand—use peas instead of corn, or any other favorites.
- Sauté diced onions in butter or oil before adding to the slow cooker for enhanced flavor, and mix flour with cream for a richer, thicker sauce.
- Add fresh herbs like thyme or parsley towards the end of cooking for more vibrant flavor.



CHICKEN LEGS

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: QT

INGREDIENTS

- 3 to 3.5 pound chicken legs or drumsticks
- 1 cup jam or jelly, (see notes)
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic, (or 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder)

DIRECTIONS

- Place the chicken legs in the bottom of the slow cooker.
- In a small bowl add the jam or jelly, ketchup, soy sauce, and garlic. Mix to combine well.
- Pour the sauce over the chicken legs.
- Place the lid on the slow cooker and cook on high for 4 hours or low for 5-6 or until the chicken is cooked through.
- Enjoy the chicken hot.

NOTES

- Use grape, apple, apricot, or peach jam for sweetness without being too fruity—avoid jams with seeds like blackberry.
- Customize with Sriracha for spice, Montreal Steak Seasoning for smokiness, or add onion powder, cumin, or ginger.
- Serve the flavorful sauce over rice with steamed veggies for a complete meal.



GARLIC AND HERB WHOLE CHICKEN

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 6 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large white onion
- 1 whole chicken, with or without skin, 3-5 pounds, thawed if frozen
- 2-3 tablespoons mixed fresh minced herbs such as parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic, about 3 cloves
- 6 tablespoons softened butter
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

- Trim both ends from the onion and remove the outer layer. Slice the onion into 4 thick slices like you would to make onion rings. Set the onion in the bottom of the slow cooker close together in the center. (You are making a little “onion platform” for the chicken to sit on.)
- Prepare the chicken by tying the legs together with cotton twine.
- In a small bowl, mix together the butter, herbs, garlic, salt, and pepper until well combined.
- Coat the chicken all over with the butter and herb mixture.
- Place the chicken on top of the onion in your slow cooker – avoid letting the chicken touch the sides of the slow cooker if you can.
- Place the lid on your slow cooker and cook on low for 6-8 hours or until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the breast registers 165 degrees F.
- Turn off the slow cooker, and remove the lid. Let the chicken rest for 10 minutes before removing it from the slow cooker.
- Place the whole chicken on a serving platter or cut in into pieces before serving. Serve right away while still hot.

NOTES

- Cook on low rather than high so the butter and herbs have time to flavor the meat instead of melting off too quickly.
- Use any herb combination you like—rosemary, sage, parsley, and thyme are great options—and turn the flavorful juices at the bottom into gravy using the instructions in the post.
- An instant-read thermometer removes all guesswork and ensures perfectly cooked chicken every time.



SHREDDED CHICKEN

PREP: 5 MINS

COOK: 30 MINS

SERVES: 4

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 4 chicken thighs, boneless and skinless
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup chicken broth, optional

DIRECTIONS

- Place the chicken and seasonings in the slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6-8 hours, or until the chicken is tender and easily shreds with a fork.
- Shred the chicken using two forks and serve.

HOW TO USE TWO FORKS TO SHRED

- Hold one fork in each hand, like you're holding drumsticks. Make sure the tines (the pointy parts) of the forks are facing away from each other.
- Begin shredding the chicken by using a gentle pulling and tearing motion with the forks. Insert the tines into the chicken meat, and then pull them apart in opposite directions.
- Keep pulling it apart with the forks. You'll notice that the chicken starts to break into small, shredded pieces. Repeat the process for the remaining chicken thighs, one at a time, until all of them are shredded.

NOTES

- This method also works with boneless skinless chicken breast though they tend to dry out a little easier. I prefer the chicken thighs but feel free to use the cut of meat that you like or have on hand.
- If your chicken thighs are very large or very thick, they'll take longer to cook than instructed. The chicken is cooked through when the center reaches 165 degrees F. on an instant read thermometer.



CHICKEN OR TURKEY BROTH

PREP: 15 MINS COOK: 12 HRS SERVES: 8 - 12 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

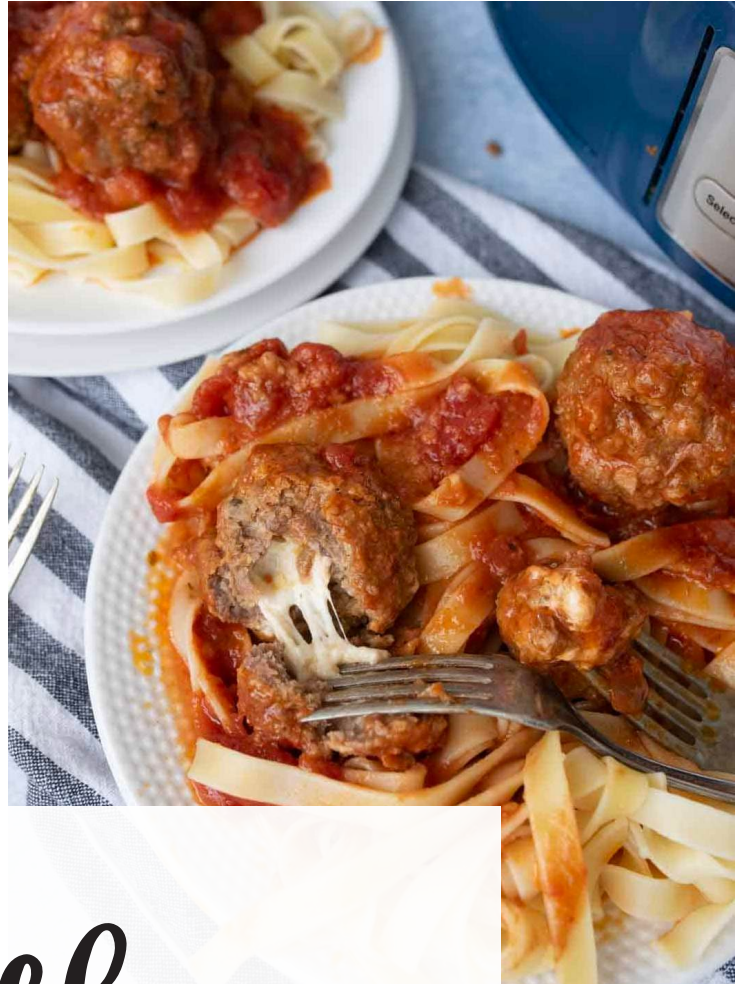
- 3 pounds chicken or turkey bones or leftover chicken or turkey carcass, after roasting and picking off the meat
- 1/2 to 1 large onion
- 2 to 3 large carrots
- 2 to 3 ribs celery
- 1/2 teaspoon black peppercorns
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tablespoon vinegar, white or apple cider vinegar
- 8 to 12 cups water, see notes

DIRECTIONS

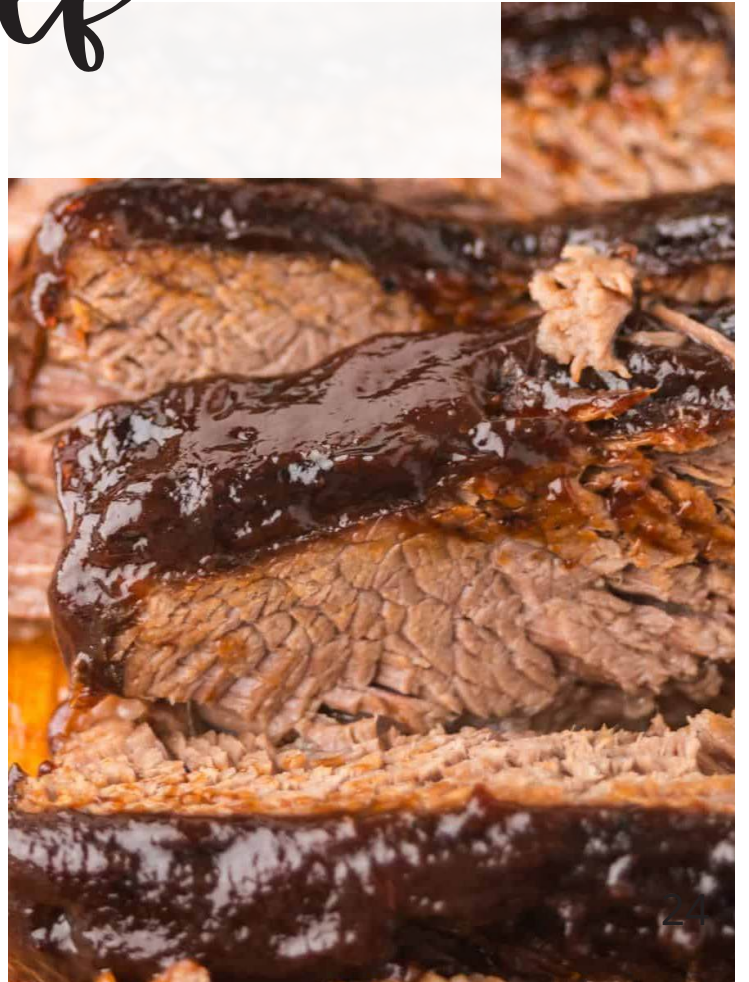
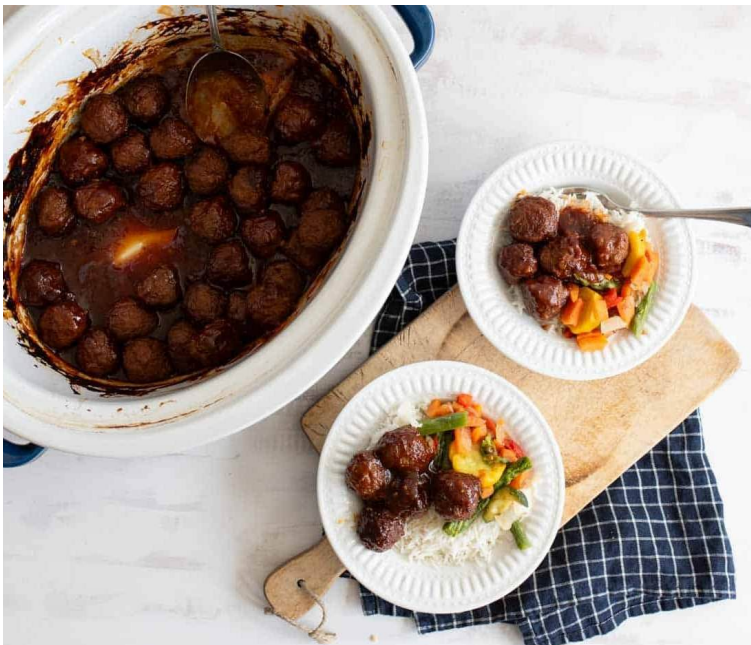
- Add the ingredients and water and slow cook on low overnight for a full 12 hours or more. The long cooking time is essential for a really good nourishing broth

NOTES

- Water amount depends on your desired thickness and pressure cooker size—use 8 cups for flavorful sipping broth or 12 cups for cooking, but never fill past the 3/4 line on your pot.
- Freeze broth in wide-mouth mason jars with 2 inches headspace, use silicone Souper Cubes for 1-cup portions, or try reusable deli containers, and don't worry if cold broth looks like jelly—that's the collagen.
- Buy soup bones from a butcher or local rancher, add vinegar to pull nutrients from the bones, and you can make this the same way in a slow cooker on low overnight.



beef





GARLIC HONEY MEATBALLS

PREP: 15 MIN

COOK: 2 HR

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds frozen meatballs
- 1 ½ cups ketchup
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons vinegar, white or apple cider
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- cooked rice & veggies, optional for serving

DIRECTIONS

- Add the meatballs to your slow cooker.
- In a medium bowl, whisk together the ketchup, brown sugar, honey, soy sauce, vinegar, and garlic until well combined.
- Pour the sauce over the meatballs in the slow cooker. Stir gently to coat all the meatballs evenly.
- Cook on low for 3-4 hours or on high for 2-3 hours. (Until the meatballs are heated through and the sauce is thickened.)
- Serve hot over rice with steamed veggies on the side.

NOTES

- Adding red pepper flakes or a drizzle of hot sauce during the last hour transforms these from sweet to sweet-and-spicy. Start with ¼ teaspoon and adjust to your family's preferences.
- Fully cooked frozen meatballs are most convenient – beef, turkey, or chicken all work great. I prefer Italian-style or plain meatballs so the honey garlic sauce really shines through.



SLOPPY JOES

PREP: 15 MIN

COOK: 2 HR

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

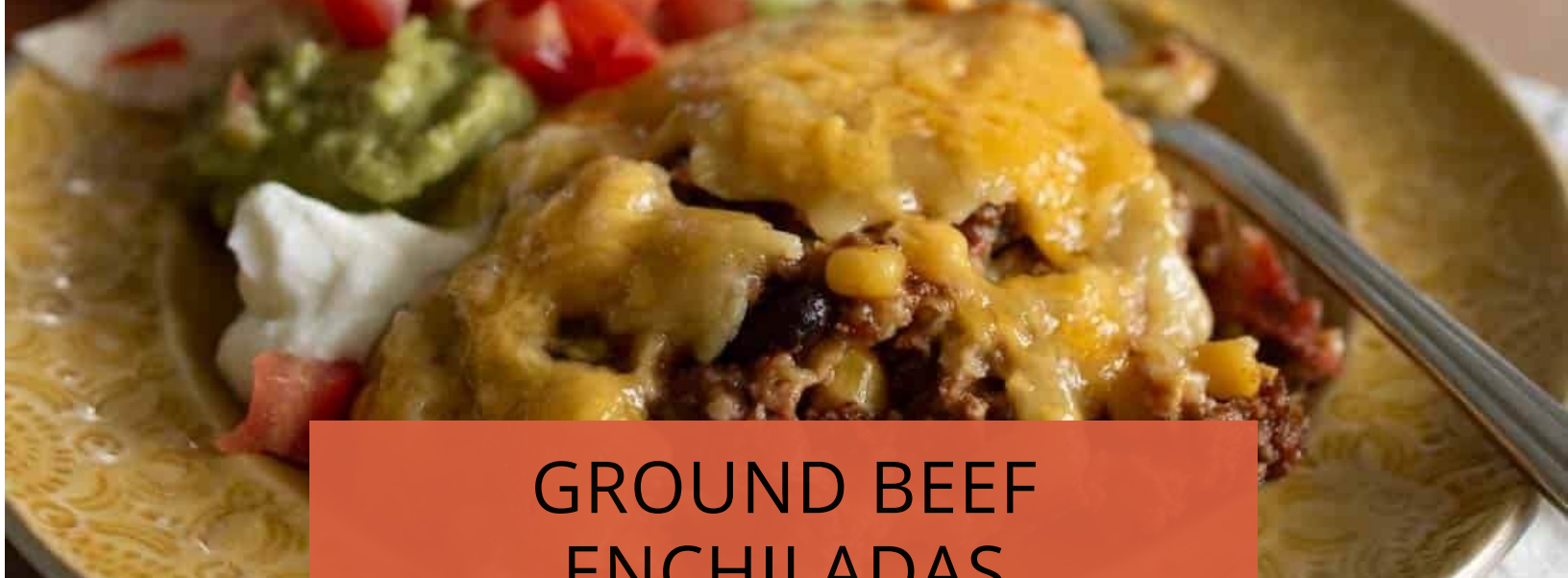
- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1 large green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium white onion, chopped
- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ½ tablespoon worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

DIRECTIONS

- Cook your ground beef in a skillet over medium-high heat for about 5 minutes, or until cooked all the way through. Break up the ground beef with a spatula as it cooks.
- Add the ground beef to a slow cooker along with the remaining ingredients. Give everything a quick stir to combine.
- Cook on high heat for 2 hours (or low for 4 hours).
- Serve your sloppy joe filling on top of a warm bun and a side of coleslaw, potato chips, etc.

NOTES

- You can substitute the white onion for a yellow onion if you want to add a little extra sweetness to your sloppy joes.
- Toast your hamburger buns lightly for extra texture contrast. Brioche buns or potato rolls take this comfort food to the next level!
- You can double or triple this recipe and freeze the extra in meal-sized portions for other busy nights when you need a quick dinner. It would also make a super easy lunch!



GROUND BEEF ENCHILADAS

PREP: 20 MINS COOK: 1.5 HRS SERVES: 6 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 pounds ground beef
- 2 tablespoons taco seasoning, store bought or homemade
- 1 can beans, 15 ounce can, drained (black, pinto, or your favorite)
- 1 can corn, 15 ounce, drained
- 8-12 corn tortillas
- 1 can fire-roasted diced tomatoes, 15 ounces, not drained
- 1 can green enchilada sauce, 10.5 ounces
- 3 cups shredded cheese, cheddar, Monterey Jack, or a blend
- shredded lettuce, guacamole, salsa, chopped fresh tomatoes, optional for serving

DIRECTIONS

- In a large skillet over medium heat, cook the ground beef until no longer pink. Drain excess grease if needed. (If using other veggies like onions, peppers, zucchini, etc brown those along with the beef.)
- Stir in taco seasoning, drained beans, corn, fire-roasted tomatoes (with juice), and 1/3 of the enchilada sauce. Mix until well combined and heated through. Remove from heat.
- Lightly grease the inside of a slow cooker. Tear tortillas to fit and place a single layer on the bottom of the slow cooker. Spread 1/3 of the meat mixture over the tortillas, then sprinkle with 1/4 of the cheese. Repeat layers two more times: tortillas, meat, cheese.
- Finish with one final layer of tortillas. Pour the remaining 2/3 of the enchilada sauce evenly over the top. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese. Cover and cook on low for 3-4 hours or high for 1.5-2 hours, until hot and bubbly.
- Turn the slow cooker off, remove the lid, and let the casserole rest for 5-10 minutes before serving.
- Scoop and serve warm with shredded lettuce, guacamole, salsa, and fresh tomatoes on the side.

