







BEST SLOW COOKER RECIPES

mini cookbook







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The Slow Cooker can be

A Busy Cook's Best Friend in the Kitchen!

How wonderful is the idea of walking into your house at 6 PM to be greeted by the mouthwatering aroma of dinner waiting for you? It doesn't have to be a fantasy! With a slow cooker and a little advanced preparation, this can be your reality several nights each week. The beauty of a slow cooker is that you can put all the ingredients together in the morning before heading out the door. Your dinner will cook while you're out doing other important things like working and taking care of (or driving around) your kids. (Please note: All recipes in this book include conventional oven and/or stovetop directions).

If you're not experienced with the slow cooker, have no fear! Below are some helpful tips to get great results from your slow cooker:

- Don't peek! Unless specifically directed in the recipe, don't lift the lid to check your food. Each time the lid is lifted, it adds approximately 30 minutes to the cooking time.
- Don't over or under-fill. Your slow cooker works best if it is 1/2 3/4 full. Food will scorch or burn more easily when the crock is less than half full, and could boil over if filled to the brim.
- Since slow cooked foods retain their juices, you may find yourself needing to add less liquid than you are used to when cooking by other means.
- Pasta can be tricky to cook in the slow cooker. Some recipes will direct
 you to add pasta during the last 30 minutes of cooking. When in doubt,
 it's best to cook the pasta separately.
- Browning meat, onions, or other ingredients prior to placing in the slow cooker is a matter of preference, although some people say it adds additional flavor. To save time and effort, skip the browning.
- Feel free to season (or add additional seasonings) toward the end of the cooking time. While perfectly acceptable to add at the beginning, the flavor of some herbs tends to dissipate while cooking. This is particularly true with fresh herbs.
- Don't worry! A slow cooker is very forgiving, and can be left for long periods
 of time: an unexpected last minute errand will likely not ruin your meal.
- Slow cooker cooking times may vary—get to know your slow cooker and, if necessary, adjust cooking times accordingly.



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- **10.** Spiced Chicken with Maple Butter Glaze



COOKING DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. In a large heavy skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Brown the onions and meat, stirring occasionally, and season them with the chili powder, garlic powder, and salt. When the meat is cooked and the onions are softened, 6 - 8 minutes, remove the pan from the heat (if using beans rather than meat, add them after the onions are cooked and warm them through).

Meanwhile, spread the chips in the bottom of a large flat baking dish with sides (a metal roasting pan is ideal). Top the chips evenly with the meat mixture, then the beans, tomatoes or salsa, peppers or olives (optional), and cheese.

Bake the nachos for 8 - 10 minutes, until everything is hot and the cheese is melted, but before the edges of the chips get browned. (Meanwhile, slice the honeydew, if you are serving it.) Serve it immediately, scooping the chips and toppings onto each plate, and topping it with guacamole or avocado, sour cream, and extra salsa, if desired.

SLOW COOKER DIRECTIONS

Omit the oil. In a medium bowl, combine the chili powder, garlic powder, and salt with the tomatoes or salsa. Spread the onions, meat, beans, tomatoes or salsa, and peppers or olives (optional) in the slow cooker. Either stir to mix or leave in layers, as you prefer. Cook on low for 6 - 10 hours or on high for 3 - 4 hours. To serve, place the tortilla chips on a plate and top with the meat mixture and cheese. Let rest for a few minutes to allow the cheese to melt before adding the optional toppings. Alternatively, if you would like your tortilla chips warmed, in the last 30 minutes of cooking time, place the cheese and tortilla chips in the slow cooker on top of the other ingredients. When serving, spoon out some of the entire mixture and invert onto individual plates.

Nacho Average Nachos

Prep + Cook: 30 minutes, # of Servings: 6

This is a great recipe to experiment with and adapt to your taste or diet, and would be a great option to serve during any casual gathering.

INGREDIENTS FOR MAIN DISH

- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- · 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 lb. ground turkey, beef, or black beans
- · 1 Tbsp. chili powder, or more to taste
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder, or more to taste
- 1/4 1/2 tsp. salt, to taste
- 6 8 cups tortilla chips
- 15 oz. canned black beans or vegetarian refried beans, drained and rinsed if using black beans
- 14 oz. petite diced tomatoes or chunky salsa, drained if using tomatoes
- 1/4 1/2 cup sliced hot peppers or olives (optional)
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese, or more to taste
- 1 cup guacamole, for serving, or use diced avocado (optional)
- 1 cup nonfat or low fat sour cream, for serving (optional)
- 1 cup salsa, for serving (optional)

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - HONEYDEW MELON OR CANTALOUPE

• 1 honeydew melon or cantaloupe, peeled and diced

DO AHEAD OR DELEGATE

Dice the onion, combine the dry seasonings, drain and rinse the beans.

FLAVOR BOOSTER

Double the chili and/or garlic powder and add the optional hot peppers.

TIP

If you prefer your nachos a little crispier, try spreading out the chips and have them overlap less on the baking sheet. This will keep the bottom of some of the chips from getting a bit soggy.

SERVE WITH HONEYDEW MELON OR CANTALOUPE

Serve it with the honeydew melon (or use cantaloupe). If the melon needs extra flavor, sprinkle it with a little superfine sugar and fresh lemon or lime juice.

Nutritional Information Per Serving (% based upon daily values): Calories 410, Total Fat: 18g, 28%; Saturated Fat: 6g, 30%; Cholesterol: 50mg, 17%; Sodium: 840mg, 35%; Total Carbohydrate: 34g, 11%; Dietary Fiber: 6g, 24%; Sugar: 3g; Protein: 28g

Nutrition with side dish(es): Calories 471, Total Fat: 18g, 28%; Saturated Fat: 6g, 30%; Cholesterol: 50mg, 17%; Sodium: 871mg, 36%; Total Carbohydrate: 50g, 16%; Dietary Fiber: 8g, 29%; Sugar: 17g; Protein: 29g





COOKING DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. In a large oven-safe Dutch oven or deep skillet, heat 2 Tbsp. oil over medium heat. Add the sausage (if you are using meat sausage, remove it from its casing), breaking it up with the edge of a spatula, and the onions, garlic, oregano, and basil. Cook the sausage and onions for 6 - 8 minutes, until the sausage is browned, stirring frequently. In a small bowl, combine the bread crumbs and 1 Tbsp. oil with your fingers or a fork and set it aside.

