Cooking Safely in the Slow Cooker

Cooking food in a slow cooker/crock pot is safe IF you follow these tips:

- Keep everything (hands, slow cooker, food, counter, knives, etc.) clean.
- Keep meat and vegetables refrigerated until ready to put in slow cooker.
- **ALWAYS** start with thawed meat or poultry - not frozen.
- Follow your slow cooker instructions for cooking whole roasts and poultry.
- Fill cooker at least half full but no more than three-fourths full.
- Cook meat, poultry, or eggs on HIGH for the first hour of cooking and then turn cooker to a lower setting.
- Preheat the cooker and add hot liquids (if possible).
- Cover meat or poultry with liquid.
- Keep the lid on.
- **DO NOT** reheat foods in the slow cooker. Heat foods on the stove or in the microwave; use the slow cooker to keep it hot.
- Remove cooked food from the cooker before storing!

Advantages of Slow Cookers

- “All-day cookin’ without lookin’.”
- Food doesn’t overcook or burn. Foods will be more tender.
- One-step preparation is convenient.
- Simmered foods taste better than boiled foods.
- Economical to operate - uses less energy.
- Prepare a wide variety of foods.
- Less tender cuts of meat cook with less shrinkage.
- Food is heated, but not the kitchen.
- Cleanup is simple.
- Slow cooker frees up oven and stove top space.
Tips for Successful Slow Cooking

Be sure to read the directions on your specific slow cooker!

- For easier cleanup, spray the inside of the cooker with nonstick cooking spray before adding ingredients.
- Most vegetables take longer to cook. Place them on the bottom of cooker.
- To avoid pasta and rice from becoming gummy, precook these ingredients.
- To avoid curdling, add milk during last hour of cooking or use evaporated milk.
- Trim visible fat on meat. Cook and drain ground meats before adding to cooker.
- One hour on HIGH = two hours on LOW.
- The lid is an important part of the cooking process, trapping steam which helps to cook the food. If you remove the lid during the cooking, the steam is lost and cooking process is slowed by 30 minutes.

### SPICY PORK AND CABBAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4-6 pork loin chops (about 1 inch thick), well trimmed</th>
<th>1/2 small onion, chopped</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salt and black pepper</td>
<td>1 cup water</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 cups coarsely shredded cabbage</td>
<td>1/4 cup sugar</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4 tart apples, cored and diced</td>
<td>2 Tbsp cider vinegar</td>
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Season pork chops lightly with salt and pepper. Place cabbage, apples and onion in slow cooker. Add remaining ingredients except pork chops. Toss together well to evenly distribute spices. Arrange chops on top of cabbage mixture, stacking to fit. Cover and cook on LOW 8 to 10 hours or on HIGH 4 to 5 hours (165°F).

Ser 6: cal 297; fat 14.7g; sod 275mg; carb 17.4g

Source: Best-Loved Slow Cooker Recipes

### POT ROAST OF BEEF

<table>
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<tr>
<th>3-4 lb rump roast or pot roast</th>
<th>and sliced</th>
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<tr>
<td>2-3 potatoes, cut up</td>
<td>1 cup water with 1 tsp beef bouillon OR 1 cup beef broth</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3 carrots, cut up</td>
<td>Salt and pepper to taste</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-2 onions, peeled</td>
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Put vegetables on bottom of slow cooker. Salt and pepper meat, then put in cooker. Add liquid. Cover and cook on LOW for 10 to 12 hours or HIGH for 4 to 5 hours (160°F).

Ser 9: cal 441; fat 33.7g; sod 371mg; carb 7.8g

### BBQ CHICKEN LEGS

| 6-8 chicken legs | 1 bottle barbecue sauce |

Put chicken legs in the slow cooker. Pour the barbecue sauce over them. Cook on LOW for 7 to 8 hours (165°F).

Ser 4: cal 253; fat 14.8g; sod 400mg; carb 8g