NOTES

- Swap the ground beef for ground chicken or turkey, or omit the meat and replace it with an additional 2 cans of beans.
- Use whatever kinds of beans you like or have on hand. I like black, pinto, and small red beans a lot in this recipe.
- Add more vegetables to this dish — saute diced onions, bell peppers, and even zucchini when you are cooking the ground beef.



BEEF STROGANOFF

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4 QT

INGREDIENTS

- ½ tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium white onion, diced
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- 2 pounds diced stew beef
- 6 cups beef broth
- ¼ cup worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ⅓ cup cornstarch

DIRECTIONS

- Heat the olive oil in a large pan or skillet over medium-high heat. Give the oil a few minutes to heat up and then add the diced onions and mushrooms. Cook for about 5 minutes until tender.
- Add the beef to the skillet and continue cooking for about 3-5 minutes, or until the beef is lightly browned.
- Add the beef and veggie mixture to your slow cooker along with the beef broth, apple cider vinegar, worcestershire sauce, dijon mustard, garlic powder, salt, and pepper.
- Cook the stroganoff on high for 4 hours or low for 6 hours. Near the end of the cook time, cook the egg noodles according to the package directions.
- Whisk the cornstarch together with a splash of water. Whisk the cornstarch slurry into the stroganoff mixture. Continue stirring until it is blended and cook in crockpot until it has thickened slightly.
- Serve your beef stroganoff over the egg noodles and enjoy!

NOTES

- Any mushroom variety works well in this recipe – both brown and white mushrooms deliver excellent flavor results.
- Yellow onions can replace white onions if you prefer a subtly sweeter taste profile.
- For a thicker consistency, add an additional ¼ cup cornstarch or ½ cup sour cream, ensuring you whisk either option completely into the mixture.



BARBACOA TACOS

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2- 2½ pound chuck roast
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- ½ cup lime juice
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1 tablespoon chili powder

DIRECTIONS

- Set out a crockpot and cut an excess fat off of your chuck roast. Place the roast in the crockpot. Depending on the size of your crock pot, you may need to cut the roast into 2-3 pieces.
- Add the remaining ingredients to the pot and use your hands to toss the ingredients together, ensuring that the beef is covered by the broth.
- Cook the roast on high for 3 hours or low for 6 hours. Ensure the beef has reached an internal temperature of 145°F.
- Remove the roast from the crockpot and shred the beef using two forks.
- Serve with your favorite taco toppings and enjoy!

NOTES

- Slow cooker option: Cook 4-6 hours until tender.
- Use bottled or fresh lime juice.
- For extra heat, substitute cayenne chili powder for regular chili powder.
- Serve on homemade tortillas with fresh salsa, sour cream, Colby Jack cheese, and cilantro.
- Refrigerate leftovers up to 3 days in a container with some cooking liquid to prevent drying, or freeze up to 3 months.



BRISKET

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 5 HRS

SERVES: 4

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pound brisket
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup barbecue sauce

DIRECTIONS

- Pat your brisket dry with paper towels. Stir the brown sugar, paprika, salt, pepper, and garlic powder together.
- Use your hands to rub the spice mix into the brisket until it is evenly coated. Place the brisket in the slow cooker and cook on Low for 8-9 hours or High heat for 5 hours.
- After 5 hours (or 8-9 if cooked on low), transfer your brisket to an oven-safe serving dish. Brush the brisket with barbecue sauce and broil on high for about 5 minutes, or until the barbecue sauce is bubbling.
- Slice, serve, and enjoy!

NOTES

- Regular paprika can be used instead of smoked paprika – it will still taste delicious!
- Replace the spice blend with your favorite dry rub if preferred.
- Don't trim fat off brisket before coating with spices and cooking.
- No need to add liquid to the slow cooker – just coat brisket and place inside.



MOZZARELLA STUFFED MEATBALLS

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 2 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 pound hot Italian sausage
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup whole milk
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 6 ounces low-moisture mozzarella cheese, cut into ¾-inch cubes
- 4 cups tomato sauce, homemade or store-bought (2 jars store-bought)

DIRECTIONS

- Cut the mozzarella into ¾-inch cubes.
- In a large mixing bowl, combine the ground beef, Italian sausage, garlic powder, salt, black pepper, bread crumbs, Parmesan cheese, eggs, milk, and parsley. Mix until just combined (do not overmix).
- Pour half of a jar of pasta sauce in the bottom of the slow cooker.
- Roll the mixture into golf ball-sized meatballs. Press one mozzarella cube into the center of each meatball, then shape the meat mixture around it to completely enclose the cheese.
- Arrange the meatballs in the slow cooker in a single layer. When you fill up the bottom, pour the second half of the pasta sauce on top, finish rolling your meatballs and put them on top of the sauce. When you have used all the meat mixture, pour the tomato sauce evenly over the top.
- Cover and cook on High for 2 to 2 ½ hours or Low for 3-4 hours, until the meatballs are cooked through (165°F internal temperature).
- Serve hot over pasta, on toasted hoagie rolls, or with crusty bread for dipping.

NOTES

- For a milder flavor, swap the hot Italian sausage for mild or sweet Italian sausage.
- Browning the meatballs in a skillet before adding them to the slow cooker adds extra flavor but is optional.
- If you are feeling like adding the cheese is tedious, you can skip it! It's still a REALLY good meatball recipe and one of my family's favorite meals!



BEEF BOURGUIGNON

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 6 ounces bacon, roughly chopped
- 4-5 pounds beef, chuck roast, cut into chubby 3 to 4-inch chunks.
- 1 large carrot, sliced 1/2-inch thick
- 1 large white onion, diced
- 6 cloves garlic, minced (divided: 4 for the stew, 2 for the mushrooms)
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt, plus more to taste
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 6 ounces small pearl onions
- 2 cups red wine, Merlot, Pinot Noir, or Chianti
- 1 cup beef stock
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 beef bouillon cube, crushed
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme, finely chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, finely chopped (divided)
- 1 pound mushrooms, white or cremini, quartered
- 2 tablespoons butter

DIRECTIONS

- Cook bacon until crisp, 5-7 minutes. Transfer to slow cooker.
- Pat beef dry and sear in batches in bacon drippings until browned. Add to slow cooker.
- Sauté carrot and diced onion until softened, about 3 minutes. Add 4 cloves garlic for 30 seconds. Transfer to slow cooker with pearl onions if using. Deglaze skillet with wine, simmering 5 minutes. Pour into slow cooker.
- Stir cornstarch into beef stock, then add to slow cooker with tomato paste, bouillon, thyme, bay leaves, 1 tablespoon parsley, salt, and pepper.
- Cook on low 8-10 hours or high 6-8 hours until beef is tender.
- Fifteen minutes before serving, sauté remaining 2 cloves garlic and mushrooms in butter until browned, 5-7 minutes. Add to slow cooker. Remove bay leaves and skim fat. Adjust consistency and seasoning as needed.
- Garnish with remaining parsley and serve over mashed potatoes.

NOTES

- Chuck roast is pricier but ideal for this recipe—perfect for special occasions and company.
- Searing the beef is essential and cannot be skipped.
- Make ahead for even better flavor. Chill, remove solidified fat, and reheat gently.



MONGOLIAN BEEF

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 4 HR

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ pounds flank steak
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger
- ½ cup soy sauce
- ½ cup beef broth
- ¾ cup water
- ½ cup brown sugar, packed
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 5 green onions, chopped, green and white parts separated
- Cooked rice, for serving

DIRECTIONS

- Thinly slice the flank steak against the grain. You don't want them too thin here though or they'll fall apart in the slow cooker. Shoot for about ½-inch slices. Place in the bottom of the slow cooker.
- In a small bowl, combine the sesame oil, garlic, ginger, soy sauce, beef broth, water, brown sugar, and corn starch. Use a fork to combine the ingredients well and then pour them over the meat in the slow cooker.
- Chop the green onions and divide the green parts from the white parts. Put all of the chopped white parts in the slow cooker. Reserve the greens for serving.
- Cover and cook on low for 4-6 hours, until the beef is tender and the sauce has thickened.
- Serve hot over cooked rice. Garnish with green parts of onions.

NOTES

- The brown sugar balances the salty soy sauce. For a less sweet version, reduce to ⅓ cup; for a richer flavor, try dark brown sugar.
- Add red pepper flakes or add a drizzle of sriracha before serving for more heat.
- Use low-sodium soy sauce to better control the saltiness.
- Serve over rice, but it's also great with noodles or even inside lettuce wraps for a lighter option.
- You can swap out the beef broth for chicken if that's what you have on hand.



STEAK BITES

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pounds round steak, cut into 1 to 1½-inch pieces
- 1 packet Lipton onion soup mix
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon beef bouillon
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Optional thickener:

- ⅓ cup cold water
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch

DIRECTIONS

- Cut steak into bite-sized pieces (about 1 to 1½ inches). Season lightly with salt and pepper. Place the steak bites in the slow cooker.
- In a small bowl add the water, onion soup, bullion, and garlic powder. Stir to combine and pour over the steak.
- Cover and cook on Low for 6–8 hours or High for 3–4 hours, until the steak is fork-tender.
- If you'd like a thicker gravy, whisk together ⅓ cup cold water and 2 tablespoons cornstarch. Stir into the slow cooker during the last 15–20 minutes of cooking. Let it simmer with the lid slightly ajar until thickened.
- Adjust the salt and pepper to taste. Spoon the steak bites and gravy over mashed potatoes, cooked rice, or egg noodles. Enjoy!

NOTES

- You can make this with sirloin steak and it's delightful but more expensive. I tested this recipe with round steaks because they are much more economical (about half the price in my area) and are really well suited for long cooking time in the slow cooker. It really is a good option for making a round steak tender.
- You can sear the meat up on the stove with a little oil in a hot pan before adding it to the slow cook if you'd like. It adds good color and flavor but I also like not adding an extra step on busy days. It's up to you.
- Adjust the salt so that the meat and gravy are slightly salty so that when added to something plain like rice, potatoes, or noodles it adds enough salt. You'll need to adjust it to taste based on what kind of bullion you used.
- You can omit the bullion and use beef broth instead if that's what you have on hand.
- You can thicken the sauce so it's a gravy or you can leave it so it's more of an au jus, we like both!



POT ROAST

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 7

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2-3 tbsp. olive oil
- salt, preferably coarse salt like kosher
- pepper
- 3 to 5 lb. chuck roast, could also use top or bottom round roast
- 2 onions, peeled and cut in half
- 6-8 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 3-inch sticks
- 2 cup beef stock
- 1 teaspoon dry crushed rosemary or 3-4 fresh rosemary sprigs
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme or 2-3 fresh thyme springs

DIRECTIONS

- Heat the olive oil over high heat in a large cast iron skillet or Dutch oven. Salt and pepper all sides of the roast well. When the oil is shimmering, add the roast and sear it well on all sides (about a minute per side). Remove the roast from the skillet and place it in the bottom of your slow cooker.
- Add the two onions to the same skillet that the roast cooked in and sear them for one minute, cut side down. Add them to the slow cooker.
- Place the carrots in the skillet and sear them for another minute, stirring often. Add 2 cups of beef stock to the hot skillet to deglaze the pan (the liquid will help remove all the little cooked on bits of vegetable and beef from the pan which adds tons of flavor). Pour the carrots and the broth from the skillet into the slow cooker.
- Add more beef stock until the roast is half covered in stock (this might be up to another 4 cups of stock). Sprinkle herbs over the contents of the slow cooker.
- Cover the slow cooker and cook on high for about 4-6 hours or on low for 6-8 hours (may need a little more time if you're using a 5-lb. roast). You'll know your roast is done if you can break off pieces of meat with your fork.
- Serve the meat with the carrots and onion slices over some steaming mashed potatoes with gravy on the top.

NOTES

- For an oven version, sear everything in a 6-7 quart Dutch oven, deglaze with broth, return the roast and onions to the pot, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and bake at 250°F for 3-6 hours.
- Substitute 1 tablespoon each of dried herbs if you don't have fresh herbs on hand.
- Transform the leftover broth and juices into gravy using your favorite gravy recipe, adding extra broth as needed to reach the right amount.



MISSISSIPPI POT ROAST

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ½ pound chuck roast
- 1 cup juice from Pepperoncinis
- 1 cup Pepperoncinis, bottled from the store
- 1 packet brown gravy mix, 1 ounce, dry mix
- ½ cup salted butter, cut into pieces
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

DIRECTIONS

- Place your chuck roast in a slow cooker.
- Add the juice from the Pepperoncinis, the Pepperoncinis, sprinkle over the brown gravy mix, and then add the butter to the top.
- Cook your roast on high heat for 4 hours.
- Remove the meat from the slow cooker and shred using two large forks. Once shredded, return the meat to the pot and stir into the juices remaining in the slow cooker.
- Serve and enjoy! We like to serve this over noodles, over rice, over mashed potatoes, or in a bun for a sandwich.

NOTES

- Depending on the size of your slow cooker, you may need to cut the chuck roast (2-3 pounds works best) into two pieces to fit, and you can also cook on low heat for 8 hours instead.
- Store leftover pot roast in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 4 days, keeping the juice in a separate container.
- Reheat the meat and juice separately—about a minute per serving for the beef and 45 seconds for the juice, covering it with a paper towel to prevent splatter.
- Pour some of the rich, slightly spicy juice from the pepperoncinis over your pot roast when serving for extra flavor.



CHILI MAC

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ pounds lean ground beef
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 jalapeño, chopped (seeded for less heat)
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon beef bouillon granules or base
- 3 cans assorted beans, drained and rinsed , 15-ounce cans, (kidney, black, pinto, etc.)
- 1 can crushed tomatoes, 28-ounce
- 8 ounces dry pasta, cooked separately (elbow macaroni or small shells)
- 8 ounces shredded cheese for serving, cheddar, Colby Jack, or pepper jack

DIRECTIONS

- Cook the ground beef, onion, bell pepper, and jalapeño in a large skillet over medium heat until the beef is browned and the veggies soften. Drain excess grease.
- Stir in the tomato paste, chili powder, smoked paprika, salt, garlic powder, onion powder, cumin, and beef bouillon. Cook 1 minute to bloom the spices.
- Add the beef mixture to a 6-quart slow cooker. Stir in the crushed tomatoes and beans until combined. Fill the tomato can half up with water and add that water to the slow cooker too. Stir to combine.
- Cover and cook on Low 4–6 hours or High 2–3 hours.
- About 15 minutes before serving, cook the pasta in salted water to al dente according to package directions. Drain well. Stir the hot pasta into the chili. Taste and adjust salt or heat. Ladle into bowls and top with shredded cheese. Add your favorite chili fixings if you'd like.

NOTES

- This is so flexible! Use turkey instead of beef, switch up the beans, or use a different pasta.
- For extra heat, add a pinch of cayenne or an extra jalapeño.
- If you prefer the pasta on the side (great for leftovers), keep it separate and spoon the chili over it when serving.
- I really like to cook the pasta for slow cooker soups separately so that you can control the liquid in the soup a little better.



BEEF ENCHILADAS

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 2 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 pounds ground beef
- 1 tablespoon taco seasoning
- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed, 15 ounces
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 1 cup salsa
- 1 can chopped green chiles, with juices, 4.5 ounces
- 6 to 8 flour tortillas, 9-inches each
- 1 can red mild enchilada sauce, divided, 10 ounces
- 3 cups shredded Mexican blend cheese, divided
- 1 avocado, halved, seeded, peeled and diced, for serving
- 1 Roma tomato, diced, for serving
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro leaves, chopped, for serving

DIRECTIONS

- Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add ground beef and cook, breaking up the meat, until it's no longer pink and cooked through, about 5 to 8 minutes.
- Remove the meat from the heat, and drain any extra grease.
- Stir in the taco seasoning, black beans, corn, salsa, green chiles, and enchilada sauce, reserving 1/2 cup of the enchilada sauce for later.
- Lightly coat the inside of a slow cooker with nonstick spray. Place enough tortillas to cover the bottom of the slow cooker. Break up the tortillas into small pieces as needed so that you can form a single layer when working with them. Spread 1/3 of the ground beef mixture evenly over the top; sprinkle with 3/4 cup cheese. Repeat with 2 more layers. Top with remaining tortillas, remaining 1/2 cup of enchilada sauce, and cheese.
- Cover and cook on low heat for 3 to 4 hours or high heat for 1.5 to 2 hours.
- Serve immediately, garnished with avocado, tomato, and cilantro, if desired.

NOTES

- Use 6-8 small corn tortillas for more stability or flour tortillas for a softer texture, and substitute ground turkey, chicken, or go meatless with 2 cans of drained beans and an extra cup of corn.
- Use any salsa you like, homemade or store-bought, and serve with shredded lettuce or a tropical fruit salad made with pineapple, banana, mango, and flaked coconut.
- Prep the meat mixture ahead and store it covered in the fridge, adding it cold to the slow cooker with an extra 20-30 minutes of cooking time.