Add the tomatoes and beans to the sausage mixture, and bring it to a low boil. Simmer it for 3 - 5 minutes, then top it evenly with the bread crumb mixture and transfer it to the oven. Bake the stew for 10 minutes, uncovered. Remove it from the oven and serve it immediately, or refrigerate it for up to 3 days.

SLOW COOKER DIRECTIONS

(This makes more of a chili than a casserole, but it's still delicious.) In a large skillet, heat 2 Tbsp. oil over medium heat. Add the sausage (if you are using meat sausage, remove it from its casing), breaking it up with the edge of a spatula, and the onions, garlic, oregano, and basil. When the meat it browned transfer to a slow cooker. Add the tomatoes, 1 lb. dried cannellini or other white beans, and 8 cups water. Cook it on High for 6 hours or on Low for 10 hours. Skip the bread crumbs.

French Cassoulet with White Beans and Sausage

Prep + Cook: 30 minutes, # of Servings: 6

Cassoulet is a French bean stew that is usually made with meat, tomatoes, and spices. This version is amazing because it's so quick, yet tastes like it's been stewing for hours! Serve it with a loaf of French bread.

INGREDIENTS FOR MAIN DISH

- 3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 14 oz. Gimme Lean (meatless) sausage or 1 lb. uncooked pork or turkey sausage (use wheat/gluten-free, if needed)
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 tsp. minced garlic, (about 2 cloves)
- 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp. dried basil
- 1/4 cup bread crumbs, or use panko
- 15 oz. diced tomatoes, with their liquid
- 15 19 oz. cannellini or white kidney beans, drained and rinsed, or use 1 lb. dried cannellini or other white kidney beans if using the slow cooker

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - FRENCH BREAD

• 1 loaf French bread, sliced

DO AHEAD OR DELEGATE

Dice the onion, peel the garlic.

FLAVOR BOOSTER

Add 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes to the pan with the sausage.

TIP

Gimme Lean is such a realistic substitute for sausage that my family doesn't know the difference unless I reveal my secret. It is fat free and higher in fiber than traditional sausage. Look for it in your supermarket's refrigerated section.

SERVE WITH FRENCH BREAD

Serve it with French bread, warmed in a 300 degree oven for 5 – 8 minutes, if desired.

Nutritional Information Per Serving (% based upon daily values): Calories 300, Total Fat: 14g, 22%; Saturated Fat: 3g, 13%; Cholesterol: 40mg, 13%; Sodium: 740mg, 31%; Total Carbohydrate: 27g, 9%; Dietary Fiber: 5g, 20%; Sugar: 3g; Protein: 18g

Nutrition with side dish(es): Calories 388, Total Fat: 15g, 23%; Saturated Fat: 3g, 14%; Cholesterol: 40mg, 13%; Sodium: 935mg, 39%; Total Carbohydrate: 44g, 15%; Dietary Fiber: 6g, 24%; Sugar: 3g; Protein: 21g





COOKING DIRECTIONS

In a small bowl, combine the spices. Remove any giblets from the chicken and discard them. Put the vegetables in the bottom of a slow cooker. Rub the spice mixture onto the chicken, and put the chicken on top of the vegetables. (Alternatively, bake the chicken in a Dutch oven or covered roasting pan at 250 degrees for 5 hours, or see faster cooking directions below.)

Cook it on low for 5 - 6 hours, or on high for 2 - 3 hours, until the chicken is tender and falling off the bone. Transfer the chicken to a pan and put it under the broiler if a crisper skin is desired. Serve it immediately with the vegetables and some of the pan juices, or refrigerate it for up to 3 days, or freeze it for up to 3 months.

TO COOK THE CHICKEN FASTER

Cook the chicken and vegetables in the oven at 400 degrees for $1\ 1/2$ hours, covered with foil or the lid of the roasting pan for the first 45 minutes. After 45 minutes, uncover and baste the chicken with the pan juices and stir the vegetables. The chicken is done when the juices at the base of the thigh run clear or an instant read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh measures 165 degrees. If time allows, let the chicken rest for 10-15 minutes after removing it from the oven before cutting it.

Spice-Rubbed Slow-Cooked Whole Chicken

Prep: 15 minutes Cook: 3 hours,

Total: 3 hours and 15 minutes, # of Servings: 6

You'll love the simplicity and flexibility of this recipe, originally suggested by Amanda Wendt. You can customize the spices and vegetables, and it's one of those dishes that you can throw in a pot in the morning and forget about until dinnertime. You can eat the cooked chicken right away, or use the chicken in tacos, pot pie, salads, or anything else you can think of. Serve it with whole grain bread.

INGREDIENTS FOR MAIN DISH

- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper, or more to taste (optional)
- · 1 yellow onion, halved and sliced
- 4 carrots, cut into large chunks
- · 2 potatoes, any variety, cut into large chunks
- 1 whole chicken (about 4 lbs., or use 8 10 chicken pieces), skin removed, if desired

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - WHOLE GRAIN BREAD

• 1 loaf whole grain bread

DO AHEAD OR DELEGATE

Combine the spices, slice the onion, and cut the carrots.

FLAVOR BOOSTER

Use 1 1/2 tsp. garlic powder and the optional cayenne pepper.

TIP

For a version that is still flavorful but much lower in fat, remove the chicken skin and rub the spices directly on the meat.

