

simplify with slow cooking

Slow cooking is a great way to cook healthy with little effort. Food can be prepared slowly over the course of a day and can be done unattended while we are away from home. The slow cooker, also known as a crock pot, offers ease of use, and it is an energy saving appliance. Meals can be prepared and frozen several days ahead and thawed when needed. They are ready to cook in the morning so you can come home greeted by the delicious aroma of your dinner. You can slow cook pastas, rice dishes, soups, and even breakfast dishes and desserts. So take it slow, and learn to enjoy a ready to eat meal this week!



Use these tips when preparing for your meals:

- The slow cooker is great for cooking cheaper cuts of meat as it can turn tough cuts into tender juicy bites!
- Trim fat from fattier cuts of meat.
- If preparing a meal while you are away all day, choose recipes where you can add all the ingredients at once.
- To save time in the morning, prepare all your ingredients the night before and store in the fridge until you're ready to start your slow cooker.
- Slow cookers do not evaporate much liquid so be careful about how much you add. If you're using a recipe that wasn't intended for a slow cooker, reduce the liquid by 1/3 to 1/2. Wait to add dairy until the very end for best results.
- Boil dried beans before adding to the slow cooker.
- If you choose to slow cook your veggies, use root vegetables to avoid mushiness. Place them closer to the heat source, at the bottom of the pot, when cooking along with meat.
- Avoid using very lean cuts of meat, fish and seafood as they do not perform well in the slow cooker.
- Add pasta and rice near end of cook time or cook pasta and rice separately.
- Experiment with crock pot breakfast recipes- cook overnight to wake up to a warm breakfast bake.
- Use crock pot "liners" for easy clean up.

Slow cooker Recipe

Skinny Sausage Breakfast Casserole

Perfect for Brunch or Breakfast-for-Dinner!

- 12 eggs
- 3/4 cup canned evaporated low-fat 2% milk
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat sharp cheddar cheese (4 oz)
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions (4 medium)

- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat Colby-Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 bag (20 oz) refrigerated cooked shredded hash brown potatoes
- 1 package (9.6 oz) refrigerated cooked turkey sausage crumbles
- 1/2 cup chopped roasted red bell peppers

Line sides slow cooker with foil that has been folded into thirds; spray with cooking spray. In medium bowl, beat eggs, milk, pepper flakes, salt and pepper with whisk. Reserve 3/4 cup Cheddar cheese and 2 Tbsps green onions; refrigerate while casserole cooks. In small bowl, stir together remaining cheeses. Layer half each of the potatoes, sausage, roasted peppers, remaining green onions and cheese. Repeat layers. Pour egg mixture over layers. Cover; cook on LOW heat setting 4 to 4-1/2 hours or until temperature reaches 160°F in center and egg mixture is set. Turn slow cooker off. Sprinkle reserved cheese and green onions over top of casserole. Cover 10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Remove foil before serving by loosening edges with table knife and pulling out.



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Slowlooker Recipe

Three-Bean Vegetarian Chili

A perfect slow-cooked vegetarian dinner. Cooking time: 8 hours and 15 minutes.

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| 2 cans (14 oz each) vegetable broth | 2 cans (15 oz each) black beans, drained, rinsed |
| 1 cup chopped onion (1 large) | 2 cans (14.5 oz each) diced tomatoes, undrained |
| 1/4 cup chopped seeded jalapeño chiles | 1 can (15 to 16 oz) pinto beans, drained, rinsed |
| 2 teaspoons chili powder | 1 can (15 oz) red kidney beans, drained, rinsed |
| 2 teaspoons ground cumin | 1/2 cup reduced-fat sour cream |
| 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce | 1/2 cup shredded pepper jack cheese (2 oz) |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro |
| 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped | |

Spray 6-quart slow cooker with cooking spray. In slow cooker, stir together all ingredients except sour cream, cheese and cilantro. Cover; cook on Low heat setting 8 hours. Top each serving with 1 tablespoon sour cream, 1 tablespoon cheese and 1-1/2 teaspoons cilantro.

Slowlooker Recipe

Meatloaf Dinner

For the 'meat and potato' lovers, you'll get bonus veggies!

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| 1½ lb ground beef or ground turkey | 2 tablespoons brown sugar |
| 2 eggs | 1 teaspoons mustard |
| ¾ cup milk | 1 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce |
| 2/3 cup bread crumbs | VEGETABLES: |
| 1 teaspoons salt | 1 lb baby carrots |
| 2 teaspoons dried minced onions | 1½ lb small red potatoes |
| 1/2 teaspoons sage | 2 tablespoons olive oil |
| SAUCE: | 1 teaspoons each of salt, pepper & garlic (powder or minced) |
| 1/4 cup ketchup | |

Line slow cooker with aluminum foil and spray with cooking spray. Beat eggs in a large bowl. Add milk, bread crumbs, onion, salt and sage and mix well. Add ground meat using hands to mix until combined. Form into a loaf to sit in the middle of your slow cooker. Mix vegetable ingredients together and place around meatloaf. Cook on low 5-6 hours. Whisk together ketchup, brown sugar, mustard and Worcestershire. Spread sauce on top of meat loaf and cook for an additional 30 minutes on high. Check for doneness with a meat thermometer. Cook until meatloaf is at 160 F degrees.

Slowlooker Recipe

Gingered Broccoli Chicken

Delicious stir fry cooking in a slow cooker! Serve your finished meal on rice.

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| 6 boneless skinless chicken thighs (about 1 1/4 lb) | 1/2 cup water |
| 2 tablespoons grated gingerroot | 5 cups frozen broccoli florets (from 22 oz bag), thawed |
| 1 medium sweet onion, cut into thin wedges | 1/4 cup water |
| 1 bag (1 lb) frozen sliced peaches, thawed | 2 tablespoons cornstarch |
| 1/2 cup teriyaki sauce | |

Spray 3- to 4-quart slow cooker with cooking spray. Place chicken in cooker; top with gingerroot, onion and thawed peaches. In small bowl, mix teriyaki sauce and 1/2 cup water; pour over chicken mixture. Cover; cook on LOW heat setting 6 to 7 hours. Stir thawed broccoli into chicken mixture. In small bowl, mix 1/4 cup water and the cornstarch; stir into chicken mixture. Increase heat setting to High; cover and cook 15 minutes longer or until sauce is slightly thickened. Meanwhile, in 2-quart saucepan, heat 3 cups water to boiling. Stir in 3 cups of rice. Cover; remove from heat. Let stand 5 minutes. Fluff rice with fork. Serve chicken mixture over rice.