STEAK CARNITAS MEAT

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 7 HRS

SERVES: 10

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cumin or smoked cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, or more to taste
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 pounds flank steak
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and chopped

Serving Options:

- Corn tortillas
- Shredded lettuce
- Grated cheese
- Tomato
- Sour cream
- Salsa

DIRECTIONS

- Mix all of the spices together in a small bowl for the spice rub. Rub the spices into each side of the steak, using all of the mixture.
- Place the spice-rubbed steak in the bottom of the slow cooker. Place the chopped onion, bell pepper, and jalapeno on top of the steak.
- Cook for on low for 7 to 8 hours.
- After the cooking time has lapsed, remove the steak from the Crock-Pot and shred with two forks. Serve immediately, or return to the Crock-Pot for a few hours until you are ready to eat.
- Serve on corn tortillas with your favorite toppings.

NOTES

- Flank steak works great for slow cooking, but you can use elk, lamb, pork, or any meat on hand—this recipe is very versatile.
- For leaner cuts, add beef stock near the end to prevent drying out.



ITALIAN BEEF SANDWICHES

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 7 HRS

SERVES: 10

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2.5 lbs. beef roast, buy whatever's on sale—chuck, rump roast, etc
- 1/2 or more of a 16oz peperoncinis, (deli sliced or whole)
- 1 cup beef broth
- salt and pepper, to taste
- Sandwich Buns
- Your favorite white cheese—mozzarella, provolone, swiss, or white cheddar
- optional: extra peperoncinis for serving

DIRECTIONS

- Trim any visible fat from your roast. Place in the bottom of your slow cooker. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place in half a jar worth of peppers (don't include all the juice, just pick out the peppers). If you want a bit more heat, add a few tablespoons of the pepper juice to the crock pot. Pour in beef broth.
- Cook on low 7-8 hours.
- Shred beef, removing any fatty bits. Slice peppers and mix into beef.
- For best serving results, toast buns, fill with beef/pepper mixture, and top with cheese and a few extra peperoncinis. If necessary, pop the sandwiches in the oven for a minute or two to melt the cheese.

NOTES

- Toast a sturdy bun to add texture and prevent sogginess.
- For saucier meat, skim fat and return shredded meat to the slow cooker for 15-30 minutes.
- Use any roast cut on sale—marbled cuts work best, but all taste great.



HONEY TERIYAKI MEATBALLS

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

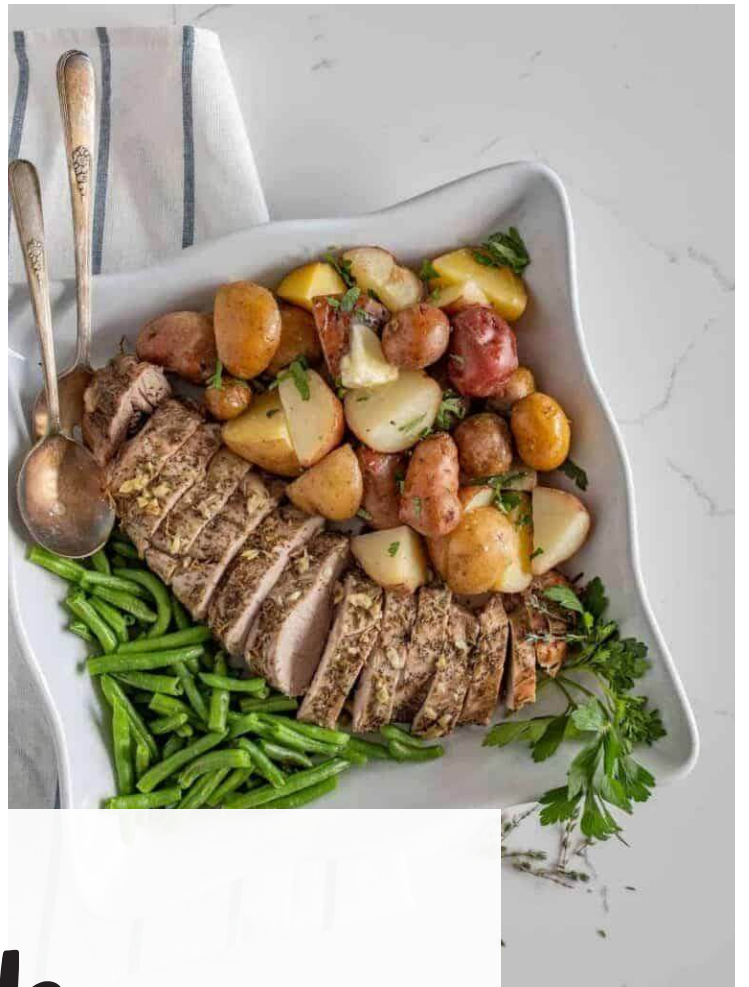
- 1 1/2 cups cold water
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 3 pounds frozen meatballs, store bought or homemade

DIRECTIONS

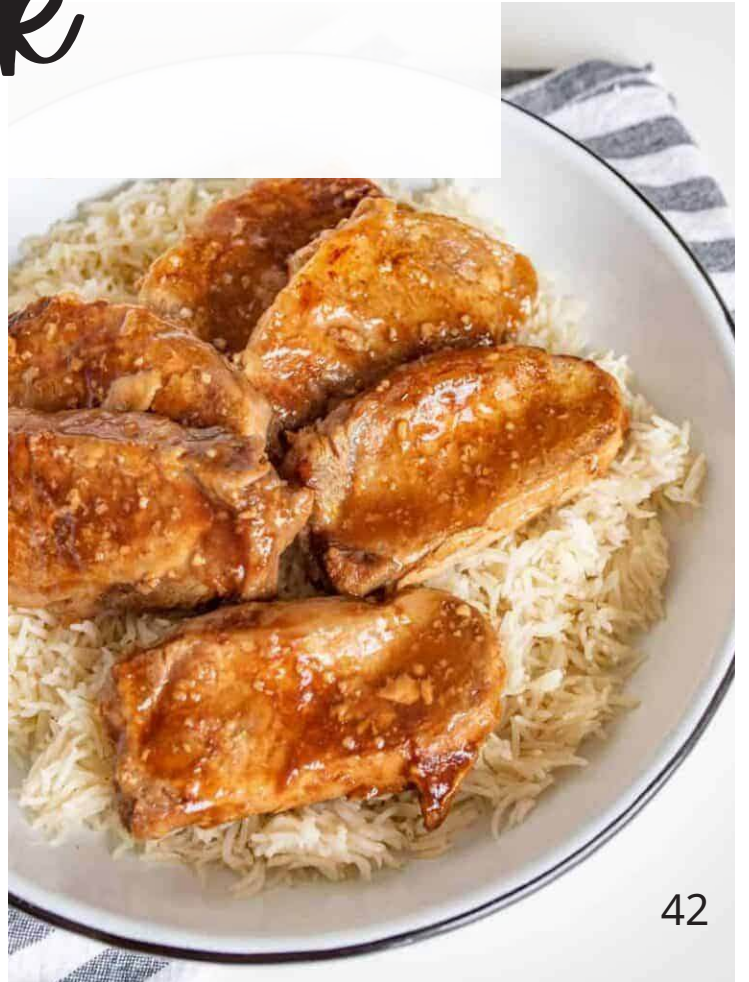
- In a medium saucepan, add the water and the cornstarch, and whisk to combine. Add the sugar, honey, soy sauce, garlic powder, and sesame oil to pan, and stir to combine.
- Heat the pan over medium-high heat, stirring often, until the mixture comes to a boil. Boil for 2 minutes until the mixture thickens. Remove from the heat.
- Place the meatballs in the slow cooker, and pour the sauce over the top. Cook according to package directions (3 to 3 1/2 hours on high for half a bag).
- Stir gently half way through cooking and once again before serving.
- When you are ready to serve, you can dish the meatballs onto a serving dish, ladle some of the sauce from the bottom of the slow cooker over the top, and sprinkle with sesame seeds and chopped green onion. Or you can just serve them right out of the slow cooker as they are. The slow cooker is a great party option because it will keep them warm for good long time.

NOTES

- Serve as an appetizer, with rice/noodles, or with vegetables. The honey-teriyaki creates a perfect sweet-savory balance.
- Ideal for parties—easy to serve and make in large batches.
- Store leftovers in an airtight container for up to 3 days. Reheat gently to keep moist.



Pork





PORK ROAST WITH APPLES & CIDER

PREP: 15 MINS COOK: 8 HRS SERVES: 8 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 4-5 pound pork roast, butt, shoulder, or picnic roast; bone-in is fine
- 2 apples, cored and cut into large pieces (skin on)
- 1 large onion, peeled and cut into thick slices
- 1 ½ cups apple cider, apple juice is fine if you can't find cider
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon black pepper

DIRECTIONS

- Place the onion slices and apple pieces in the bottom of the slow cooker. Pour in the apple cider.
- In a small bowl, mix together the garlic powder, salt, parsley, thyme, and black pepper. Rub the spice mixture all over the pork roast. Place the seasoned pork on top of the apples and onions.
- Cover and cook on Low for 8-10 hours or High for 6-8 hours, until the pork is fall-apart tender.
- Turn off the slow cooker and let the meat rest in the liquid, covered, for about 10 minutes.
- Shred the pork with two forks and stir back into the slow cooker with the apples, onions, and pan juices. Adjust salt to taste.

APPLE RICE PILAF RECIPE

- Sauté 2 chopped apples, half an onion, 1 carrot, and 1 rib celery in 2 tablespoons butter until onion is tender.
- Add 2 cups rice and 4 cups chicken stock. Bring to a simmer, reduce heat, cover, and cook 20 minutes until rice is tender.
- Season with salt and stir in fresh herbs if desired.

NOTES

- The apples and onions get so cooked that they just kind of melt. You should have no chunks left and if there are they will be so tender. I just stir them back into the shredded pork.
- For extra depth of flavor, brown the pork roast in a skillet before adding it to the slow cooker. It just depends on the day if I do this or not.
- Use a sweet apple variety like Honeycrisp or Fuji for the best flavor.



PULLED PORK SANDWICHES

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

For the Pulled Pork:

- 1 pork tenderloin, (1.5 to 2 pounds)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 cup chicken broth or water
- 1 cup BBQ sauce, (store-bought or homemade)

For the Sandwiches:

- 1 package hamburger buns
- Additional BBQ sauce
- 6 pepper jack or provolone cheese slices
- 1 recipe easy fridge pickles

DIRECTIONS

- Remove the pork tenderloin from the package, and place it on a cutting board. In a small bowl, combine the salt, smoked paprika, garlic powder, and onion powder. Mix to combine. Rub your spice mixture all over the tenderloin, and then place it in the bottom of your slow cooker.
- Add the water or chicken stock to the bottom of the slow cooker (don't pour it directly over the pork, though, so that you don't wash off your spice rub). Add the lid, and cook on high for 4 to 5 hours, or until the tenderloin is easy to shred with a fork.
- Remove the pork from the slow cooker, and shred with 2 forks. Return it to the slow cooker, and mix it with any liquid that might have remained in the bottom of the slow cooker. Add your BBQ sauce, and stir to combine. Adjust salt and BBQ sauce amounts to your liking.
- To make the sandwiches: Toast or grill your buns if you'd like. Add additional barbecue sauce to the inside of both buns. Add warm pulled pork, and top with optional cheese and pickles. Serve right away.

NOTES

- Make quick fridge pickles by combining 1 cup water, 1/3 cup vinegar, 2 teaspoons salt, sliced cucumber, and onion in a jar, letting it rest for 15 minutes or overnight.
- Scale up by adding 3-4 tenderloins and increasing cook time by 30 minutes per pound, or cut the tenderloin into chunks to reduce cooking time to as little as 3 hours.
- Add BBQ sauce after cooking to prevent burning and accommodate those who don't like it, and prep ahead by shredding the meat and storing it in the fridge for up to 3 days.



PORK TENDERLOIN FOR TACOS

PREP: 5 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pork tenderloin, 1.5 to 2 pounds
- 3 teaspoons homemade taco seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup water or broth

DIRECTIONS

- Remove the pork tenderloin from the package, and place it on a cutting board.
- In a small bowl, combine the salt and the taco seasoning.
- Rub your spice mixture all over the tenderloin, and then place it in the bottom of your slow cooker.
- Add the water or chicken stock to the bottom of the slow cooker (don't pour it over the pork, though, so that you don't wash off your spice rub).
- Add the lid, and cook on high for 4 to 5 hours, or until the tenderloin is easy to shred with a fork.
- Remove the pork from the Crock-Pot, and place it on a cutting board. Cut into 4 equal parts, and then shred with two forks.
- Return it to the slow cooker, and mix it with any liquid that might have remained in the bottom of the slow cooker. Adjust salt to taste.
- Serve hot in your favorite tacos, burritos, or on a salad or nachos.

NOTES

- Easy to scale up for a crowd—just add an extra hour of cooking time.
- If using store-bought taco seasoning, skip added salt until after shredding since it's saltier than homemade.
- Check doneness with a fork—pork should fall apart easily when ready.
- Use this versatile pork in any of your favorite Tex-Mex dishes.



HONEY GARLIC PORK CHOPS

PREP: 5 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 6 thick cut boneless pork chops
- Salt and pepper
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic, about 2 cloves
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- 1/3 cup honey

DIRECTIONS

- Pat your pork chops dry, and sprinkle with salt and pepper on both sides. Place in the bottom of the slow cooker.
- In a small bowl, add the garlic, ketchup, soy sauce, and honey, and mix well to combine.
- Pour the sauce over the pork chops.
- Cover the slow cooker, and cook the pork chops for 4 hours on low, or until they are fully cooked.
- Serve the pork hot, and spoon the extra sauce in the bottom of the slow cooker over the top. It's also great served with rice so that the rice catches some of the sauce.

NOTES

- Add 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger for Asian flavor or chili flakes for spice.
- Thinner pork chops cook faster, so watch closely to avoid overcooking.
- Serve over rice with steamed broccoli and drizzle sauce over everything.
- Thicken the sauce by stirring in a cornstarch slurry and cooking for 15-20 minutes.



PULLED PORK TENDERLOIN

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6 - 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pork tenderloin, (1.2 to 2 pounds)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 cup chicken broth or water
- 1 cup BBQ sauce, (store bought or homemade)

DIRECTIONS

- Remove the pork tenderloin from the package, and place it on a cutting board.
- In a small bowl combine the salt, smoked paprika, garlic powder, and onion powder. Mix to combine.
- Rub the spice mixture all over the tenderloin then place it in the bottom of the slow cooker.
- Add the water or chicken stock to the bottom of the slow cooker (don't pour it over the pork, though, so that you don't wash off your spice rub).
- Add the lid and cook on high for 4-5 hours, or until the tenderloin is easy to shred with a fork.
- Remove the pork from the crock pot, and shred with 2 forks. Return it to the slow cooker, and mix it with any liquid that might have remained in the bottom of the slow cooker.
- Add the BBQ sauce, and stir to combine. Adjust salt and BBQ amounts to your liking serve warm.

NOTES

- Scale up by adding 3-4 tenderloins, increasing cook time as pork weight increases, or cut into chunks to reduce cook time to 3 hours.
- Add BBQ sauce after cooking to prevent burning and accommodate those who don't like BBQ.
- Don't substitute regular paprika—smoked paprika is essential for the flavor.
- Pull some meat out before adding sauce if not everyone likes BBQ.



PORK NACHOS

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 4 pound pork roast
- 1 ½ cups chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons smoked paprika

DIRECTIONS

- Add the pork roast to your slow cooker. Pour the chicken broth over the roast and then add the rest of the ingredients to the pot.
- Rub the spices over the roast and then cook your roast on high heat for 3-4 hours (or on low for about 6 hours).
- Remove the pork from the slow cooker and use two large forks to shred it.
- Serve your shredded pork over tortilla chips along with your favorite nacho toppings.

NOTES

- We really liked the smokey flavor of smoked paprika; however, it definitely isn't necessary. It will elevate the flavor of your pork a little bit, but regular paprika will work just as well.
- If you have a higher spice tolerance then you can add a few drops of tabasco sauce to the slow cooker. You can also add 2 teaspoons of cayenne chili powder.
- If you have fresh garlic then you can use 2-3 cloves of minced garlic instead of garlic powder.
- Some of my family's favorite nacho toppings to pair with this shredded pork include cilantro lime crema, sliced jalapenos, pico de gallo, etc.
- You can store leftovers in the fridge for up to 5 days. While you don't need to reserve all of the liquid from the slow cooker, you will want to save a little bit to help keep the pork from drying out.
- Reheat a plate of leftover shredded pork in the microwave for about 45 seconds.



PORK CARNITAS

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 8 HRS

SERVES: 8 - 12 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 3.5-4 pound pork shoulder or pork butt, (boneless, if bone-in get an additional 1/2 pound)
- 3 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 1 large white or yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 jalapeño, seeds removed and chopped
- juice from 2 oranges, (about 2/3 of a cup)

DIRECTIONS

- Combine salt, pepper, garlic powder, smoked paprika, oregano, and cumin in a small bowl.
- Rub spice mixture all over the pork (no need to trim fat). Place in slow cooker with fattiest part on top.
- Add onion and jalapeño on top of pork, then pour orange juice over everything.
- Cook on high for 7-9 hours or low for 8-10 hours until pork shreds easily.
- Remove pork to a rimmed dish. Skim excess fat from cooking liquid if desired, leaving about half.
- If more than 2 cups liquid remains, simmer vigorously in a saucepan until reduced to 2 cups. Keep the peppers and onions in the liquid. Shred the meat while liquid reduces.
- To crisp: Add shredded pork to a large skillet in a single layer with some reserved juice. Cook over medium-high heat until juice evaporates and meat crisps. Flip once and cook until crispy. Work in batches to avoid crowding.
- Drizzle any remaining juice over the crispy pork.
- Serve in tacos, burritos, or salads. Store leftovers in the fridge up to 1 week or freeze longer.