SERVE WITH WHOLE GRAIN BREAD

Serve it with a loaf of whole grain bread. Warm it in a 300 degree oven for 5 – 8 minutes, if desired.

Nutritional Information Per Serving (% based upon daily values): Calories 264, Total Fat: 10g, 15.5%; Saturated Fat: 3g, 15.5%; Cholesterol: 72mg, 24%; Sodium: 487mg, 20%; Total Carbohydrate: 18g, 16%; Dietary Fiber: 3g, 11.5%; Sugar: 3g; Protein: 25g

Nutrition with side dish(es): Calories 374, Total Fat: 12g, 18.5%; Saturated Fat: 3g, 15.5%; Cholesterol: 72mg, 24%; Sodium: 667mg, 28%; Total Carbohydrate: 38g, 23%; Dietary Fiber: 6g, 23.5%; Sugar: 6g; Protein: 29g





COOKING DIRECTIONS

(Start the rice and the fruit salad first, if you are serving them.) In a small bowl or measuring cup, whisk together the soy sauce, rice wine, sugar, cornstarch, and red pepper flakes (optional). Set it aside.

Heat a large nonstick skillet over high heat and add the oil. When it is smoking, add the beans and cook, stirring frequently, until they are shriveled and black in spots, 5 - 8 minutes. Reduce heat if necessary to keep them from burning. Transfer the beans to a plate.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the turkey, pork, or meatless crumble. Cook until no pink remains, about 5 minutes, then add the garlic and ginger, stirring until fragrant, about 1 minute. Return the beans to the pan, stir the sauce again, and add it to the pan. Cook until heated through and sauce is thickened, about 1 minute. Stir in scallions or chives and serve it immediately, or refrigerate it for up to 3 days, or freeze it for up to 3 months.

SLOW COOKER DIRECTIONS

Whisk together the sauce ingredients as directed, adding the garlic and ginger as well. Place the turkey, pork, or meatless crumble into the slow cooker, lay the scallions and beans on top, and pour the sauce over all. Cook on low for 6 - 8 hours or on high for 3 - 4 hours, until meat is cooked through with no pink remaining.

SERVE WITH BROWN OR WHITE RICE

Prepare the rice according to package directions.

SERVE WITH FRUIT SALAD WITH LIME DRESSING

Toss in-season fruit of your choice with the lime juice.

Spicy Szechuan Green Beans and Ground Turkey or Pork

Prep + Cook: 25 minutes, # of Servings: 4

Adapting a technique from Cooks Illustrated and adding ground meat to make it a full dish, this recipe works perfectly as an easy weeknight meal! Scramble recipe tester Greg Kershner said, 'This was fantastic! Super fresh. Super tasty. Filling. Unique. Just perfect.' Serve it with steamed rice and a fruit salad with lime dressing.

INGREDIENTS FOR MAIN DISH

- 3 Tbsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce or tamari (use wheat/ gluten-free, if needed)
- · 1 Tbsp. rice wine, mirin, or dry sherry
- 1 tsp. brown sugar
- 1 tsp. cornstarch
- 1/4 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes, to taste (optional)
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable or coconut oil
- 1 lb. green beans, trimmed & cut in half (or use frozen, defrosted)
- 1 lb. ground turkey, pork, or meatless crumble
- 2 tsp. minced garlic, (3 4 cloves)
- 1 Tbsp. fresh ginger, minced
- 1/4 cup scallions or chives, thinly sliced

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - BROWN OR WHITE RICE

1 - 2 cups quick-cooking brown or regular white rice

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - FRUIT SALAD WITH LIME DRESSING

- 3 6 cups seasonal mixed fruit such as strawberries, blueberries, bananas, grapes, and/or melon
- 1/4 lime, juice only, about 1 tsp.

DO AHEAD OR DELEGATE

Combine the ingredients for the sauce, trim the green beans, peel the garlic, peel and mince the ginger, slice the scallions.

FLAVOR BOOSTER

Use the optional crushed red pepper.

TIP

Small kids can get involved with the preparation of this recipe by breaking off the ends of the green beans and then snapping them in half.

Nutritional Information Per Serving (% based upon daily values): Calories 244, Total Fat: 12g, 18%; Saturated Fat: 6g, 27%; Cholesterol: 80mg, 27%; Sodium: 558mg, 23%; Total Carbohydrate: 14g, 5%; Dietary Fiber: 4g, 17%; Sugar: 4g; Protein: 25g

Nutrition with side dish(es): Calories 523, Total Fat: 14g, 21%; Saturated Fat: 8g, 34%; Cholesterol: 80mg, 27%; Sodium: 586mg, 25%; Total Carbohydrate: 77g, 22%; Dietary Fiber: 11g, 45%; Sugar: 25g; Protein: 31g





COOKING DIRECTIONS

(Make the salad first, if you are serving it.) In a stockpot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Sauté the garlic for 1 minute, then stir in the broth. Bring it to a boil, and then add the tortellini, tomatoes, pepper, basil, and oregano.

Reduce the heat to keep it at a low boil for 7 minutes. (Meanwhile warm the bread, if you are serving it.) Add the spinach. Simmer it for 2 more minutes, then remove it from the heat and serve it immediately, topped with Parmesan cheese.

SLOW COOKER DIRECTIONS

Add all ingredients except tortellini and Parmesan cheese to the slow cooker. Cook on low 6 - 10 hours (this can simmer all day). Add the tortellini 30 minutes before serving. Serve topped with Parmesan cheese.

SERVE WITH GREEN SALAD WITH CARROTS, CELERY, AND PARMESAN CHEESE

Combine the lettuce, carrots, celery, and Parmesan cheese. Toss it with the vinaigrette dressing, to taste.

SERVE WITH FRENCH BREAD

Serve it with French bread, warmed in a 300 degree oven for 5 – 8 minutes, if desired.

