

Easy Crockpot Dinners

In Only 4 Ingredients

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Introduction

I'm a big fan of crockpot cooking. No matter how busy I get or how much running around town I've got to do, I know a yummy home-cooked meal will be ready when we get home.

To make things even easier, I've experimented with some simple dishes that only use 4 ingredients (plus water and the occasional seasonings like salt, pepper, sugar etc... things you have sitting in your pantry). The results were simple and delicious weekday dinners that I can't wait to share with you.

Add some rice or pasta, a salad, a loaf of home-made bread and dinner is ready in a matter of minutes.

I hope you and your family will enjoy the recipes in this little guide as much as mine have. To help you get started and tweak the recipes to your family's taste, we'll start off with some helpful tips for simple crockpot cooking.

For more yummy slowcooker recipes, visit the [crockpot recipe section](#) on the Hillbilly Housewife website and take a look at [Crockpot Cooking Made Simple](#).

Let's get cooking...

Warmly,



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Choosing Your Best Crockpot

Thirty or forty years ago, there were only a few models of crock pots to choose from. Today there are hundreds if not thousands of options in the world of crock pots. Over the years, improvements have been made, new brands have come to the market, and the world is reinventing what the slow cooker can do. When it comes to selecting a crock pot, you need to know what to look for, what you absolutely need your crock pot to do, and your bottom line. Let's take a look at a few guidelines for choosing the crock pot that's right for you:

The Basic Structure

A crock pot is made up of three main parts; 1) the outer shell or base; 2) the inner stoneware or crock insert, and 3) the lid.

The outer shell should stay rather cool to the touch. You should be able to wash off the surface with a damp rag without too much trouble. Look for skid-proof feet on the bottom to keep the crock pot from slipping around the counter top while you're preparing your meal. The outer shell also houses the controls, so check to see if they are sturdy, well situated, and easy to see.

The inner stoneware section, or 'crock,' should be rather resilient and feel sturdy. The crock is not unbreakable, so if you drop it on a solid floor, it may break. However, it should feel solid in your hands. The best crock pots have a removable insert so it makes serving and clean up easy. You'll also want to be sure you can get your hands on the crock handles and easily lift it out of the outer shell without struggling.

The lid, while simple in design, is one of the reasons crock pots work so well. The best lids have a separate knob protruding out of the top. This separation of materials helps to keep the knob cool to the touch while the rest of the device heats up. The lid should also have a good seal around the outside edge, in order to keep the heat and liquids from escaping. Glass lids used to be the standard, but nowadays the plastic ones are just as nice and they have the added benefit of being lighter, which makes them easier to handle.

What You Need vs What You Want

While the three basic parts come standard on all crock pots; the base, insert, and lid. Beyond those three basic elements, you'll find some very nice, convenient features you might want to look at.

Your basic crock pot has one switch on the outside of the base, sort of a dial. This switch usually has three or four settings. The standard settings you'll find are High, Low, and Warm. There is a fourth setting of "Off" on many crock pots today, but years ago, it was common to unplug the crock pot when you wanted to turn it off.

More modern crock pots allow you to control more than those three basic settings. Digital crock pots are designed to give you control over the actual temperature of the crock pot. You can also

set a timer to let you know when your dish needs to be stirred, have ingredients added, or is done.

Programmable crock pots allow the user to set the temperature on high, then automatically turn down to low at a chosen time during the cooking process. While it usually seems good to have more control, these added features may make things a little difficult. Depending on your style, this may make crock pot cooking seem more involved, especially when most crock pot recipes are written with simple High and Low settings.

Determining the size of the crock pot is also important. The larger the family, the bigger the crock pot. However, a large stew can still be made in a four or five quart crock pot. You'll want to consider the area you have on your counter top, too. Also, the shape is important. If you've cooking a lot of bigger chickens or roasts, you might want to consider an oval shape. If your crock pot will be used mainly for soup, a deeper model may be just right. If you are cooking appetizers and snacks mostly, a smaller crock pot will probably suit you just fine.

The Bottom Line

Crock pots can range from ten dollars to well over a couple hundred. The most important aspect of picking out the perfect crock pot for you is to look at your budget and find the best value for your money. Look at size, construction of parts, and how well it all goes together. If taken care of, your crock pot will last a lifetime and will pay for itself over and over again. Just remember, you don't have to get the fanciest crock pot to cook a great meal for your family.