NOTES

- Make ahead by storing cooked shredded pork and juices separately, then crisp in a pan when ready to serve.
- Keep browned pork warm in the slow cooker with juices until serving, or add extra jalapeños with seeds for more heat.
- Serves 8, but portions stretch further with rice and beans versus simple toppings like onion, jalapeño, lime, and cilantro.



PORK CHILE VERDE

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 4 HR

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 3 poblano peppers
- 3 anaheim peppers
- 6 tomatillos
- ½ cup chicken broth
- ¼ cup lime juice
- ½ cup fresh cilantro
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2-3 pounds pork roast

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat your oven to 400°F. Place the pepper and tomatillos on a large baking tray and cook them in the oven for 25 minutes.
- Add the peppers, tomatillos, chicken broth, lime juice, cilantro, olive oil, oregano, salt, pepper, paprika, and garlic powder to a blender or food processor. Pulse the blender until the mixture is smooth.
- Cut the pork into a few large pieces. Add the pork to your slow cooker along with the green chili sauce. Fold to combine. Cook your pork on high heat for 4 hours or on low heat for 6-7 hours.
- Use two large forks to shred the pork before serving. Enjoy!

NOTES

- Remember to peel away the papery husks from tomatillos before roasting them in the oven.
- I prefer combining poblano and anaheim peppers for the best flavor, though jalapeño peppers make an excellent substitute.
- If you don't have smoked paprika on hand, you can use regular paprika. It will provide less of a smoky flavor but it's still yum.
- The pork becomes incredibly tender and will shred easily with minimal effort. The green chili sauce keeps it moist so the meat should practically fall apart when touched with a fork.



LASAGNA

PREP: 30 MINS

COOK: 3 HR

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 jar Italian-style tomato pasta sauce, 24-ounce
- 1 can diced tomatoes (with juice), 14.5-ounce can
- 1 pound ground Italian sausage
- 24 ounces part-skim ricotta cheese
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 12 no-boil lasagna noodles
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella

DIRECTIONS

- In a skillet over medium heat, cook the sausage until browned and fully cooked. Drain any excess grease.
- Stir the pasta sauce and diced tomatoes (with their juice) into the cooked sausage. Set aside.
- In a separate bowl, mix together the ricotta, egg, Parmesan, and dried basil until well combined.
- To assemble the lasagna: Spread a small amount of meat sauce on the bottom of a greased slow cooker. Add a layer of 3 no-boil noodles (break them as needed to fit).
- Spread $\frac{1}{3}$ of the ricotta mixture over the noodles. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ of the meat sauce.
- Repeat the layers two more times (noodles, ricotta, meat sauce), for a total of three layers.
- Finish with a final layer of noodles, the last of the meat sauce, and sprinkle the mozzarella on top.
- Cover and cook on Low for 5-6 hours or High for 3-3½ hours, until the noodles are tender and everything is heated through.
- Turn off the heat and let the lasagna sit uncovered in the slow cooker for 5-10 minutes. This allows it to firm up and slices cleanly.

NOTES

- You can add just about any veggie you like when you are cooking the meat. Cook the veggies until tender. I really like to add zucchini and/or spinach to this recipe.
- I have had no issues using traditional lasagna noodles if you don't have no-boil. They seem to work just the same in my experience.
- Use a favorite pasta sauce. I like to find one with lots of garlic. You can always add a teaspoon of minced garlic to the sauce if you'd like, too.



SAUSAGE & PEPPERS WITH PASTA

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound Italian sausage, mild or spicy
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 can crushed tomatoes, 28-ounce can
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 8 ounces penne pasta, uncooked
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 can tomato sauce, 15-ounce can
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- Cooking spray, for greasing the slow cooker

DIRECTIONS

- Spray the inside of your slow cooker with cooking spray.
- In a large skillet over medium-high heat, cook the sausage, onion, and bell peppers until the sausage is browned and cooked through, about 7-9 minutes, breaking up the sausage into pieces as it cooks. Add the garlic and oregano, and cook for 1 additional minute, until fragrant.
- Stir in the crushed tomatoes, heavy cream, uncooked pasta, salt, and pepper. Mix well to combine. Pour the mixture into the slow cooker. Spread the tomato sauce over the top without stirring.
- Cover and cook on HIGH for 3 hours, or until the pasta is tender. (Note: I do not recommend cooking this recipe on low. The pasta needs the high heat to cook properly!)
- Gently stir the pasta. If the sauce is too thick, stir in a bit of hot water to loosen it to your liking. Sprinkle the mozzarella cheese on top. Cover and let sit for 5-10 minutes, or until the cheese is melted.
- Serve warm, garnished with fresh basil or parsley if desired.

NOTES

- Use penne, rigatoni, or ziti. These pasta shapes hold up well in the slow cooker and don't turn mushy.
- Want more heat? Use spicy Italian sausage or add a pinch of red pepper flakes.
- Make it extra creamy by adding more cream or a dollop of ricotta cheese before serving.
- You can add lots of other vegetables to this dish if you'd like. Mushrooms, spinach, and zucchini would all be great additions to this dish.
- High Heat Only: Cooking the pasta for a short time on high helps it to not get mushy.



CAFE RIO SWEET PORK BARBACOA

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 6 HRS

SERVES: 12+

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 3 1/2 – 4 pound pork butt, shoulder, or picnic roast
- 4-5 tablespoons taco seasoning or 2 packets, divided
- 1 can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cans diced green chiles
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 1 1/2 -2 cups brown sugar
- 1/2 bunch cilantro, chopped
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped

DIRECTIONS

- Rub the pork with half the taco seasoning. Place it in the crock of your slow cooker.
- Add the tomatoes, green chiles, and garlic.
- Cook on low heat for 6 to 8 hours, or on high for 4 to 6 hours. (It depends on your slow-cooker, but you can't really overcook this; the pork should fall apart. Slow and low is better here.)
- When the pork is cooked and tender, shred with a fork and remove anything creepy (you know, what you wouldn't want to eat).
- Add the other half of the taco seasoning and brown sugar. Taste it and add more of either if needed. It should be sweet and still taste "mexican-y."
- If you have the time, let the pork cook on high heat with the lid off the slow-cooker for at least 30 minutes to reduce the liquid. If you don't have time to do this, just serve with a slotted spoon. Add cilantro and green onions just before serving (if your kids don't like green things in their meat, chop them very small, or keep them separate and add them separately to your taco).

NOTES

- Use any pork cut—chops, bone-in, or boneless all work well. This recipe is easy and forgiving, so use what's on hand or on sale.
- Makes a large batch perfect for crowds. Freeze half for later if not serving a group.



PULLED PORK TACOS

PREP: 1 HR

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 8 - 10 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

For the Pork in the Slow Cooker:

- 1 pork tenderloin, (1.5 to 2 pounds)
- 3 teaspoons homemade taco seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup water or broth

For the Stove-top Cilantro Lime Rice:

- 1 cup uncooked rice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 to 2 teaspoons lime zest, (I do at least 2 and sometimes a little more... I love zest)
- 1 cube chicken bullion, or Better than Bullion
- 2 cups water
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 4 tablespoons fresh chopped cilantro

For the Cilantro Ranch Sauce:

- 2/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup buttermilk
- 2 or 3 large tomatillos, husk removed
- 1 or 2 cloves garlic, outer skin removed
- 1/2 bunch cilantro, (about a cup)
- 1/2 a lime's juice
- 1 jalapeno, seeds removed
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- More salt and pepper, to taste

To serve:

- Tortillas, (we love Homemade Hard Corn Taco Shells)
- Shredded cheese
- Shredded lettuce
- Chopped tomatoes
- Optional things like hot sauce, salsa, or guacamole,

DIRECTIONS

For the Pork:

- Remove the pork tenderloin from the package, and place it on a cutting board.
- In a small bowl, combine the salt and the taco seasoning.
- Rub your spice mixture all over the tenderloin, and then place it in the bottom of your slow cooker.
- Add the water or chicken stock to the bottom of the slow cooker (don't pour it over the pork, though, so that you don't wash off your spice rub).
- Add the lid, and cook on high for 4 to 5 hours, or until the tenderloin is easy to shred with a fork.
- Remove the pork from the Crock-Pot, and place it on a cutting board. Cut into 4 equal parts, and then shred with two forks.
- Return it to the slow cooker, and mix it with any liquid that might have remained in the bottom of the slow cooker. Adjust salt to taste.
- Serve hot in your favorite tacos, burritos, or on a salad or nachos.

Recipe continues on next page...



PULLED PORK TACOS

DIRECTIONS (CONTINUED)

For the Rice:

- Add the rice, water, garlic, lime zest, and bullion to a medium sauce pan over medium-high heat.
- When the water starts to boil, reduce the heat to low, and cover the pan with a lid.
- Cook until the rice is cooked through and all the water is absorbed, about 20 minutes.
- In a small bowl, combine the lime juice, sugar, and cilantro.
- When the rice is done, fluff it with a fork, and then pour the lime juice mixture over hot cooked rice.
- Stir to combine, and serve hot.

For the Cilantro Ranch Sauce:

- Throw everything into a blender, and blend until smooth, about one minute.
- Taste the dressing on a piece of lettuce, and adjust the seasonings as needed.
- It keeps covered in the fridge for up to 10 days.

To serve:

- Serve the pork in tortillas with rice and the sauce and your choice of toppings. These are also awesome toppings for pork taco salad!

NOTES

- Start the pork in the morning, then at dinner time make the rice, blend the sauce (or prep it in the morning), and chop tomatoes, lettuce, and cheese.
- It looks like more work than it actually is and the combination is absolutely worth the effort—it's an all-time favorite!



GARLIC HERB PORK TENDERLOIN

PREP: 5 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 5

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 to 2 pounds pork tenderloin
- 4 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic, about 6 cloves
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley, or 1 tablespoon fresh
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme, or 1 1/2 teaspoon fresh
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano, or 1 1/2 teaspoons fresh
- 1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary, or 1 teaspoon fresh
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

- Remove the pork loin from the packaging and pat it dry with paper towels.
- In a small bowl, combine the butter, garlic, herbs, and pepper. Use a fork to combine well.
- Spread the butter mixture all over the pork loin and then place the pork in the bottom of your slow cooker.
- Cook on high for 4 hours or on low for 5 or until the pork reaches 145 degrees F in the center.
- When the pork is cooked through, remove from the slow cooker. Let the pork rest on a cutting board for 5 minutes.
- After the pork has rested, slice it into rounds and serve right away.

NOTES

- Use any fresh herbs you like—dill and chives work great along with parsley and rosemary.
- Strain the leftover juice to serve au jus, or make gravy by simmering it with a cornstarch slurry until thickened.
- Use an instant-read thermometer or slow cooker probe to cook pork to 145°F for perfect results.



BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground breakfast sausage
- 2 cups frozen hash browns
- 1 ¼ cup cheddar cheese
- 6 large eggs
- ½ cup whole milk
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

- In a small pan or skillet, cook the breakfast sausage over medium-high heat until fully cooked and no longer pink in the middle.
- Once cooked, combine the sausage with the hash browns and cheddar cheese in your crock pot. Stir to combine.
- In a separate bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, pepper, and salt until homogenous. Pour the egg mixture into the crock pot and stir again until the sausage, eggs, and hash browns are fully coated in the egg mixture.
- Place the lid on your crock pot and cook on high heat for 3 hours.
- Serve and enjoy!

NOTES

- If you'll be out for a while, cook this casserole on low heat for 5-6 hours, and there's no need to thaw or fry the hashbrowns beforehand since they'll fully cook in the slow cooker.
- For a spicier version, add a few drops of tabasco sauce to the egg mixture, use pepper jack cheese, or sprinkle in 1-2 teaspoons of red pepper flakes before baking.
- Feel free to add one cup of diced bell peppers, onions, or some sliced jalapeños for extra flavor and texture.
- This casserole is best served fresh, but leftovers can be stored in the fridge for up to 3 days and reheated in the microwave for about a minute, though reheating will remove some moisture.



PORK TENDERLOIN AND POTATOES

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Smithfield Prime Pork Tenderloin, about 1.5 pounds
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 teaspoon celery seed
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small to medium onion cut into 4 large slices
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 to 2.5 pounds potatoes, scrubbed and cut into 1 to 1.5 inch cubes
- 3 tablespoon butter, divided
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- additional salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Open the package of pork and remove one tenderloin. Save the second for another meal. Place the pork on a large plate.
- Mix together the salt, rosemary, celery seed, black pepper, and minced garlic in a small bowl.
- Rub the pork all over with the olive oil and then coat it well with the spice mixture on all sides.
- Place the sliced onion on the bottom of the slow cooker, favoring one side of the slow cooker, and then place the pork on top of the onion.
- Gently drizzle the soy sauce and Worcestershire sauce over the pork.
- Use a large piece of foil to make a pocket for the potatoes next to the pork. Be careful to make it large enough so that the pork juice won't get into the foil.
- Fill the foil with the cubed potatoes and add 1 tablespoon of butter.
- The pork should be off to one side but not completely touching the side of the slow cooker.
- Add the lid and cook for 3.5 to 4 hours on LOW or until the pork registers 145 degrees using an instant-read thermometer or the probe on your slow cooker.

Recipe continues on next page...



PORK TENDERLOIN AND POTATOES

DIRECTIONS (CONTINUED)

- Open the package of pork and remove one tenderloin. Save the second for another meal. Place the pork on a large plate.
- Mix together the salt, rosemary, celery seed, black pepper, and minced garlic in a small bowl.
- Rub the pork all over with the olive oil and then coat it well with the spice mixture on all sides.
- Place the sliced onion on the bottom of the slow cooker, favoring one side of the slow cooker, and then place the pork on top of the onion.
- Gently drizzle the soy sauce and Worcestershire sauce over the pork.
- Use a large piece of foil to make a pocket for the potatoes next to the pork. Be careful to make it large enough so that the pork juice won't get into the foil.
- Fill the foil with the cubed potatoes and add 1 tablespoon of butter.
- The pork should be off to one side but not completely touching the side of the slow cooker.
- Add the lid and cook for 3.5 to 4 hours on LOW or until the pork registers 145 degrees using an instant-read thermometer or the probe on your slow cooker.
- When the pork is cooked through, remove from the slow cooker and allow to rest for 3 minutes.
- While the pork is resting, place the potatoes in a large bowl and add the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter, chopped parsley and salt to taste. Stir to combine.
- Slice the pork and place it on a serving platter. Serve right away with buttered potatoes on the side.

NOTES

- Cut potatoes into 1-1½ inch cubes for even cooking with the pork, and use any fresh herbs you like such as rosemary, thyme, dill, chives, tarragon, oregano, or sage.
- Strain the leftover juice to serve au jus or make gravy by simmering it with a cornstarch slurry until thickened.



PULLED PORK SANDWICH

PREP: 1 HR

COOK: 8 HRS

SERVES: 12

SLOW COOKER SIZE: QT

INGREDIENTS

For the slow cooker pulled pork

- 4-5 pounds of bone-in meat, see post for more details on cuts or 3-4 pounds boneless
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika

For the barbecue sauce

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ of a small onion, finely chopped (about ⅓ cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

- 1 cup ketchup
- ⅓ cup brown sugar
- ⅓ cup honey
- 4 tablespoons white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon spicy brown mustard
- 1 teaspoon chili paste, optional if your BBQ sauce a little spicy
- One recipe refrigerator pickles
- Whole wheat buns
- Thinly sliced red onion
- Pepperjack or Swiss cheese slices, optional

DIRECTIONS

For the Pulled Pork:

- Combine all spices in a small bowl and rub over the meat. Add to slow cooker.
- Cook on low until very tender and falling apart, 8-12 hours.
- Remove meat to a bowl or rimmed baking sheet. Pour liquid from slow cooker into a clear container.
- Shred meat with two forks, removing any bones, fat, or gristle. Return to slow cooker.
- Skim fat from the liquid. Add enough liquid back to the slow cooker to moisten the meat with a little pooling at the bottom.
- Taste and season with salt until slightly salty. Stir well and add more liquid if needed. Serve hot.
- Reserve any leftover liquid for reheating. Freeze extra meat for later use.

Recipe continues on next page...



PULLED PORK SANDWICH

DIRECTIONS (CONTINUED)

For the Pulled Pork:

- Combine all spices in a small bowl and rub over the meat. Add to slow cooker.
- Cook on low until very tender and falling apart, 8-12 hours.
- Remove meat to a bowl or rimmed baking sheet. Pour liquid from slow cooker into a clear container.
- Shred meat with two forks, removing any bones, fat, or gristle. Return to slow cooker.
- Skim fat from the liquid. Add enough liquid back to the slow cooker to moisten the meat with a little pooling at the bottom.
- Taste and season with salt until slightly salty. Stir well and add more liquid if needed. Serve hot.
- Reserve any leftover liquid for reheating. Freeze extra meat for later use.