Tortellini Soup with Spinach and Tomatoes

Prep + Cook: 20 minutes, # of Servings: 5, Serving Size: about 2 cups

This fun recipe is great for a time-pressed weeknight, and can easily be doubled for bigger families. Serve it with a green salad with carrots, celery, and Parmesan cheese and French bread, which is also great for soaking up the broth.

INGREDIENTS FOR MAIN DISH

- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. minced garlic, (about 2 cloves)
- 32 oz. reduced-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 9 oz. whole wheat or regular cheese tortellini, (sold refrigerated)
- 15 oz. no salt added diced tomatoes, with their liquid
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. dried basil
- 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
- 3 cups baby spinach, (or use Swiss chard)
- 1/4 cup shredded Parmesan cheese, or to taste

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - GREEN SALAD WITH CARROTS, CELERY, AND PARMESAN CHEESE

- 1 small head lettuce
- · 2 carrots, thinly sliced or shredded
- 2 stalks celery, sliced
- 1 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 4 Tbsp. light vinaigrette dressing

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - FRENCH BREAD

• 1 loaf French bread, sliced

DO AHEAD OR DELEGATE

Peel the garlic, combine the dry seasonings.

FLAVOR BOOSTER

Add an extra clove of garlic and double the black pepper. Use freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

TIP

Buitoni sells a whole wheat three cheese tortellini that is tender and delicious and much higher in dietary fiber than their traditional tortellini.

Nutritional Information Per Serving (% based upon daily values): Calories 254, Total Fat: 10g, 16%; Saturated Fat: 3g, 16%; Cholesterol: 36mg, 12%; Sodium: 431mg, 18%; Total Carbohydrate: 27g, 9%; Dietary Fiber: 7g, 27%; Sugar: 5g; Protein: 13g

Nutrition with side dish(es): Calories 372, Total Fat: 13g, 19.5%; Saturated Fat: 4g, 19%; Cholesterol: 38mg, 12.5%; Sodium: 784mg, 32.5%; Total Carbohydrate: 50g, 17%; Dietary Fiber: 10g, 40%; Sugar: 8g; Protein: 18g





COOKING DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Heat a Dutch oven on the stovetop over medium to medium-high heat. In a small bowl, combine all the dry spices, and rub the mixture all over the outside of the roast (don't trim the fat off of the roast before cooking it).

When the pot is hot, sear the meat for 2-3 minutes per side until the outside is browned, then sear it for about 1 minute on each of the shorter sides of the roast to brown them.

Put the onions on top of the roast (some will slide off), cover the pot, and transfer it to the bottom rack of the oven. Cook it for 3 hours, then remove it from the oven to flip it, baste it with the onions and accumulated liquid, and return it to the oven, covered, for 1 more hour until the meat is falling apart (you should be able to easily shred it with a spoon). (Meanwhile, prepare the salad, if you are serving it.)

Using a slotted spoon, transfer all of the meat and onions to a serving bowl, and discard the remaining liquid. Shred the meat into smaller pieces, and serve it on top of the rolls topped with a little barbecue sauce, if desired. Serve immediately or refrigerate it for up to 3 days and serve warm or cold.

SLOW COOKER DIRECTIONS

Follow directions above, searing the meat. Cook it on Low for 7 - 8 hours or on High for 3 - 4 hours.

SERVE WITH GREEN SALAD WITH RED BELL PEPPERS, GOAT CHEESE, AND PECANS

In a large salad bowl, combine the lettuce, bell peppers, cheese, and pecans. Toss it thoroughly with vinaigrette or salad dressing of your choice.

Pulled Pork Sandwiches

Prep: 15 minutes Cook: 4 hours, Total: 4 hours and 15 minutes, # of Servings: 6, Serving Size: 2 sandwiches

Slow and steady cooking and a delicious spice mixture are the secrets to this simple and delicious meal. If it didn't taste so darned awesome, I would say the best part of slow roasting this herb-infused meat is that the house smells heavenly all day. Serve it with a green salad with red bell pepper, goat cheese, and pecans.

INGREDIENTS FOR MAIN DISH

- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 3/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp. ground cumin
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. allspice
- 3 lbs. boneless pork loin roast (or use pork butt or shoulder)
- 3 sweet yellow onions such as Vidalia or Walla Walla, halved top to bottom and thinly sliced
- · 12 soft whole wheat rolls or buns
- 3/4 cup barbecue sauce, for serving (optional)

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - GREEN SALAD WITH RED BELL PEPPERS, GOAT CHEESE, AND PECANS

- 1 head lettuce
- 1/4 cup goat or feta cheese, crumbled
- 2 Tbsp. pecans
- 1/2 red bell pepper, diced
- 2 4 Tbsp. vinaigrette dressing

DO AHEAD OR DELEGATE

Combine the dry seasonings, slice the onions.

FLAVOR BOOSTER

Add ½ tsp. black or red pepper to the spice rub.

TIP

If your meat is very lean there may not be as much liquid in the pan while cooking. If the bottom of the pan is dry after 3 hours, add 1 cup of water for the remaining hour of cooking.

Nutritional Information Per Serving (% based upon daily values): Calories 555, Total Fat: 10g, 15.5%; Saturated Fat: 2g, 8.5%; Cholesterol: 125mg, 41.5%; Sodium: 1349mg, 56%; Total Carbohydrate: 47g, 15.5%; Dietary Fiber: 6g, 22%; Sugar: 10g; Protein: 64g

Nutrition with side dish(es): Calories 623, Total Fat: 16g, 23.5%; Saturated Fat: 3g, 12.5%; Cholesterol: 128mg, 42.5%; Sodium: 1398mg, 58%; Total Carbohydrate: 51g, 16.5%; Dietary Fiber: 8g, 29%; Sugar: 13g; Protein: 66g





COOKING DIRECTIONS

In a large heavy saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onions and sauté them for 3 – 5 minutes until they are soft and translucent. Add the mushrooms, garlic, thyme, and salt and sauté them until they are tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the paprika.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine the flour and 1 cup of broth and whisk it together until there are no lumps. Stir it in with the mushrooms, then stir in the remaining broth, the milk, and the soy sauce. Bring it to a boil, stirring occasionally, then cover it, reduce the heat to keep it at a simmer, and cook it for 15 minutes, again stirring occasionally (and prepare the baguette and salad, if you are serving them). (At this point you can pure the soup a little bit with an immersion blender if you want a smoother soup.)