Is A Dutch Oven Like a Crockpot?

By design, the crock pot and Dutch oven are similar in shape and function, both achieving similar results. But there are pros and cons to each. Let's take a look at the battle of the deep-dish cookers and find out which one comes out on top:

Crock Pot Pros And Cons

One of the best features of the crock pot is how it does its job, cooking a full meal, in so little space. Unlike the oven and cook-top, the crock pot can be relegated to a corner and go about its business virtually unseen.

Cooking a meal or side dish with your crock pot also frees up your oven and cook-top for other dishes. How many times have you tried to plan a big meal and have to shuffle dishes in and out of the oven and around the burners?

The 'set it and forget it' crock pot method frees you up when cooking dishes that you may otherwise have to watch, stir, and keep from burning. The low cooking temperatures keep dishes simmering just right so you don't have to worry about watching a pot boil. This low, even temperature takes the guess work out of many dishes you may have previously spent time fretting over.

Cooking a meal in a crock pot is also more economical when it comes to energy consumption. Heating up a crock pot, even considering the length of time, takes less energy than heating up a large oven or letting a burner stay on, radiating its heat out into the kitchen. The heating element in the crock pot is contained and is designed to heat only the insert that holds the food. You're not spending money to heat a large space nor are you letting the heat escape into the room.

One of the downsides to crock pot cooking is there are just some ingredients that don't work well in a slow cooker. For instance, dairy products. Making a cream or milk based dish becomes more complicated, involving extra steps and extreme caution so as not to curdle the milk.

If you're not careful choosing and cutting up the food that goes into the crock pot, you may end up with food that's either undercooked or overcooked. For instance, many cooks are used to coarse cutting vegetables for stew, but vegetables cook slower in the crock pot and may need to be cut finer, or cooked longer. Meat typically cooks faster than vegetables in the crock pot, making the size of the ingredients important.

Crock pot meals are best when using fresh meats and vegetables. So, if you live in an area in which you must rely more on canned foods, the texture in a crock pot will be disappointing. Because canned foods are already processed, they may become quite soft and mushy in the crock pot. Picture cooking canned peas for 8 hours, even on such a low heat. Yes, you can add the canned veggies in during the last minutes of cooking time, but if the idea is to walk away and have dinner ready when you come home, it sort of defeats the purpose.

Dutch Oven Pros And Cons

These sturdy pots were the typical tools of the trade during the good old days. Picture an open pit with cowboys circled around waiting to dig into their stew. The even heating of a heavy duty Dutch oven is almost second to none. You may remember your grandparents or parents stirring stews on the stove or basting a pot roast in the oven in one of these big pots with the heavy lid.

A wide variety of meals can be prepared in a Dutch oven. They are dual purpose; you can begin a meal by browning the meat right in the Dutch oven on the stove burner, then add the vegetables, cover it, and pop it in the oven to continue cooking. Or you can brown your beef over the burner, then add the ingredients for chili and continue cooking it right on top of the stove.

Sounds ideal, but there are a few drawbacks. That chili or beef stew on top of the stove will some watching. No matter how low your burner goes, you'll need to stir it up to keep it from sticking or burning to the bottom of the Dutch oven. This is a pot that needs watching. Using your Dutch oven, whether in the oven or on top of the stove takes up space. If you want to add a nice loaf of crusty homemade bread to your pot roast meal, you'll have to do some juggling to time your bread in the oven. Adjusting the temperature becomes an issue, too.

Dutch ovens convey heat extremely well, making the temperature you use in the oven and on the stove top very important. A few degrees makes a difference. An oven that runs hot can cause your meal to burn or dry out before you know it.

Slow cooking a meal in a Dutch oven requires a heated oven or a burner on the stove top. Either way, it takes a lot of energy to heat the inside of a large oven just to cook what's in a five quart pot. And a burner radiates heat out into the room; it does not trap it under the pot.

Removing your Dutch oven full of food from the oven or burner proves to be quite a feat for many people due to the fact that they are usually very heavy and retain the heat very well. They are hot for a long, long time which makes them the kind of thing to keep children away from. Dishing up a meal becomes a bit hazardous because the container itself remains hot for a long time after you remove it from the heating source. So, what makes a Dutch oven cook well, its weight, also makes it harder to handle.