For the Barbecue Sauce:

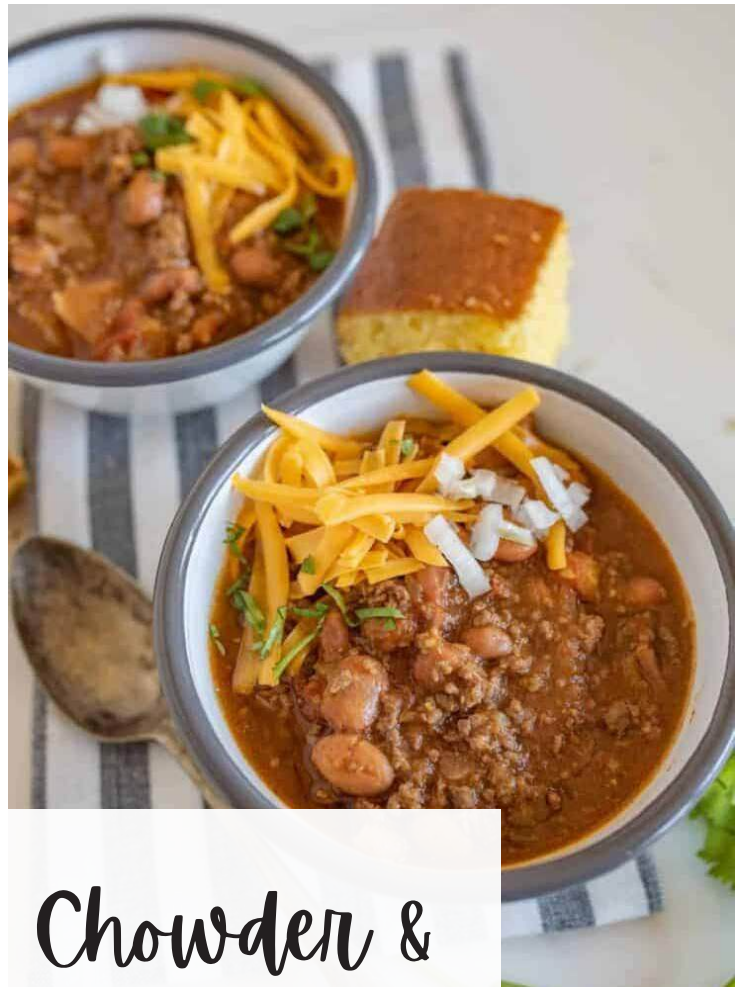
- Cook onion and garlic in olive oil over medium-low heat until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir often to prevent burning.
- Add remaining ingredients and simmer over low heat for 20 minutes.
- For smooth sauce, cool 10-15 minutes, then blend until smooth.
- Use immediately or refrigerate up to 2 weeks.

To Make Sandwiches:

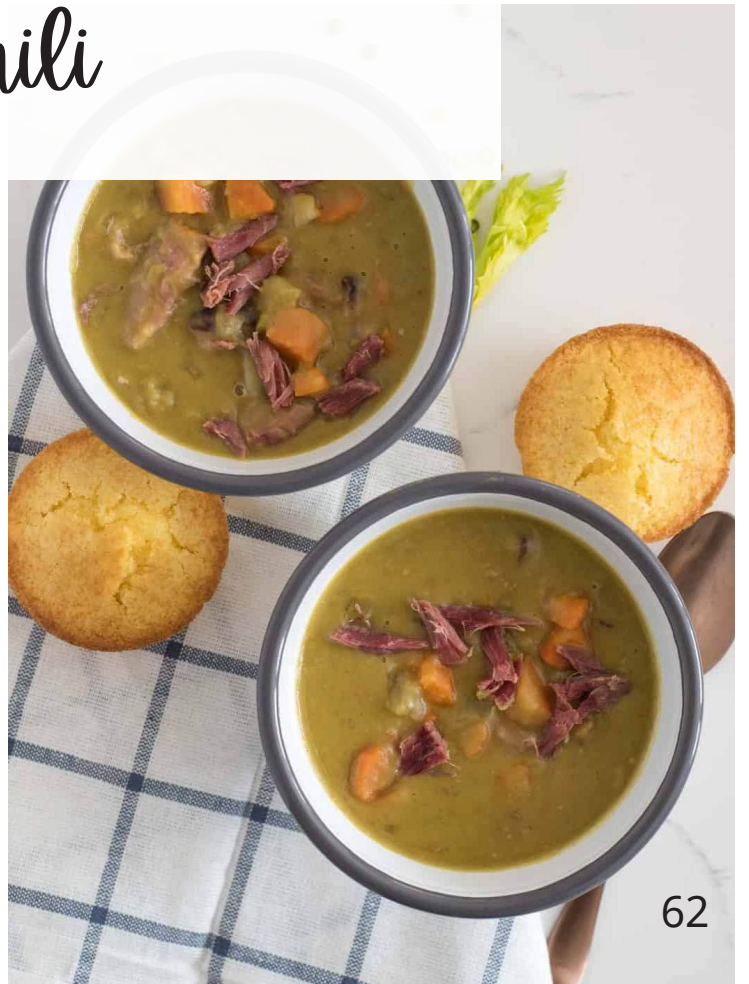
- Toast buns if desired. Spread barbecue sauce on both buns, add warm pulled pork, and top with sliced red onion, cheese, and pickles. Serve immediately.

NOTES

- Toast or grill buns and spread barbecue sauce on both sides.
- Fill with warm pulled pork and top with sliced red onion, optional cheese, and pickles.



Soup, Stew, Chowder & Chili





MINISTRONE SOUP

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 medium ribs celery, chopped
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 4 cups vegetable broth, or chicken stock
- 1 can diced tomatoes, with liquid, 28-ounces
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups chopped mixed seasonal vegetables, potatoes, squash, zucchini, green beans, or peas all work
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup small pasta, orecchiette, shells, or elbow macaroni
- 1 can beans (15 ounces), such as kidney, Great Northern beans or cannellini beans, rinsed and drained (or 1 1/2 cups home-cooked beans)
- 2 cups baby spinach or chopped kale
- Additional salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Add the onion, carrots, celery, tomato paste, garlic, oregano, thyme, vegetable broth, diced tomatoes, water, mixed vegetables, salt, bay leaves, and black pepper to the slow cooker. Stir well.
- Cover and cook on Low for 6–7 hours or High for 3–4 hours, until the vegetables are tender.
- About 30 minutes before serving, stir in the pasta. Cover and cook until the pasta is tender.
- Stir in the beans and spinach (or kale) and cook for another 5–10 minutes, until heated through and the greens are wilted. Remove the bay leaves, taste, and adjust seasoning with more salt and pepper if needed.
- Serve hot with Parmesan cheese sprinkled on top, if desired.

NOTES

- If using hearty vegetables like potatoes or green beans, chop them a little smaller so they cook evenly.
- To prevent pasta from overcooking, you can boil it separately and stir it in just before serving.
- Use a good stock here, it's a big part of the flavor.
- Don't be stingy with the salt when serving this because it adds so much to a vegetable heavy dish.



CHICKEN GNOCCHI SOUP

PREP: 25 MINS

COOK: 3 HR

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 to 2 pounds chicken breast, boneless skinless
- 2 ribs celery, chopped
- 1 to 2 large carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 medium to large onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3 cups small gnocchi, about 500 g, (Dried, refrigerated, or fresh homemade gnocchi.)
- 2 cups fresh spinach, roughly 3 ounces, chopped
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

- Add the chicken breasts, celery, carrots, onion, garlic, parsley, thyme, salt, pepper, and chicken stock to the slow cooker.
- Cover and cook on Low for 6–7 hours or High for 3–4 hours, until the chicken is cooked through and tender.
- Remove the chicken, shred it with two forks, and return it to the slow cooker.
- In a small bowl, whisk together the heavy cream and cornstarch until smooth. Stir the mixture into the slow cooker.
- Add the gnocchi and cook for an additional 30 minutes on High, until the gnocchi are tender and the soup has thickened.
- Stir in the spinach and Parmesan cheese just before serving. Adjust seasoning with extra salt and pepper, if needed.
- Ladle into bowls and serve warm.

NOTES

- This soup is really great with spicy sausage used instead of the chicken!
- Add some extra veggies – mushrooms, sun-dried tomatoes, or zucchini all taste delicious.
- If you prefer a thicker soup, add an extra tablespoon of cornstarch mixed with cold cream or broth. If you like more of the soupy broth, add an additional cup of cream if you'd like.



CREAMY POTATO CHOWDER

PREP: 10 MIN

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- ½ pound bacon
- 1 large white or yellow onion, chopped
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2.5 to 3 pounds potatoes, cubed (about 8 cups)
- 4-5 medium carrots, peeled and sliced
- 2-3 stalks celery, chopped
- 6 cups water
- 1 tablespoon chicken better-than-bouillon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sour cream
- additional salt and pepper to taste
- chopped green onions, additional sour cream, grated cheese, and/or hot sauce, optional for serving

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut bacon up into ¼-inch pieces. Add to a large pot or dutch oven and cook bacon over medium high heat until crispy, about 10 minutes. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon leaving the drippings.
2. Keep enough bacon drippings to cover the bottom of the pot (about 2 tablespoons), and remove the rest.
3. Return pot to heat and add onion. Cook onions until translucent and soft, about 5 minutes.
4. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.
5. Add the cooked onion and garlic to the base of your slow cooker and add the rest of the veggies, water, bouillon, and salt.
6. Cook on high for 4 hours or low for 5-6 or until the potatoes are tender.
7. Stir in the sour cream and bacon just before serving and adjust the salt and pepper to taste.
8. Serve hot with toppings of your choice.

NOTES

- Feel free to peel the potatoes or not, depending on your preference. This busy mama rarely peels the potatoes and it tastes just great.
- If you'd like to make this a cheese soup, reduce the amount of sour cream to 1/2 a cup and add 1 to 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese at the end of cook time. Stir until melted and well combined.



CHICKEN SOUP

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 6 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pounds chicken breast, diced
- 6 cups chicken broth
- 3 stalks celery, diced
- 3 carrots, diced
- 2 medium russet potatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 ½ tablespoons Italian seasoning
- 12 ounces noodles, such as egg noodles or rice ramen noodles

DIRECTIONS

- Add everything but the noodles to your slow cooker.
- Give the ingredients a quick stir and then cook the soup on low heat for 6 hours (or high for 3-4 hours).
- After 6 hours, cook your noodles according to the package directions. Drain the noodles and add them to the soup.
- Serve with crusty bread and enjoy!

NOTES

- You can use a variety of noodles in this recipe. I like to use rice ramen noodles. They have a chewier texture and help give this soup a classic Campbell's chicken noodle soup flavor. Other noodles you can include include fettuccine and egg noodles.
- If you want to add more veggies to your soup then you can use a white or yellow onion and spinach or kale. You can also swap the russet potatoes out for sweet potatoes.
- Make your own Italian seasoning at home by combining ¼ tablespoon of dried basil, dried oregano, dried rosemary, dried thyme, along with a teaspoon of garlic powder and onion powder.
- This recipe also works with chicken thighs. You can also grab a rotisserie chicken and use shredded chicken. If you're using fully cooked chicken then you can just add it at the end along with the noodles.



TACO SOUP

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 2 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5-2 pounds lean ground beef
- 1 medium onion
- 1 large bell pepper, (any color will work)
- 1 can of whole kernel corn, drained (14.5 ounces)
- 1 can of black beans, rinsed and drained (14.5 ounces)
- 1 can of pinto beans, rinsed and drained (14.5 ounces)
- 1 can of medium red enchilada sauce, (14.5 ounces)
- 1 can of diced tomatoes with green chilies, (10 ounces)

- 4 cups of chicken broth
- 2 packets of taco seasoning, or 4 tablespoons homemade taco seasoning
- Salt and pepper to taste

Optional Garnishes:

- Cilantro
- Sour cream
- Cheese
- Avocado
- Tortilla strips or crumbled chips

DIRECTIONS

- Dice your onion and bell pepper.
- Heat a large skillet on the stovetop over medium to medium high heat. Add your bell pepper, onion and ground beef. Season to taste with salt and pepper and cook till the beef is no longer pink and the onion and pepper are softened. Drain any grease once you are done cooking.
- In a slow cooker, place your beef, onions and peppers, and top with the corn, beans, enchilada sauce, and diced tomatoes. Sprinkle your taco seasoning in and then stir in your chicken broth.
- Cook on low for 4 hours or high for 2 hours.
- Adjust the seasoning to taste, adding more salt and/or taco seasoning to your liking. Serve and enjoy with or without your favorite garnishes.

NOTES

- Cook on low for up to 6 hours, or throw it in while heading out for a quick few-hour meal.
- Use any beans you like or have on hand.
- Swap beef for ground turkey or chicken if preferred.
- Store leftovers in an air-tight container in the fridge for up to 5 days.



CHILI

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1 large onion, diced (about 1 heaping cup)
- 2 cups pumpkin puree
- 1-2 cups green salsa
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 2 cans diced tomatoes, juice included (15 ounce)
- 4 cups cooked beans such as pinto or cranberry beans
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 2 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Additional salt and pepper to taste
- Raw onion, shredded cheese, hot sauce, and/or sour cream for serving, optional

DIRECTIONS

- In a medium skillet over medium high heat, add the ground beef and onion. Cook until the beef is cooked through and no longer pink. Drain the excess grease.
- Add the cooked meat mixture to the base of your slow cooker.
- Add the pumpkin puree, green salsa, chicken stock, diced tomatoes, chili powder, cumin, paprika, garlic powder, and salt. Stir to combine well.
- Cook on high for 3-4 hours or low for 5-6.
- Before serving, adjust the seasoning to taste and add additional salt and pepper as needed.
- Serve hot with optional onion, shredded cheese, hot sauce, and/or sour cream.

NOTES

- Substitute ground chicken, turkey, elk, or venison for beef, and adjust green salsa to your heat preference—start with less and add more after cooking if needed.
- Pumpkin adds subtle sweetness and thickness without pumpkin flavor, and dry beans like cranberry beans work great if cooked in an Instant Pot first.



BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 6 cups cubed butternut squash, from a 3-4 lb squash, peeled and seeded
- 1 large tart apple, Granny Smith, Braeburn, or McIntosh, cored and cut into chunks
- 1 large white onion, trimmed, peeled, and cut into large chunks
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 can unsweetened coconut milk, canned, 15 ounces
- 1 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
- 2 teaspoons yellow curry powder
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

DIRECTIONS

- Add stock, squash, apple, onion, and garlic to a 6-quart slow cooker.
- Cover and cook on Low 6-8 hours or High 3-4 hours, until everything is very tender.
- Stir in coconut milk, salt, curry powder, garam masala, ginger, turmeric, black pepper. Blend until completely smooth with an immersion blender right in the slow cooker.
- If the soup is thicker than you like, splash in a bit more warm stock or water.
- Taste and add more salt or curry to make the flavors pop. Ladle into bowls and serve.

NOTES

- Garnish with coconut milk or Greek yogurt swirl, toasted pepitas, chopped cilantro, cracked black pepper, crusty bread or grilled cheese.
- For extra brightness, squeeze in a little lemon or lime after blending.
- This recipe is make-ahead friendly and freezer-friendly. Cool completely before packing; leave a little headspace for freezing.
- I moved across the country lately and in restocking some of my spices I bought an extra inexpensive curry powder and I regretted it after the first use. It was extremely bitter and left a really odd aftertaste. Don't make my mistake, but a reputable brand of curry powder!
- Don't be stingy with the spices here. Taste and add until it's to your liking.



WHITE CHICKEN ENCHILADA SOUP

PREP: 15 MINS COOK: 4 - 6 HRS SERVES: 10 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds chicken, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 cans beans, small white, white kidney, or pinto, drained and rinsed
- 2 cups frozen corn
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 can diced Hatch green chiles
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Optional toppings: sour cream, avocado, sliced green onions, shredded cheese, jalapeño slices, salsa, hot sauce, tortilla chips or strips

DIRECTIONS

- Make this soup in your slow cooker by throwing everything into the cooker except the optional toppings and cook on high for 4 to 6 hours or until the chicken is fully cooked.

NOTES

- This recipe works great with any kind of beans you like or have on-hand.
- To cook this soup in an Instant Pot, put all of the ingredients in the Instant Pot and cook on high pressure for 6 minutes. Then, you can either use a quick pressure release or let it sit in the pot and do a natural pressure release.
- This soup is best when served hot with cornbread or buttermilk biscuits.



TURKEY PUMPKIN CHILI

PREP: 10 MINS COOK: 2 - 3 HRS SERVES: 8 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground turkey, or other ground meat
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4-6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can diced tomatoes, 15 ounce
- 3 cups tomato juice
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 4 cups cooked beans, such as pinto
- 2 cups pumpkin puree
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- additional salt and pepper to taste
- additional toppings such as sour cream, minced fresh cilantro, grated cheese, hot sauce, optional

DIRECTIONS

- In a large pan or cast iron dutch oven over medium to medium-high heat, cook the ground turkey and onion until the turkey is cooked through and the onion is very soft, about 5 minutes.
- Add the garlic and cook until just fragrant, about 30 seconds.
- To the slow cooker, add the cooked meat, onion, and garlic, also add the diced tomatoes, tomato juice, chicken stock, cooked beans, pumpkin puree, chili powder, salt, smoked paprika, and cumin. Stir to combine well.
- Let it cook on low for 4-6 hours or high for 2-3 hours.
- Adjust the salt and pepper to taste and serve hot with additional toppings of your choice.