Just before serving it, stir in the sour cream and lemon juice. Season the soup with freshly ground black pepper and serve immediately, or refrigerate it for up to 3 days.

SLOW COOKER DIRECTIONS

Combine the flour and 1 cup of broth in the slow cooker, and whisk it together until there are no lumps. Add remaining 1 cup broth and all remaining ingredients except the sour cream and lemon juice, and stir well to combine. Cook on low for 7-8 hours (or all day if you wish), or on high for 4-5 hours. Just before serving, stir in the sour cream and lemon juice. Season the soup at the table with freshly ground black pepper.

SERVE WITH TOASTED BAGUETTE SLICES

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Thinly slice the baguette and spread the slices on a baking sheet. Put the oil in a small bowl. Using a pastry brush, lightly coat the tops of the slices with the oil. Bake for 5 minutes or until they are just starting to get light brown and crispy (they'll crisp up a bit more after you remove them from the oven).

SERVE WITH GREEN SALAD

In a large salad bowl, combine the lettuce, 1 pear, pecans, cheese, and the dressing, to taste. Serve it with an extra sliced pear for non-salad eaters. For a delicious homemade dressing, combine 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice, 1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar, 1 Tbsp. olive oil, 1 Tbsp. minced shallots, 1/2 Tbsp. honey, and a pinch of salt.

Hungarian Cream of Mushroom Soup

Prep Time: 20 minutes Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

This recipe marries the classic Cream of Mushroom Soup with Hungarian Mushroom Soup in a creamy and delectable brew that has earthy, tangy, and savory flavors. Serve it with toasted baguette slices and with a green salad with sliced pear, pecans, and Gorgonzola cheese.

INGREDIENTS FOR MAIN DISH

- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 lb. sliced cremini or white button mushrooms, or use a combination of the two
- 1 tsp. minced garlic, (about 2 cloves)
- 1 tsp. dried thyme, or use fresh (also good with dried dill)
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 Tbsp. paprika
- 1/4 cup whole wheat flour or all-purpose flour (use wheat/ gluten-free flour, if needed)
- 2 cups reduced-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- · 1 cup low-fat milk (or use any variety), warmed
- 1 Tbsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce (use wheat/gluten-free, if needed)
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 lemon, juice only, about 2 Tbsp.

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH-TOASTED BAGUETTE SLICES

- 1 whole grain baguette (use a wheat/gluten-free baguette if needed)
- · 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - GREEN SALAD WITH SLICED PEAR, PECANS, AND GORGONZOLA CHEESE

- 1 small head lettuce, torn into bite-sized pieces (6 8 cups)
- 2 pears, sliced
- 1/4 cup pecans, toasted, if desired
- 1/4 cup Gorgonzola or blue cheese
- 2 4 Tbsp. vinaigrette dressing

DO AHEAD OR DELEGATE

Chop the onion, slice the mushrooms if necessary, peel the garlic, juice the lemon, or fully prepare and refrigerate the soup.

SCRAMBLE FLAVOR BOOSTER

Top the soup with a splash of sherry and/or some finely chopped fresh parsley or dill. Add 1/2 tsp. dried dill with the thyme.





COOKING DIRECTIONS

Put the mushrooms (or meat), onions, and peppers in a large resealable bag. Combine the oil, vinegar, chili powder, salt, and garlic, and add it to the bag with the mushrooms. Massage the vegetables gently to coat well with the marinade. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 48 hours.

Preheat the grill to medium-high heat. Spray a vegetable grilling tray or a piece of foil with nonstick cooking spray, or brush it with a little vegetable oil, and heat it on the grill. Drain the vegetables and mushrooms (or meat) in a colander and transfer them to the grilling tray. Grill them with the cover closed for about 15 minutes, flipping them once, until they are tender and partially browned but not charred. (Meanwhile, prepare the side dishes.)

Heat the tortillas in the microwave or on a hot skillet for 30 seconds to 1 minute so they are soft and warm. Place about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetable filling on the center of each tortilla, top it with about 2 tsp. cheese, and about 1 Tbsp. each sour cream and salsa, if desired. Fold the bottoms up and the sides in and serve them immediately.

SLOW COOKER DIRECTIONS

No need to marinate in advance. Place the mushrooms, onions, and peppers in the slow cooker. Combine the oil, vinegar, chili powder, salt, and garlic, and pour over the vegetables and mushrooms (or meat), stirring to combine. Cook for 3 hours on high or 6 - 10 hours on low, then assemble and serve with warmed tortillas as directed.

SERVE WITH REFRIED BEANS

Heat the refried beans in a small skillet on the stovetop until they are heated through, or according to the directions on the can(s).

Grilled Portobello Mushroom Fajitas

Prep: 15 minutes Cook: 20 minutes, Total: 1 hour and 5 minutes, # of Servings: 6, Serving Size: 1 fajita

Portobello mushrooms are a meaty vegetable, and just like beef or chicken, they take well to marinades and grilling. (However, if you don't want to grill them, these would be equally good cooked in a cast iron skillet.) Serve them with refried beans and cantaloupe.

INGREDIENTS FOR MAIN DISH

- 6 oz. portobello mushroom caps, sliced, or use 3/4 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 large yellow onion, halved top to bottom and thinly sliced
- · 2 green bell peppers, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/8 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. chili powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 1/2 tsp. minced garlic, (about 3 cloves)
- 6 medium whole wheat or flour tortillas (soft taco size)
- 1/2 cup crumbled goat or feta cheese
- 3/4 cup sour cream, for serving (optional)
- 3/4 cup chunky salsa, for serving (optional)

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - REFRIED BEANS

• 15 - 30 oz. vegetarian or nonfat refried beans

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - CANTALOUPE

• 1 cantaloupe, diced

DO AHEAD OR DELEGATE

Slice the mushrooms, onion, and bell pepper, and marinate the vegetables.