NOTES

- Use any ground meat you like—turkey, chicken, beef, elk, or venison all work great.
- Use any beans you prefer or a mix, and cook dried beans in an Instant Pot to freeze in 2-cup portions for convenience.



WHITE CHICKEN CHILI

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 16

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken (breast or thighs work great)
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 can butter beans, 14 ounce, drained and rinsed
- 2 cans great Northern beans, 14 ounce, drained and rinsed
- 1 can corn, or 2 cups frozen, drained and rinsed
- 2 cans diced green chilis
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 32 ounces chicken broth
- 1 package cream cheese, 8 ounces, at room temperature
- additional salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- In a large slow cooker, place the chicken, diced onion, beans, corn, green chilis, seasonings, and chicken broth. Cook on high for 4-5 hours or on low for 6-7 hours or until the chicken is tender and shreds easily with a fork.
- When the chicken is cooked through and tender, remove it from the slow cooker and shred with two forks. Return shredded chicken to the slow cooker and stir to combine.
- Cut the cream cheese into 1 inch cubes and add them to the slow cooker. Stir to combine until the cream cheese melts.
- Adjust the seasonings to taste, adding more salt, pepper, and cumin as needed.
- Serve warm right away and store leftovers in an air-tight container in the fridge for up to 4 days.

NOTES

- You can add a half cup of chopped cilantro when you add the cream cheese if you'd like – it's great in it.
- We LOVE butter beans (they are super big and creamy), but if you can't find them, just add another can of great northern beans.



SAUSAGE POTATO SOUP

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 6 slices bacon, diced, about 6 ounces
- 1 pound hot pork sausage, can use mild if you prefer
- 4 cups diced russet potatoes, $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pieces, 2 to 2.5 pounds
- 1 cup diced white onion
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 cups heavy cream, to be added at the end
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded Parmesan
- 4 cups kale, stems removed and chopped, to be added at the end

DIRECTIONS

- Cook the bacon in a skillet over medium heat until crisp, 7–9 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate and store in fridge. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon of the drippings.
- Add sausage and onion to the skillet. Cook, breaking up the sausage, until browned. Stir in the garlic for 30–60 seconds. Drain excess fat.
- Add the sausage mixture to the slow cooker along with potatoes, thyme, salt, pepper, and chicken stock. Stir to combine.
- Cover and cook on Low 5–6 hours or High 3–4 hours, until the potatoes are tender.
- Mix the cornstarch into the cream. Stir in the heavy cream, parmesan, and kale. Cover and cook on High for 10–15 minutes, until the kale wilts and the soup is creamy. Remove bacon from the fridge.
- Taste and adjust salt and pepper. Ladle into bowls and top with the crispy bacon.

NOTES

- Half regular-half turkey sausage works well with this recipe.
- We love using hot sausage, but you can totally use mild or Italian sausage if you prefer those.
- The soup may thicken as it sits – just add a splash of chicken broth when reheating.
- Freezing isn't recommended due to the cream and potatoes, which can separate and become grainy.



SAUSAGE POTATO SOUP

PREP: 15 MINS COOK: 25 MINS SERVES: 6 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 6 slices of bacon
- 1 medium white or yellow onion, chopped
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2.5 pounds of potatoes, about 6 medium potatoes
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup cream
- 2 teaspoons salt, or to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, I like sharp cheddar
- 4 green onions, finely sliced
- 1/2 cup sour cream

DIRECTIONS

- Cook the bacon on the stovetop until crispy. Reserve the bacon grease.
- Add the bacon grease, onion, potatoes, and chicken broth to the slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 4-5 hours, or until the potatoes have softened significantly.
- Stir in the cream, salt, and pepper.
- Serve hot with the cooked bacon and suggested toppings.

NOTES

- No thickeners needed—the potatoes cook down and thicken the soup naturally in the slow cooker.
- For a smoother texture, mash the softened potatoes to your desired consistency.
- The toppings aren't just garnishes—they're essential to this soup!
- Leftovers reheat well and can be made ahead and stored in the fridge or freezer.



SPLIT PEA SOUP

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil or butter
- 1 large onion, diced
- 3 ribs celery, diced
- 3-4 carrots, diced
- 1 bag Hurst's Hampeas Green Split Peas, 20 ounces, rinsed and sorted
- Seasoning packet that comes with split peas
- 8 cups broth, chicken or vegetable is best
- 2 pounds ham hocks, shanks, or leftover ham bone
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Select browning/saute to preheat the slow cooker. Add the olive oil or butter and onion, celery, and carrots. Sauté until the onion is tender, about 3 minutes.
- Add split peas to the pot, add the seasoning packet, and the broth. Stir to combine.
- Add the ham hocks, shanks, or ham bone to the pot.
- Lock the lid in place, make sure the vent is set to seal
- When the cooking time ends, remove the ham pieces and bones and place them on a plate. Remove any extra meat and discard the non-edible pieces. Return the ham meat to the pot and stir to combine.
- Adjust salt and pepper to taste and serve hot.

NOTES

- The soup will thicken a lot as it cools, so serve it hot or use a bit of broth to thin it out as needed.
- I tried this recipe with and without the included seasoning packet and I really liked using the seasoning packets. It adds a great smoky flavor. It's gluten-free, too. If you are sensitive to salt though, try adding only half and adjusting additional salt to your liking.
- You are free to use the pork/ham product of your choice - using a leftover ham bone works great. I just toss my ham bone in a zipper-topped freezer bag after dinner and keep it there until I'm ready to make soup.
- You can make this on the stove top by cooking it for about 40 minutes until tender or in the slow cooker on low for about 4 hours.



VEGGIE BEEF SOUP

PREP: 15 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1-2 pounds stew beef
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2-4 cloves garlic, minced
- 3-4 cups new potatoes, cut into 1 inch pieces
- 2 cups fresh green beans
- 3-4 carrots, sliced
- 6 ears sweet corn, cut from the cob
- 4 cups whole tomatoes in their own juice
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

DIRECTIONS

- In a large cast iron skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add your stew meat and sear well on all sides. Place the seared stew meat pieces in the bottom of your slow cooker.
- Return the cast iron skillet to the stove over medium heat. Add the onions and cook for 3-5 minutes, until the onions start to soften. Add the garlic and cook until just fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the garlic and onion to the slow cooker.
- Add any and all vegetables that you plan on using to the slow cooker. Make sure they are washed and cut into bite-sized pieces.
- When adding the tomatoes in their own juice, crush them in your hand to break them into smaller pieces as you pour them in or give them a light chop before adding.
- Add the chicken stock.
- Add the salt, pepper, and bay leaves, and stir the contents of your slow cooker. Cook on low for 6-8 hours or high for 4-5. Your soup is ready when your potatoes and carrots are tender. Remove bay leaves, stir in parsley, adjust salt and pepper to taste, and serve hot.

NOTES

- This recipe is flexible—use whatever vegetables you like and have on hand in the quantities you prefer.
- Yellow summer squash, zucchini, roughly chopped green cabbage, or even beets are all great additions.
- Feel free to use frozen or canned vegetables depending on season and availability.



SAUSAGE BEAN SOUP WITH SPINACH

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 8 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4 - 7 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces cooked hot or sweet Italian chicken sausage, sliced 1/2 inch thick
- 1 onion, chopped fine
- 4-6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 6 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups water
- 8 ounces white mushrooms, trimmed and quartered
- 8 ounces (1 1/4 cups) 15-bean soup mix, flavoring packet discarded, rinsed and picked over
- 2 bay leaves
- salt and pepper
- 4 ounces baby spinach, (4 cups)

DIRECTIONS

- Microwave the sausage, onion, garlic, thyme, and pepper flakes in a bowl, stirring occasionally, until the onion starts to soften, about 5 minutes. Place the onion mixture in your slow cooker. Add the broth, water, mushrooms, dried beans, bay leaves, and 1/4 teaspoon of salt. Stir to combine. Cover and cook until the beans are tender, 9 to 11 hours on low or 6 to 8 hours on high.
- Throw away the bay leaves. Stir in the spinach and let it sit until slightly wilted, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve right away.

NOTES

- A 4 to 7 quart slow cooker is the best size for this recipe.



CHICKEN STEW WITH DUMPLINGS

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6QT

INGREDIENTS

For the Chicken Stew:

- 1 cup small-dice carrots
- ⅓ cup small-dice celery
- ½ cup small-dice yellow onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ cup white wine or chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 5 chicken thighs, boneless and skinless
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme

- 3 tablespoons butter
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup whole milk
- ½ cup frozen peas

For the Dumplings:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary, minced
- 1 teaspoon thyme, minced
- ½ cup whole milk
- 2 tablespoons melted butter

DIRECTIONS

- Add carrots, celery, onion, garlic, salt, pepper, and chicken broth in a slow cooker.
- In a small bowl, whisk together cornstarch and chicken broth. Add mixture to the slow cooker.
- Lay chicken thighs on top of vegetables and broth.
- Add rosemary, thyme, and butter on top of the chicken.
- Cook on high for 3 hours or low for 6 hours.
- Make the dumplings while the stew is cooking. In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder, salt, rosemary, and thyme. Add milk and melted butter and stir until combined and a loose dough has formed.
- When the stew finished cooking, remove chicken thighs. Shred chicken and add it back to the slow cooker.

Recipe continues on next page...



CHICKEN STEW WITH DUMPLINGS

DIRECTIONS (CONTINUED)

- Stir in the heavy cream, milk, and peas to the slow cooker.
- Drop rounded tablespoons of the dumpling dough onto the stew, placing it evenly over the top. Cook the dumplings for an additional hour on high.
- Serve hot.

NOTES

- Dumplings will look damp on the edges but are fully cooked inside, so keep the lid on while they cook to trap the heat.
- Chicken thighs work best for this recipe—chicken breasts will be drier and less flavorful.
- Don't peek while dumplings cook; keeping the lid closed ensures proper cooking.



HAM AND BEAN SOUP

PREP: 15 MINS COOK: 7 - 8 HRS SERVES: 8 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil or butter
- 1 large onion, diced
- 3 ribs celery, diced
- 3-4 carrots, diced
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bag Hurst's Hambeens Great Northern Beans, 20 ounces, rinsed and sorted
- Seasoning packet that comes with the Great Northern Beans
- 8 cups broth, chicken or vegetable is best
- 2 pounds ham hocks, shanks, or leftover ham bone
- salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- To make ham and bean soup in a slow cooker, sauté the garlic and onion as directed in a pan on the stovetop and then add everything to your slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 7 to 8 hours or until the beans are tender.

NOTES

- The seasoning packet adds great flavor (and I have tested this recipe without it and preferred the soup with the seasoning packet).
- If you are sensitive to salt, start with using only half of the seasoning packet and add more if needed.



POTATO CORN CHOWDER WITH HAM

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: QT

INGREDIENTS

- 2-3 cup chopped carrots
- 4-6 cups cubed potatoes, 1 to 1 ½ inch cubes
- 1 medium to large onion, chopped
- 2-3 cups frozen corn
- 1 quart chicken stock
- 1 can evaporated milk or 1 cup cream
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 cups cubed ham
- Additional salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Add the carrots, potatoes, onion, and corn to the base of your slow cooker.
- Add the chicken stock and stir well to combine.
- Cook on high for 4-5 hours or low for 6-8 or until the potatoes and carrots are cooked through.
- 15 minutes before serving, add the evaporated milk or cream, salt, garlic powder, and cubed ham. Stir well to combine. Let the mixture cook for an additional 15 minutes before serving hot with additional salt and pepper to taste.

NOTES

- Add enough chicken stock to nearly cover the veggies, supplementing with water if needed and adjusting salt and pepper to taste.
- Use any potatoes up to 1½ inches in size, peeled or unpeeled, for even cooking.
- Substitute ham with 2 chicken breasts cooked with the veggies, then shred and return when adding milk or cream.
- Add evaporated milk or cream at the end to prevent curdling.



POTATO CHOWDER

PREP: 15 MINS COOK: 45 MINS SERVES: 8 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 pound bacon
- 1 large white or yellow onion, chopped
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2.5 to 3 pounds potatoes, cubed (about 8 cups)
- 4-5 medium carrots, peeled and sliced
- 2-3 stalks celery, chopped
- 6 cups water
- 1 tablespoon chicken better-than-bouillon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sour cream
- additional salt and pepper to taste
- chopped green onions, additional sour cream, grated cheese, and/or hot sauce, optional for serving

DIRECTIONS

- Cut bacon up into 1/4 inch pieces. Add to a large pot or dutch oven and cook bacon over medium high heat until crispy, about 10 minutes. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon leaving the drippings.
- Keep enough bacon drippings to cover the bottom of the pot (about 2 tablespoons), and remove the rest.
- Return pot to heat and add onion. Cook onions until translucent and soft, about 5 minutes.
- Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.
- Add potatoes, carrots, celery, water, bouillon, and salt.
- Bring soup to a boil, reduce heat to medium low and cook until veggies are soft, about 30 minutes.
- Remove from the heat and stir in the cooked bacon and sour cream. Salt and pepper to taste.
- Serve hot.

NOTES

- Peeling potatoes is optional—unpeeled works great. Use chicken broth instead of water and bouillon if preferred.
- For cheese soup, reduce sour cream to 1/2 cup and add 1-2 cups sharp cheddar at the end. Stir until melted.
- Add 1-2 cups more water for a thinner soup. Adjust consistency to your liking.



BLACK BEAN CHILLI

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 2 HR

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 to 2 pounds lean ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 jalapeño, chopped (optional, remove seeds for less heat)
- 1 can fire-roasted diced tomatoes with juice, 15 ounces
- 1 can crushed tomatoes, 28 ounces
- ½ can of water, using the crushed tomato can to measure
- 2 cups beef broth
- 4 cans black beans, drained and rinsed, 15-ounce each
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 tablespoons smoked paprika
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

- In a large skillet over medium-high heat, cook the ground beef with the onion, bell pepper, and jalapeño (if using) until the beef is browned and cooked through. Drain any excess grease.
- Transfer the mixture to the slow cooker.
- Add the fire-roasted tomatoes, crushed tomatoes, water, beef broth, black beans, and all the spices. Stir to combine.
- Cover and cook on Low for 4-8 hours or High for 2-4 hours.
- Taste and adjust seasonings before serving.

NOTES

- Using 1 pound beef makes this chili a bit lighter, while 2 pounds makes it extra hearty.
- For a milder chili, skip the jalapeño or remove the seeds. For extra spice, add a second jalapeño or a pinch of cayenne.
- This recipe easily doubles and freezes beautifully—let the chili cool completely before portioning into freezer-safe containers.
- Any leftover chili is great made into a second meal by serving it over baked potatoes later in the week.



BROCCOLI AND CHEESE SOUP

PREP: 30 MINS

COOK: 5 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: QT

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 5 stalks broccoli
- 4-6 cups chicken broth, or water +
 boullion paste
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 can evaporated milk, around 12 ounces
- 8 ounces package cream cheese, cubed, 1
 package
- 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese, (I like sharp
 cheddar.)
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- In a medium skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until translucent, about 5 minutes.
- Add the garlic and cook for another minute until the garlic is fragrant.
- While the onion is cooking, finely chop the broccoli and add it to the slow cooker.
- Once the garlic and onions are cooked, add them to the slow cooker. Add enough chicken broth to cover all of the vegetables, it should take 4 to 6 cups. (The less liquid you add, the thicker your soup will be in the end, so take that into account, too.)
- Add the salt and pepper to the Crock-Pot.
- Cook on low for 4 to 6 hours until the broccoli is cooked through and very tender.
- Thirty minutes before serving, add the evaporated milk, cream cheese, cheddar, and Parmesan to the hot broccoli mixture and stir until everything is melted. This will take a few minutes of stirring.
- Working in batches, process the soup in a blender or food processor until smooth. (If you have an emulsion blender that would work great, too). I blended half of the soup and left half of it chunky. Blend as much as you like to get the texture you prefer.
- Add all of the blended soup back to the Crock-Pot and let it reheat until you are ready to serve. Once the soup is hot, turn off the Crock-Pot and serve right away.

Recipe continues on next page....

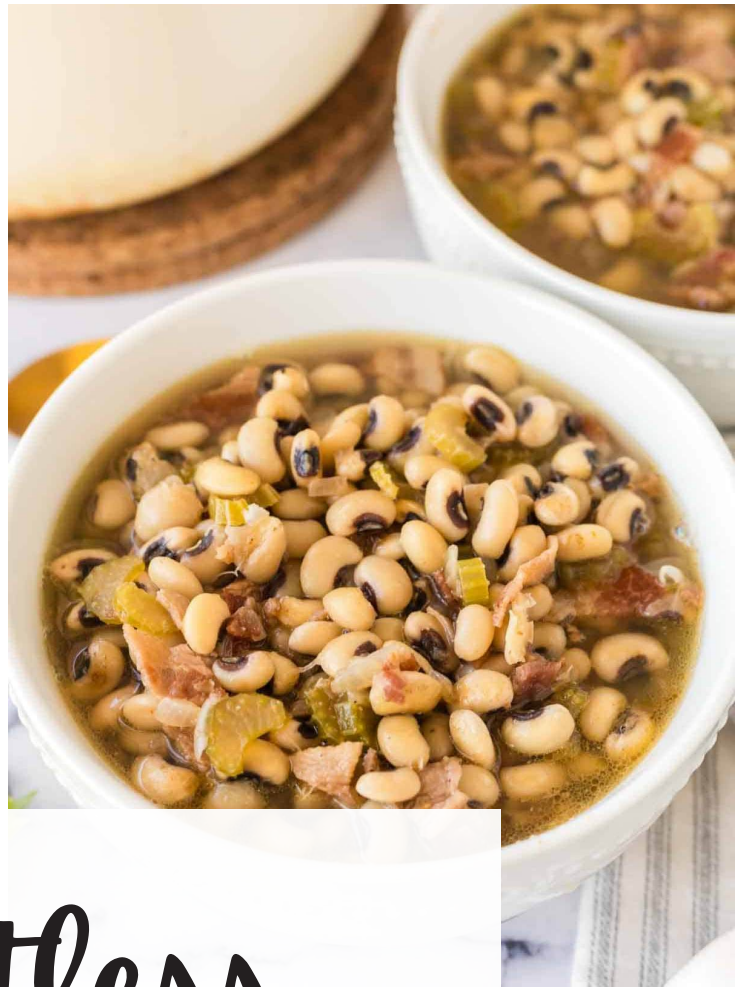


BROCCOLI AND CHEESE SOUP

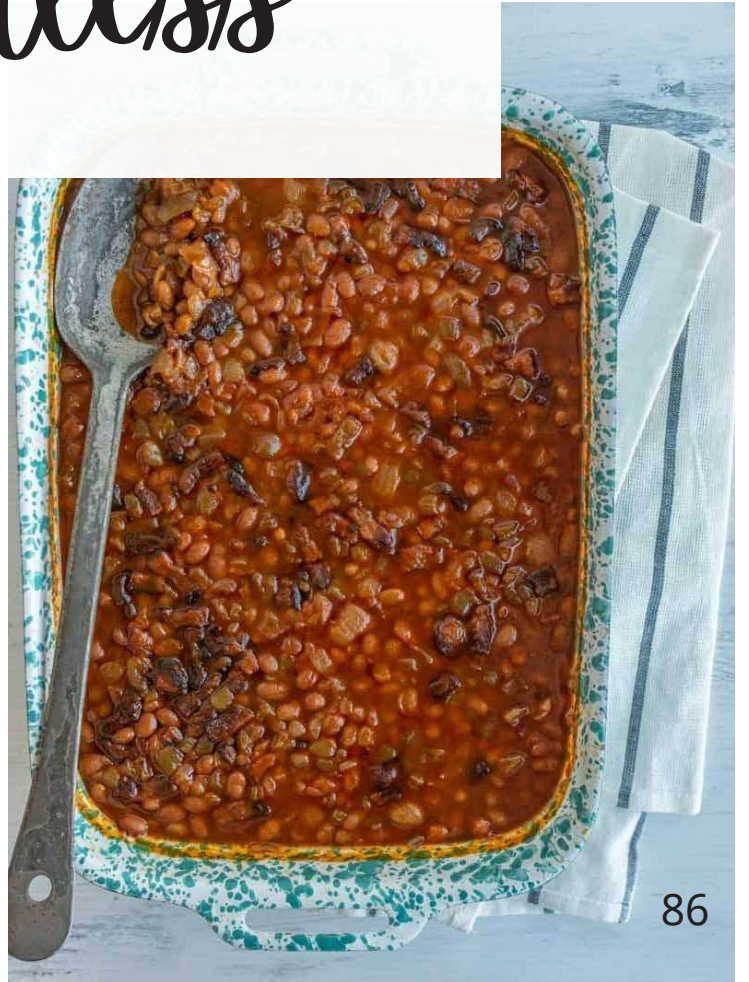
RECIPE CONTINUED

NOTES

- Use 5 broccoli stalks (not bunches). Frozen broccoli works too—thaw and remove excess moisture first. Freshly shredded cheese melts better than pre-shredded; use cream or evaporated milk, not regular milk.
- Serve with crusty bread, garlic knots, or in bread bowls. Top with croutons, extra cheese, bacon, or sour cream.
- Soup tastes better the next day. Store refrigerated for up to 4 days. Reheat gently with a splash of broth or cream if too thick.



Meatless





MAC AND CHEESE

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 10

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 box elbow macaroni noodles, (16 ounces)
- 2 cans condensed cheddar cheese soup, (10.5 ounce cans, do not dilute)
- 3 cups 1% milk
- 1 cup parmesan cheese, grated
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 8 ounces Colby jack cheese, shredded

DIRECTIONS

- Place the macaroni noodles in a strainer and rinse with cold water, stirring well while rinsing, 2-3 times or until the water runs clear.
- Place the noodles in a 6 quart or larger crockpot.
- Stir in the cheddar cheese soup, milk, grated parmesan cheese and black pepper until well combined.
- Place the lid on the crockpot and then turn it on to low and allow it to cook for 1 hour without touching it.
- Stir the mac and cheese well and then replace the lid and allow to cook for another 30-45 minutes before stirring again.
- Continue cooking, stirring every 20-30 minutes, until the mixture is smooth and creamy and the noodles are cooked through.
- Depending on your crockpot the total cook time may take anywhere from 2.5 to 3.5 hours.
- Once the noodles are cooked through but not mushy, turn the crockpot to warm and stir in the shredded cheese until all of the cheese is melted and smooth.
- Serve hot.

NOTES

- Use any similarly sized pasta as macaroni, though cook time may vary slightly, and once you make it once you'll know the timing for your specific slow cooker.
- Use sharp cheddar or any cheese combination you prefer for best flavor.
- Add the cheddar cheese soup straight from the can without diluting it first.



VEGETABLE LASAGNA

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 7

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 jar Italian tomato pasta sauce, 24 ounce
- 1 can diced tomatoes, with the juice (14.5 ounce)
- 24 ounces part-skim ricotta cheese OR cottage cheese
- 9 lasagna noodles with wavy edges
- 3-4 cups chopped vegetables of choice, I used zucchini and fresh spinach
- 2 cups shredded Mozzarella or Provolone cheese
- Parmesan cheese for topping
- fresh parsley for topping

DIRECTIONS

- In a small bowl combine the pasta sauce, diced tomatoes, and ricotta or cottage cheese. Place 1/2 cup of the tomato mixture on the bottom of the slow cooker. Break 3 lasagna noodles so that they fit into the slow cooker better (you can see how I did this in the pictures.)
- Cover with about one third of the tomato sauce mixture, chopped vegetables, cheese, and end with noodles. Repeat layers two more times for a total of three complete layers. Covered with a thin layer of sauce and a little bit more shredded cheese.
- Cover and cook for 3 hours on high or 5-6 hours on low. Turn off the slow cooker and let the lasagna sit for one hour before serving so that the noodles can absorb any extra moisture. Sprinkle with a little Parmesan and fresh parsley before serving.

NOTES

- Use whatever vegetables you like or have on hand—zucchini, spinach, kale, shredded carrots, or bell peppers all work great.
- The zucchini and fresh spinach combination is especially delicious.
- If you are using mushrooms, cook them ahead of time before adding to the slow cooker for best results.



DRIED BEANS

PREP: 5 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pounds or 2 cups dried beans
- water
- drizzle of oil*, optional

DIRECTIONS

- Rinse and beans and sort through them, remove any bit of debris or small rocks.
- Place the beans in the bottom of the slow cooker.
- Cover the beans in the slow cooker with water until it reaches 3 inches above the beans.
- Add the lid to the slow cooker. Cook in the slow cooker on high for 4-6 hours or on low for 6-8.
- When beans are cooked to your liking, drain the extra water from the beans.
- Use beans as you would canned beans in dishes and store any extras portioned out into smaller containers and kept in the freezer for up to 8 weeks.

NOTES

- Cooking time varies based on bean size (small beans like navy cook fastest, large beans like chickpeas take longest) and whether you soaked them overnight, which reduces cook time by about 50%.
- Check beans for doneness at the start of the cook time range and make notes for future reference, especially when trying a new bean variety.
- Add a drizzle of oil to reduce foaming and mess, and always drain and rinse soaked beans before cooking with fresh water.



CAJUN BEANS AND RICE

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 45 MINS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium yellow or white onion, diced
- 1 sweet bell pepper, diced
- 3 ribs celery, trimmed and diced
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 7 cups chicken, vegetable, or beef broth
- 1 package Hurst Beans Cajun 15 Bean Soup rinsed and sorted
- Seasoning packet included in the soup mix
- 3-5 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon thyme leaves
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 cans diced green chilis
- 1 pound smoked ham shanks
- 1 can fire roasted diced tomatoes
- salt and pepper to taste
- 4-6 cups hot cooked rice
- Optional hot sauce, pickled jalapenos, cheese, cilantro, or sour cream for serving

DIRECTIONS

- Heat the oil over medium-high heat in a cast iron skillet on the stove. Add the onions, bell pepper, celery and carrot. Saute until the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes.
- Add the contents of the skillet to the crock of your slow cooker. Add the broth, beans, seasoning, garlic, thyme, cumin, bay leaves, and canned chilis. Stir to combine. Add the ham shanks.
- Cover and cook on low for 8-10 hours or on high for 6-7 hours or until the beans are tender and cooked through.
- Remove the shanks from the slow cooker and place them on a cutting board. Remove the meat from the ham shanks and discard any bone, fat, or other non-edibles.
- Return the meat to the slow cooker as well as the can of diced tomatoes, juice included. Stir to combine well. Add salt and pepper to taste.
- Serve over hot cooked rice with your choice of toppings.

NOTES

- For thicker beans, follow the recipe as written. For a soup-like consistency, add an extra cup of broth.
- Salt generously—the amount needed depends on your broth choice.
- This dish keeps well on the "warm" setting for hours, perfect for making ahead.
- For a vegetarian version, omit the meat and add 3 tablespoons of soy sauce for flavor.
- "Sort" the beans means pick through them to remove any debris or small stones.
- Save your Christmas ham bone to use instead of shanks!



BLACK-EYED PEA SOUP

PREP: 15 MINS COOK: 1 HR 35 MINS SERVES: 6 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound dried black-eyed peas
- 1 cup diced celery, about 2 large stalks
- 1 cup diced white onion, about ½ large white onion
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 teaspoons chicken or Cajun seasoning
- 8 slices bacon, crumbled
- 5 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups water

DIRECTIONS

- Melt the butter in a small pan over medium heat. Add the vegetables and sauté until softened.
- Transfer the sautéed vegetables to the slow cooker along with the remaining ingredients.
- Cook on high for 4 hours or on low for 8 hours.
- Serve and enjoy!

NOTES

- Soaking beans is optional but helps them cook faster and softer. If skipping, increase simmering time to 30-35 minutes.
- Add extra veggies like spinach, kale, broccolini, or carrots. For more protein, add diced andouille sausage with the veggies.
- Use salted or unsalted butter. Substitute chicken/Cajun seasoning with 3 teaspoons chicken bouillon powder if desired.
- For uncooked bacon, cook it first in the pot and omit the butter since it renders enough fat.
- Refrigerate leftovers up to 5 days. Reheat single servings in the microwave for 1-1½ minutes until 120°F.



WHOLE SPAGHETTI SQUASH

PREP: 5 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 6

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large spaghetti squash, about 3 pounds
- 1 cup water

DIRECTIONS

- Rinse off your spaghetti squash, poke it a few times with a fork or sharp knife, and set it in the bowl of your slow cooker.
- Add one cup of water to the bottom of the slow cooker.
- Cover and cook on high for 3 to 4 hours or on low for 4 to 5 hours, or until a fork easily pierces the skin of the squash.
- Remove from the slow cooker, and place on a cutting board.
- Cut in half width-wise with a sharp knife, and remove the stem.
- Use a spoon to scrape the seeds from the center.
- Use a fork to scrape the flesh so that it becomes "spaghetti."
- Serve however you like.

NOTES

- This is such an easy and set-it-and-forget-it recipe!
- Make sure you pick a good squash – heavy for its size, no soft spots, and "injury" free.
- This recipe is fantastic for meal prep days.
- You can also use this method with other hard skinned winter squash like butternut and acorn.



WHOLE BUTTERNUT SQUASH

PREP: 5 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 5

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium butternut squash, 3-4 pounds

DIRECTIONS

- Prepare your squash by washing off the outside well and breaking off the stem (if you can – the stem isn't really going to hurt anything). No need to prick the outside, but you can if you like.
- Place the squash in the bottom of the slow cooker. No water needed.
- Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours or on high for 4-5 hours. Test the doneness of the squash by poking it with a fork. If the fork pierces the butternut squash easily then it's done.
- Let the squash cool enough to be handled.
- Remove from the slow cooker and place on a cutting board.
- Cut the squash in half from stem top to blossom end. Use a spoon to remove the seeds and discard (or feed to your chickens or roast them up like you do pumpkin seeds).
- Use a spoon to scoop out the soft flesh and use as you like or eat it as is with a little salt, pepper, and butter.

NOTES

- Buy firm, blemish-free squash when they're on sale in late summer or fall—they store for weeks or even months.
- Serve in the skin with butter and herbs, mash with butter and brown sugar, or use like pumpkin puree, potatoes, or sweet potatoes in any recipe including soups and Shepherd's Pie.
- If the squash is too big for your slow cooker, carefully trim the ends to make it fit.



VEGETABLE BEAN SOUP

PREP: 5 MINS

COOK: 8 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. dried great northern beans, soaked overnight and drained
- 3 carrots, cubed into small pieces
- 2 stalks celery, very finely minced
- 1 large onion, very finely minced
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon rubbed sage
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2 cups water
- 2-3 teaspoons smoked chili powder
- 1-2 teaspoons salt
- salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Soak the beans overnight according to the package directions.
- In the morning, drain the beans and place the beans, carrots, celery, onion, garlic, and sage in the slow cooker.
- Cover with broth and water. Stir to combine.
- Cover and cook on high for about 8 hours (the beans will be tender after about 6 hours, but the longer it cooks, the creamier the soup gets).
- Before serving stir in 2-3 teaspoon smoked paprika and 1-2 teaspoons salt, both to taste. I tend to like more of both of them.
- Taste soup and add additional salt and pepper to taste.
- Serve hot with your favorite cornbread recipe.

NOTES

- Other white beans work too. Soaking speeds cooking, but isn't essential. Mince vegetables very small so they melt while cooking.
- To thicken soup, blend a few cups of beans and stir back in for a creamier texture.



BAKED POTATOES

PREP: 10 MINS COOK: 3 - 4 HRS SERVES: 4 SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- small to medium potatoes, between 5 and 8 ounces
- OR large baking potatoes, between 8-12 ounces

DIRECTIONS

- To make baked potatoes in the slow cooker, simply wash your potatoes, poke them a few times with a fork, and place them in your slow cooker. Add the lid and cook small to medium potatoes on high for 3-4 hours or low of 5-6. Slow cook large potatoes for 4-5 hours on high or 6-7 hours on low.
- You can cook them in foil or you can cook them right in the slow cooker. It's up to you. I have tried both and both work well. You also do not need to add any water to the slow cooker; they'll be fine without it.

NOTES

- Wash and poke potatoes with a fork, then cook small/medium potatoes on high for 3-4 hours or low for 5-6 hours, and large potatoes on high for 4-5 hours or low for 6-7 hours.
- Cook in foil or directly in the slow cooker without water—both methods work well.
- Cook potatoes alongside meat like chicken legs by separating them with parchment paper or foil so they don't touch the sauce.
- The skin won't crisp in the slow cooker, but you can finish them in a 450°F oven with oil and salt for 10-15 minutes to crisp the skin.



REFRIED BEANS

PREP: 5 MINS

COOK: 8 HRS

SERVES: 4

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bag pinto beans, 20 ounces
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1-3 jalapeño chilis, stemmed, deseeded, and minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 6 cups chicken or vegetable broth, plus more as needed
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
- Juice from one lime
- Salt and pepper to taste, at least 1 teaspoon

DIRECTIONS

- Place the Hurst's Beans pinto beans in the bottom of your slow cooker and sort for any debris. Add the chopped onion, minced jalapeño, minced garlic, and cumin to your slow cooker. Add the vegetable or chicken broth and stir to combine.
- Place the lid on the slow cooker and cook on high for 8-9 hours.
- I like to see if my beans need any more cooking liquid at about 7 hours in. Feel free to add a 1/2 cup as needed through the end of the cooking time.
- After the cooking time, use a potato masher to crush the beans to make a traditional refried bean texture. If the texture is too dry, add a little more broth.
- Add the cilantro, lime juice, and salt and pepper. Stir to combine. Adjust the lime juice, salt, and cumin to taste. Serve warm (can be left in the slow cooker on warm for up to 2 hours). Store any extras in the fridge or freezer.

NOTES

- Use an immersion blender or food processor for super smooth refried beans.
- Keep jalapeño seeds in for a spicier result.
- Use vegetable broth instead of chicken broth for a vegan version.
- If you freeze the refried beans, remember to label them in the month and year so you know when you put them in the freezer.