FLAVOR BOOSTER

Double the chili powder and/or serve the fajitas with spicy salsa.

TIP

For a gluten-free alternative, use corn tortillas in place of whole wheat or flour tortillas here.

SERVE WITH CANTALOUPE

Double the chili powder and/or serve the fajitas with spicy salsa.

Nutritional Information Per Serving (% based upon daily values): Calories 230, Total Fat: 14g, 21.5%; Saturated Fat: 4g, 19%; Cholesterol: 11mg, 4%; Sodium: 510mg, 22%; Total Carbohydrate: 22g, 7.5%; Dietary Fiber: 2g, 6.5%; Sugar: 3g; Protein: 5g

Nutrition with side dish(es): Calories 384, Total Fat: 15g, 23.5%; Saturated Fat: 4g, 19%; Cholesterol: 11mg, 4%; Sodium: 1096mg, 46%; Total Carbohydrate: 52g, 17.5%; Dietary Fiber: 9g, 36.5%; Sugar: 18g; Protein: 12g



EST SLOW COOKER RECIPES



COOKING DIRECTIONS

(If you are making the rice, start it first.) In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook it for 30 seconds until it is fragrant. Place the fillets in the pan and press them down with a spatula to ensure each fillet is completely touching the pan. Season them with a little salt and pepper. Cook the fish for 3 - 4 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fillets, until the bottoms start to brown.

Flip the fillets, pour the lemon juice over them, and season the second side with salt and pepper. Top the fish with the capers. Cook it for another 3 - 4 minutes. (Meanwhile, cook the spinach, if you are serving it.) When the tilapia is white throughout and flakes easily, remove it to a plate and serve it.

SLOW COOKER DIRECTIONS

Place each piece of tilapia on its own individual piece of aluminum foil. Drizzle each piece of fish with olive oil and lemon juice, season with salt and pepper, and top with garlic and capers. Fold the foil over the fish to make a packet, and arrange the packets in the slow cooker, stacking one on top of the other as necessary. Cook for 3 - 4 hours on high, or 6 - 7 hours on low.

SERVE WITH RICE PILAF WITH LENTILS

Prepare the rice according to the package directions.

SERVE WITH WILTED GARLICKY SPINACH

In a nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium heat until it is shimmering. Add the garlic and sauté it for 30 seconds - 1 minute until it is fragrant but before it is browned. Add the spinach, tossing it thoroughly with the oil using tongs, cover the pan, reduce the heat, and steam the spinach for about 2 minutes until it is just wilted. Transfer it to a serving bowl and season it with salt and pepper to taste.

Quick Tilapia with Lemon, Garlic, and Capers

Prep + Cook: 15 minutes, # of Servings: 4

Tilapia is a great fish for a weeknight meal. It's thin so it cooks quickly and is about half the price of many other types of fresh fish, and its mild taste is kid-friendly, too. Serve it with rice pilaf with lentils and with Wilted Garlicky Spinach.

INGREDIENTS FOR MAIN DISH

- 1 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. minced garlic, (about 2 cloves)
- 1 1 1/2 lb. tilapia fillets or other thin white fish fillets, (about 4 fillets)
- 1/4 tsp. salt, or to taste
- 1/8 tsp. black pepper, or to taste
- 3/4 lemon, juice only, 2 3 Tbsp.
- 1 Tbsp. capers, drained, or use 1 Tbsp. chopped green olives

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - RICE PILAF WITH LENTILS

• 1 pkg. rice pilaf with lentils (made by Near East)

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - WILTED GARLICKY SPINACH

- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 2 tsp. minced garlic
- 6 9 oz. baby spinach

DO AHEAD OR DELEGATE

Peel the garlic, juice the lemon.

FLAVOR BOOSTER

Top the fish with the zest of half a lemon when you add the lemon juice, and use extra capers and garlic.

TIP

Capers may be small, but they pack a flavorful punch. They've got a sharp, salty taste and add dimension to fish, meats, pastas, and sauces. In addition to having a lot of flavor, capers contain a number of phytonutrients and vitamins like vitamin A and vitamin K.

Nutritional Information Per Serving (% based upon daily values): Calories 200, Total Fat: 8g, 12%; Saturated Fat: 0g, 0%; Cholesterol: 95mg, 32%; Sodium: 150mg, 6%; Total Carbohydrate: 4g, 1%; Dietary Fiber: 0g, 0%; Sugar: 0g; Protein: 28g

Nutrition with side dish(es): Calories 427, Total Fat: 18g, 27%; Saturated Fat: 3g, 13%; Cholesterol: 103mg, 35%; Sodium: 709mg, 29%; Total Carbohydrate: 34g, 11%; Dietary Fiber: 8g, 30%; Sugar: 2g; Protein: 38g





COOKING DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 500 degrees. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil and spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray. In a small bowl, combine the four dry spices.

Place the chicken pieces skin side up on the baking sheet. Sprinkle and rub the spice mixture evenly over the chicken (leave the drumsticks without spices for picky eaters). Position the sheet in the upper third of the oven, about 4 inches from the heating element, and bake it, without turning it, for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan combine the maple syrup, butter, and mustard. Stir it over low heat until the butter melts. Remove it from the heat. (Start the bulgur now, if you are serving it.)

After the chicken has baked for 15 minutes, remove it from the oven and brush it with the maple glaze and bake it for 5 more minutes. (*Prepare the asparagus now, if you are serving it.*) Brush the chicken with the glaze again and bake it 5 minutes more. Remove it from the oven and serve it.