STUFFED BELL PEPPERS

PREP: 30 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 4

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 5 1/2 TO 7 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 4 red, orange, or yellow bell peppers
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 1/2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 can black beans, rinsed, 15-ounce
- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 1 cup corn, frozen or freshly cut from the cob
- 1 cup jarred tomato salsa
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

DIRECTIONS

- Trim a 1/2 inch from the top of each pepper. Discard the seeds and core. Remove the stem from the pepper tops and then finely chop the pepper tops. Add the chopped pepper tops, onion, and olive oil to a small saute pan and cook over medium heat until the peppers are soft and the onions are translucent, about 6 minutes. Add the minced garlic the last minute of cooking and cook until fragrant.
- In a large bowl combine the cooked vegetable mixture, 1 cup of the cheese, black beans, quinoa, corn, salsa, half of the cilantro, and spices. Stir well to combine. Pack the filling evenly into each bell pepper.
- Pour 1/3 cup water in the bottom of the slow cooker and place each pepper standing up in the bottom. Cover and cook until the peppers are tender, 4 to 5 hours on low or 3 to 4 hours on high.
- Sprinkle the rest of the cheese evenly over the peppers, put the lid back on and cook until the cheese melts, about 5 minutes. Remove the peppers from the slow cooker and place on a serving dish. Sprinkle with remaining chopped cilantro and serve.

NOTES

- The original recipe used Monterey Jack cheese and rice instead of quinoa. I added cumin for extra flavor.
- I made 1.5x the recipe for my larger family, but the written recipe fills 4 peppers.



PUMPKIN

PREP: 5 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 3

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 6-8 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 or 2 sugar pumpkins, 3 to 5 pounds each

DIRECTIONS

- Wash the outside of the pumpkin with warm water taking care to scrub off any dirt if necessary. Remove the stem and cut the pumpkin in half. Remove the seeds (you can save them to roast) and the stringy parts of the inside of the pumpkin with a spoon or an ice cream scoop.
- Place the pumpkin halves skin side up in your slow cooker and cook on high for 2-3 hours or until a fork pierces through the skin of the pumpkin easily. Allow the pumpkin to cool enough to handle and then scrape the flesh from the shell with a spoon.
- Use the fresh pumpkin as you would canned pumpkin. Mash the insides with a fork to remove lumps or you may choose to puree it in a food processor or blender before using to get a very smooth texture.
- Store pumpkin flesh in the fridge for up to a week or in the freezer for up to 6 months.

NOTES

- Use sugar pumpkins (pie pumpkins) for best flavor, but carving pumpkins work too—cut into smaller pieces if needed to fit your slow cooker.
- Puree for smoother texture in baking and save the seeds to roast as a snack.
- Use fresh pumpkin puree in any recipe calling for canned pumpkin, though the color will differ slightly.
- Freeze in 1-cup portions for easy long-term storage, and check you-pick pumpkin patches for edible varieties.



GRANDMA LUCY'S BAKED BEANS RECIPE

PREP: 20 MINS

COOK: 3 HRS

SERVES: 18

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 80 ounces canned pork and beans
- 1/3 pound bacon
- 1 large green bell pepper, diced
- 1 large onion, diced
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard

DIRECTIONS

- Add all ingredients to the slow cooker instead of a baking pan.
- Cook on low for 4-5 hours, or until heated through and fully cooked.
- Serve hot.

NOTES

- Use about 80 ounces total of pork and beans (one 28-ounce can and one 53-ounce can work well). Being a few ounces off is fine.
- Cool completely before refrigerating in a shallow container for faster, even cooling.
- Use a sturdy baking dish like cast-iron or ceramic for even heat distribution and to prevent burning.



Special Foods





APPLE CIDER

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 4 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 10-12 medium apples, assorted types (I used a mixture of all kinds of apples)
- 1 orange, optional
- 3 cinnamon sticks
- 2 teaspoons whole cloves
- 10-14 cups water
- 1/3 - 2/3 cup brown sugar, or your sweetener of choice, see notes

DIRECTIONS

- Wash the apples and orange and roughly cut them into quarters, no need to remove seeds or stems. Place the cut fruit and spices in the bowl of your slow cooker. Add water until it's about an inch from the top of the bowl. Cook on high for 4 hours.
-
- When you have an hour left in the cooking process, use a potato masher or a large spoon to crush and mash the apples and then let them continue to cook.
- After 4 hour strain the cider to remove all of the fruit. I strained it through my normal pasta colander and then again through cheesecloth to make sure it was all cider and no chunks.
- Give your slow cooker bowl a quick rinse to remove any extra pieces of fruit or spices and then return the strained cider to the bowl. Heat on low heat and add sweetener of your choosing, such as brown sugar, honey, or maple syrup to taste, stirring well to combine. Serve warm with additional orange slices and cinnamon sticks as a garnish.

NOTES

- This makes a little more than a half gallon of cider.
- I liked a mix of mostly brown sugar and a bit of pure maple syrup for sweetening the cider. You can use brown sugar, honey, maple syrup, or a mixture of those to sweeten it.



WASSAIL

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 40 MINS

SERVES: 7

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups orange juice
- 3 cups apple cider
- 1 cup lemonade
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 2 teaspoons ginger
- 2 teaspoons cloves
- 2 teaspoons nutmeg

DIRECTIONS

- Combine all of the ingredients together in a large pot and use a wooden spoon to stir them until combined.
- Cover the wassail with a lid and allow it to sit over low-medium heat for 40 minutes.
- Remove the cinnamon sticks from the liquid and give it another quick stir.
- Serve and enjoy!

NOTES

- You can usually find apple cider year round at most major grocery stores. It can be found on the juice aisle or in the deli section.
- We like to use a combination of whole and ground spices to really infuse the wassail, but you are more than welcome to use all ground or all whole spices.
- The sweetness of the orange juice helps balance the warmth of the cider and spice blend.
- You can serve this wassail hot or cold.
- Store your wassail in the fridge for up to 2 weeks. We like to store it in an airtight pitcher, but a Rubbermaid container will work as well.



HOT COCOA

PREP: 10 MINS

COOK: 2 HRS

SERVES: 12

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

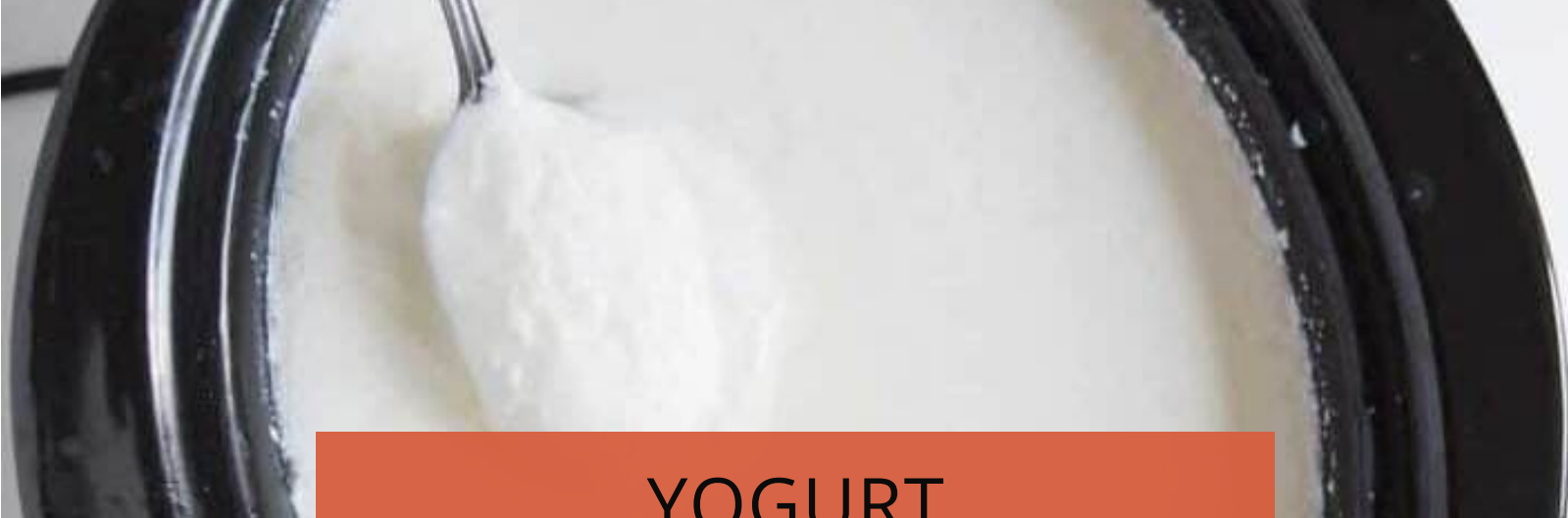
- 6 cups whole milk
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk, (14 ounces)
- 2 cups milk chocolate chips
- 1/3 cup cocoa powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, optional
- additional toppings such as whipped cream, mini marshmallows, or crushed peppermint candies

DIRECTIONS

- In a large slow cooker (4 quart or larger) add the milk, cream, and sweetened condensed milk. Stir to combine. Cover and cook on low for about 2 hours to warm up the mixture.
- 10 minutes before you plan to serve the hot cocoa add the chocolate chips, cocoa powder, and salt if using. Whisk to combine. Stir every few minutes until the chocolate chips melt and everything is fully combined.
- Ladle the hot cocoa into mugs and serve with any additional toppings you might like.

NOTES

- Don't try to speed up the hot chocolate by turning your crock pot to high because you risk curdling the milk and cream.
- Use a cocoa powder that is labeled Dutch processed (it's usually available in grocery stores) because it's less bitter than regular cocoa powder.
- It's worth splurging on high-quality chocolate chips for this beverage.
- If you have a large enough slow cooker this is a great recipe to double for a crowd. I served it at our local winter farmer's market and it was a huge hit.



YOGURT

PREP: 5 MINS

COOK: 8 HRS

SERVES: 8

SLOW COOKER SIZE: 4-6 QT

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 gallon (8 cups) whole milk (you'll get a thinner product with a lower fat content milk)
- 1/2 cup commercial plain yogurt that says "Live and Active Cultures" on the tub, I have great success with Mountain High yogurt for my culture.

DIRECTIONS

- In a large crock pot, add the milk. Add the lid. Turn it on low for around 2 ½ hours.
- After that time has passed, unplug the crock pot and let it sit for 3 hours. I always set a timer for these or I don't remember.
- After the 3 hours has passed, stir in the ½ cup of yogurt. Replace the lid of the crock pot and cover with two big towels or a blanket. Let rest for 8 to 12 hours (overnight works well). In the morning you'll have yogurt!
- Place it in a half-gallon mason jar and refrigerate for a few hours before serving. It will thicken up in the fridge. Keep a ½ cup of this yogurt for your next batch and say goodbye to buying yogurt!
- You can also let the yogurt strain in cheese cloth in the fridge for a few hours and you'll get a thicker Greek yogurt.

NOTES

- Use an instant-read thermometer to scald milk to 180°F, then cool to 110-115°F before adding culture.
- Save ½ cup of homemade yogurt as starter for your next batch.
- Strain through cheesecloth for a few hours for thicker Greek-style yogurt—it thickens more when refrigerated.
- Store in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or freeze for up to 2 months (use frozen yogurt in smoothies or baking).

SLOW COOKER TIPS

1

Adjust Seasoning at the End

The long heat of the slow cooker can reduce the potency of some herbs and spices, so always taste before serving and add additional spices (in addition to salt and pepper!) to taste. I find that things like curry powder, cumin, and other warm spices tend to lose their flavor the easiest.

2

Resist the Urge to Peek

Every time you lift the lid, you lose about 20 minutes of cooking heat. Unless you're stirring at the halfway point, keep that lid on!

3

Layer Ingredients Smartly

Dense veggies (like potatoes and carrots) should go on the bottom, closer to the heat source. More delicate veggies (like peas or bell peppers) go toward the top or added later.

4

Time Is Flexible, But Not Infinite

Slow cookers are forgiving, but food can overcook if left all day. If you'll be away longer than the recipe calls for, set your cooker to low and use a timer or keep-warm setting.

5

Watch Liquid Levels

Unlike stovetop cooking, liquid doesn't evaporate much in a slow cooker. If your dish looks too soupy, remove the lid for the last 30 minutes to let it thicken, or stir in a cornstarch slurry.

6

Prep Ahead to Save Time

You can chop veggies and measure ingredients the night before. Store everything in the fridge, then dump it into the slow cooker in the morning for an easy start.

KITCHEN CONVERSION CHART

| LIQUID MEASURES | | | | |
|-----------------|-----|------|-------|--------|
| FLUID OZ | CUP | PINT | QUART | GALLON |
| 8 | 1 | 1/2 | 1/4 | 1/16 |
| 16 | 2 | 1 | 1/2 | 1/8 |
| 32 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1/4 |
| 64 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 1/2 |
| 128 | 16 | 8 | 4 | 1 |

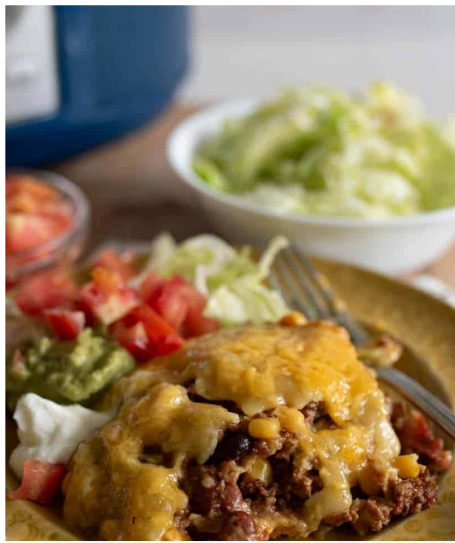
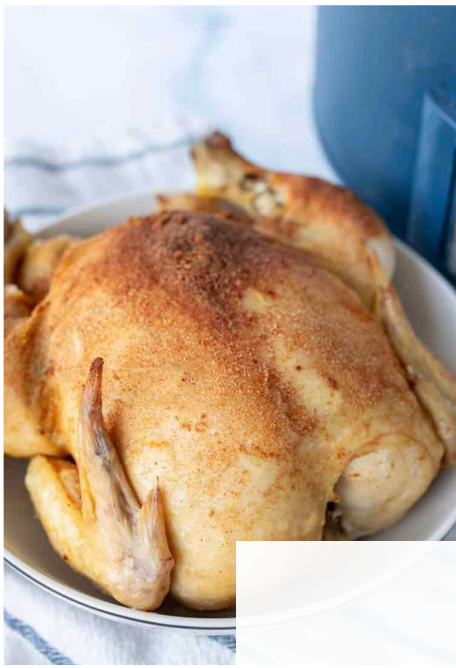
| DRY MEASURES | | | |
|--------------|----------|------------|------|
| GRAM | TEASPOON | TABLESPOON | CUP |
| 14 | 3 | 1 | 1/16 |
| 29 | 6 | 2 | 1/8 |
| 57 | 12 | 4 | 1/4 |
| 114 | 24 | 8 | 1/2 |
| 171 | 36 | 12 | 3/4 |
| 229 | 48 | 16 | 1 |

| OVEN TEMPERATURES | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| °C | 120 | 160 | 180 | 205 | 220 |
| °F | 250 | 320 | 350 | 400 | 425 |

WEEK OF: _____

MEAL PLANNER

| | BREAKFAST | LUNCH | DINNER | DESSERT |
|-----|-----------|-------|--------|---------|
| MON | | | | |
| TUE | | | | |
| WEN | | | | |
| THU | | | | |
| FRI | | | | |
| SAT | | | | |
| SUN | | | | |



CONTACT



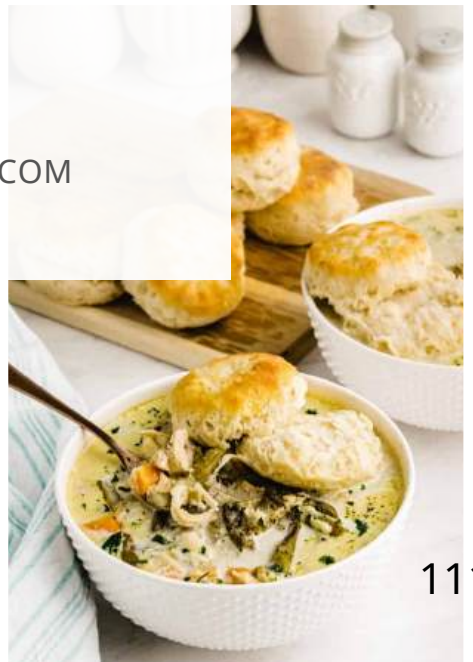
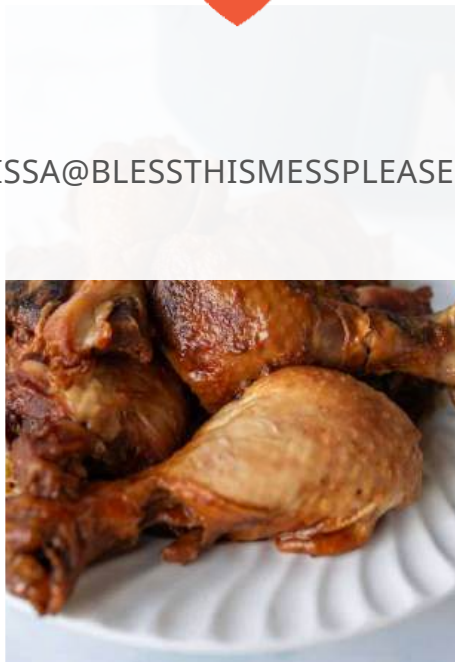
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