SLOW COOKER DIRECTIONS

Place the chicken in the slow cooker, then sprinkle and rub the spice mixture evenly over the chicken. (Placing the chicken in the slow cooker first keeps the rub contained and eliminates mess.) Melt the butter, then combine it with the maple syrup and mustard. Brush the chicken with about half of the glaze. Cook on low for 6 - 8 hours, or high for 3 - 4 hours until chicken is done. About half an hour before serving, brush the chicken with the remainder of the glaze.

SERVE WITH BULGUR WHEAT

In a medium saucepan, cook the bulgur wheat in the chicken or vegetable broth or combination of broth and water. Bring it to a boil, cover, and simmer it for 15 minutes until it is tender. Or, prepare quick-cooking brown rice according to package directions, using broth or water.

Spiced Chicken with Maple Butter Glaze

Prep + Cook: 30 minutes, # of Servings: 6

This scrumptious chicken, adapted from a Weight Watchers recipe, has received raves from subscribers when I have run it in previous newsletters. It cooks so quickly because of the high heat and the chicken's proximity to the oven's heating element. Serve it with bulgur wheat and Lemony Asparagus.

INGREDIENTS FOR MAIN DISH

- 1 1/2 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp. ground cumin, or use chili powder
- 1 whole chicken, cut up
- 3 Tbsp. pure maple syrup
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. butter or margarine
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard (use wheat/gluten-free, if needed)

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - BULGUR WHEAT

- 1 1/2 cups bulgur wheat (or quick-cooking brown rice)
- 24 oz. reduced-sodium chicken or vegetable broth, or use water or combination or water and broth (optional)

INGREDIENTS FOR SIDE DISH - LEMONY ASPARAGUS

- 1 lb. asparagus
- 1/2 1 tsp. salt-free lemon pepper seasoning (optional)
- 1 tsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. minced garlic, (about 1 clove)
- 1/4 lemon, juice only (optional)

DO AHEAD OR DELEGATE

Combine the dry spices.

FLAVOR BOOSTER

Substitute 1/4 tsp. of the paprika with cayenne pepper.

TIP

In comparison to honey, maple syrup has fewer calories and a higher concentration of minerals. It's a great source of manganese and zinc.

SERVE WITH LEMONY ASPARAGUS

Trim the asparagus and cut it into thirds. In a heavy skillet over medium heat, sauté the garlic in the olive oil then add the asparagus and sauté it for 4-5 minutes until it is tender crisp. Sprinkle it with the lemon juice or the salt-free lemon pepper seasoning, to taste.

Nutritional Information Per Serving (% based upon daily values): Calories 310, Total Fat: 16g, 24%; Saturated Fat: 5g, 26%; Cholesterol: 105mg, 34%; Sodium: 360mg, 15%; Total Carbohydrate: 7g, 2%; Dietary Fiber: 0g, 0%; Sugar: 6g; Protein: 33g

Nutrition with side dish(es): Calories 486, Total Fat: 18g, 27%; Saturated Fat: 5g, 26%; Cholesterol: 105mg, 34%; Sodium: 435mg, 18%; Total Carbohydrate: 44g, 14%; Dietary Fiber: 9g, 37%; Sugar: 7g; Protein: 40g



SLOW COOKER GROCERY LIST

THE FOLLOWING INGREDIENTS WILL MAKE:

(1) = Nacho Average Nachos, (1a) = Honeydew Melon or Cantaloupe, (2) = French Cassoulet with White Beans and Sausage, (2a) = French Bread, (3) = Spice-Rubbed Slow Cooked Whole Chicken, (3a) = Whole Grain Bread, (4) = Spicy Szechuan Green Beans and Ground Turkey or Pork, (4a) = Brown or White Rice, (4b) = Fruit Salad with Lime Dressing, (5) = Tortellini Soup with Spinach and Tomatoes, (5a) = Green Salad with Carrots, Celery, and Parmesan Cheese, (5b) = French Bread, (6) = Pulled Pork Sandwiches, (6a) = Green Salad with Red Bell Peppers, Goat Cheese, and Pecans, (7) = Hungarian Cream of Mushroom Soup, (7a) = Toasted Baguette Slices, (7b) = Green Salad with Sliced Pear, Pecans, and Gorgonzola Cheese, (8) = Grilled Portobello Mushroom Fajitas, (8a) = Refried Beans, (8b) = Cantaloupe, (9) = Quick Tilapia with Lemon, Garlic, and Capers, (9a) = Rice Pilaf with Lentils, (9b) = Wilted Garlicky Spinach, (10) = Spiced Chicken with Maple Butter Glaze, (10a) = Bulgur Wheat, (10b) = Lemony Asparagus *Includes ingredients that are optional

PRODUCE:

- □ 6 carrots (3)(5a)
- □ 1/4 cup scallions or chives (4)
- \Box 4 yellow onions (2)(3)(7)(8)
- ☐ 1 small yellow onion (1)
- □ 3 sweet yellow onions such as Vidalia or Walla Walla (6)
- \square 1/2 red bell pepper (6a)
- ☐ 2 green bell peppers (8)
- 2 stalks celery (5a)
- 2 small heads lettuce (5a)(7b)
- ☐ 1 head lettuce, any variety (6a)
- □ 3 cups + 6 9 oz. baby spinach (5)(9b)
- 3 4 cloves garlic (9b)
- □ 1 Tbsp. fresh ginger (4)
- ☐ 1 lb. fresh or frozen green beans (4)
- 1 lb. asparagus (10b)
- 2 potatoes (any variety) (3)
- ☐ 1 lb. sliced cremini or white button mushrooms (7)
- ☐ 6 oz. portobello mushroom caps (8)
- □ 13/4 lemons (7)(8b)(9)(10b)*
- ☐ 1/4 lime (optional)(4b)*
- □ 1/2 lime or lemon (optional)(1a)
- □ 3 6 cups seasonal mixed fruit such as strawberries, apples, blueberries, pears, bananas, mango, kiwi, grapes, and/or melon(4b)
- □ 2 pears (7b)
- ☐ 1 cantaloupe (8b)
- ☐ 1 honeydew melon or cantaloupe (1a)

MEAT AND FISH

- ☐ 1 whole chicken (about 4 lbs., or use 8 10 chicken pieces) (3)
- □ 1 whole chicken cut up or use 8 - 12 bone-in chicken pieces of your choice (about 4 lbs.) (10)
- ☐ 1 lb. ground turkey, pork, or meatless crumble (4)
- ☐ 1 lb. ground turkey, beef, vegetarian ground "meat" or blackbeans (1)
- □ 1-11/2 lbs. tilapia fillets or other thin white fish fillets such as trout, flounder, or cod (9)
- □ 3 lbs. boneless pork loin roast, or use pork butt or shoulder (6)
- □ 14 oz. Gimme Lean (meatless) sausage or 1 lb. uncooked pork or turkey sausage (2)

SHELVED ITEMS

- ☐ 1 whole grain baguette (use wheat/gluten-free, if needed) (7a)
- □ 1 loaf whole grain bread (use wheat/ gluten-free, if needed) (3a)
- □ 12 small soft whole wheat rolls or buns (use wheat/gluten-free if needed) (6)
- ☐ 2 loaves French bread (use wheat/gluten-free, if needed)(2a)(5b)
- ☐ 1 2 cups quick-cooking brown or regular white rice (4a)
- ☐ 1 pkg. rice pilaf with lentils (made by Near East) (9a)
- □ 11/2 cups bulgur wheat or use quick-cooking brown rice (10a)
- □ 6 8 cups tortilla chips (use wheat/gluten-free, if needed) (1)

SHELVED ITEMS CONTINUED...

- 6 medium whole wheat or flour tortillas (soft taco size) (usewheat/ gluten-free, if needed) (8)
- □ 1/4 cup whole wheat flour, or allpurpose flour (use wheat/glutenfree all-purpose flour, if needed) (7)
- □ 30 oz. diced tomatoes (2)(5)
- ☐ 14 oz. petite diced tomatoes or chunky salsa (1)
- □ 32 oz. + 5 cups reducedsodium chicken or vegetable broth(5)(7)(10a)*
- □ 1 cup salsa (look for brands with no sugar added) (optional)(1)*
- □ 3/4 cup chunky salsa (optional)(8)*
- □ 3/4 cup barbecue sauce (store-bought or homemade) (optional)(6)
- ☐ 1 Tbsp. rice wine, mirin, or dry sherry (4)
- □ 15 30 oz. refried beans (use nonfat and/or vegetarian, if needed) (8a)
- □ 15 19 oz. cannellini or white kidney beans (or use 1 1/2 cups home-cooked beans for every 15 oz. can) (2)
- ☐ 15 oz. canned black beans or vegetarian refried beans (1)*
- □ 1/4 1/2 cup sliced hot peppers or olives (optional)(1)
- ☐ 1 Tbsp. capers (9)
- □ 2 Tbsp. + 1/4 cup pecans (6a)(7b)

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...



SLOW COOKER GROCERY LIST CONTINUED...

REFRIGERATED/FROZEN	SPICES	STAPLES
□ 1/4 cup crumbled feta or goat cheese (6a)	4 - 41/4 tsp. salt (1)(3) (6)(7)(8)(9)(10)*	2 tsp. superfine sugar (optional)(4b)(8b)
□ 1/4 cup Gorgonzola or	□ 1/2 - 1 tsp. salt-free lemon pepper	□ 2 Tbsp. butter (7)
blue cheese (7b)	seasoning (optional)(10b)	☐ 11/2 Tbsp. butter or margarine (10)
□ 1/2 cup crumbled goat or feta cheese (8)	1 tsp. dried oregano (2)(5)1 tsp. dried basil (2)(5)	□ 10 - 11 Tbsp. + 1/4 cup + 1 tsp. extra virgin olive oil(1)(2)
□ 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese (1)	☐ 2 tsp. dried thyme (3)(7)*	(5)(7a)(8)(9)(9b)(10b)
□ 1/4 cup + 1 - 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese (5)(5a)*	□ 1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper	☐ 1 Tbsp. vegetable or coconut oil (4)
☐ 1 cup guacamole (optional)(1)	(optional)(3)*	□ 1/8 cup balsamic vinegar (8)
□ 1/2 cup sour cream (7)*	1/4 - 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes (optional)(4)	☐ 6 - 12 Tbsp. vinaigrette dressing (store-bought or
☐ 1 cup nonfat sour cream (or use any variety) (optional)(1)*	□ 13/8 tsp. black pepper (3)(5)(9)	homemade)(5a)(6a)(7b) 11/2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard (use
☐ 3/4 cup low fat sour cream (or use any variety) (optional)(8)	□ 1/2 tsp. allspice (or use a combination of ground cinnamon	wheat/gluten-free, if needed)(10)
□ 1 cup low fat milk (or use any variety) (7) □ 9 oz. whole wheat or regular cheese tortellini (use wheat/gluten-free, if needed) (sold refrigerated) (5) NOTES:	and ground cloves) (6) 11/2 tsp. ground cinnamon (6)(10) 11/2 tsp. ground cumin (6)(10) 21/4 tsp. garlic powder (1)(3)(6) 2 Tbsp. + 1 tsp. chili powder (1)(6)(8) 31/2 tsp. + 1 Tbsp. paprika (3)(7)(10)	 4 Tbsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce (use wheat/gluten-free, if needed) (4)(7) 1 tsp. brown sugar (4) 3 Tbsp. pure maple syrup (10) 8 tsp. minced garlic (about 16 cloves) (2)(4)(5)(7)(8)(9)(10b) 1/4 cup bread crumbs or panko (use wheat/gluten-free, if needed) (2) 1 tsp. cornstarch