And The Winner Is...

While Dutch ovens are more versatile in the dishes they can deliver, crock pots are the overall winners of this battle for several reasons. Crock pots take the prize when it comes to freeing up cooking space for other chores. Their compact size, virtually a mini-oven, also cooks with less energy, which saves you money.

Because you can walk away from the meal, the crock pot becomes the ultimate time-saver in the kitchen. Once preparation is done, you have the freedom to do other chores, or even leave the house. Crock pots do the cooking part of a meal for you – just set it and forget it.

You also can't debate the safety issue of a crock pot versus a Dutch oven. The new crock pots have cool exteriors and built in timers to ensure they shut off when the meal is done. Plus, you aren't constantly opening the oven to check on the meal, nor are you lifting the hot, heavy lid to stir the contents. Once the meal is in the crock pot, you normally don't have to worry about picking the lid up again until it's dinnertime.

We may never give up our Dutch ovens, but I think it could take a backseat to the crock pot in your kitchen. Keep your crock pot handy on your counter top and see how many times you choose it now over your Dutch oven.

Comfort Food from Your Crockpot

It took your mother hours to put together your favorite comfort foods, preparing and simmering all sorts of delights that made you feel all warm and fuzzy no matter what kind of day you were having. These slow cooked recipes passed down from generation to generation, gather you up in a whirlwind of memories and whisk you away to a better time. A time when life was simpler and the street lights would tell you when it was time to come home after playing outside all day.

Today you are an adult, and life is filled with ups and downs. The frustrations of each day seem to run together. However, there is no reason to let these frustrations follow you into the kitchen. Why not combine your two favorite things; the smile that comfort food brings to your heart, and the ease of cooking with a crock pot. You get the best of both worlds; the flavors and aromas of comfort food simmering on the stove all day, along with easy and carefree cooking. Let's take a

look at how you can put your crock pot to work for you creating those same warm and fuzzy comfort food feelings:

Your Favorite Comfort Foods In The Crock Pot

Soups of all kind are truly comfort foods. Chicken noodle soup and chicken vegetable soup are all time favorites, especially when it gets cold outside. This dish is a great candidate for a crock pot. Loaded with veggies, chicken, and savory broth, chicken soup warms you inside and out, and have even been proven to help when you've got the sniffles. Beef vegetable soup and all sorts of chowders are classic foods to get cozy with on a stressful day. Soups in general are usually a good way to gather together with family and friends to reminisce and relax. Let your crock pot do the work so you can enjoy the moment.

Chili is another great comfort food. It is hearty with beans, meat, tomatoes, and warm spices that can whisk you away to an old fashioned chili-cook-off in your very own kitchen. Perhaps, you remember the sound of a football game on the television on a Sunday afternoon, and the aromas of a big pot of chili ready for all the family to enjoy during half-time. Chili not only feeds a family inexpensively, but it is very filling and satisfying; a comfort food in the best sense of the word.

Pot roast is about as old fashioned as you can get in the comfort food category. Many families remember a time when dad came home from work and sat right down at the table, signaling the rest of the family to join him. Mom brought in the pot filled with tender beef, potatoes, and carrots, with a thick gravy ready to ladle over everything. The crock pot is not only an easy way to make a pot roast, but the specific method of cooking in a crock pot tenderizes any meat better than oven roasting.

Why Your Crock Pot Is The Perfect Choice

Crock pot cooking embodies the 'trifecta' of great homemade comfort foods; 1) the meals are easy, 2) the meals are filling, and 3) the meals stimulate the senses.

With comfort foods in the past, we most likely were talking about a lot of time and effort. However, while your parents had to spend the whole day in the kitchen preparing your favorite comfort foods, now your crock pot can do most of the job for you. This frees up your time and gives you the flexibility to prepare a filling meal while accomplishing other tasks without watching the pot.

The perfection of time management and organization, your crock pot is the ultimate way to cook comfort foods, helping you manage your health, stress, and your time. You'll spend just a little time to prep your meal, then the rest of the work is up to the crock pot. Set it and forget it. When you're ready to relax and dig into your favorite comfort food, all you need is a place to sit. And, when you're feeling all warm and fuzzy inside, you aren't faced with a kitchen overflowing with pots and pans. Crock pot cooking is almost one pot cooking. Put your leftovers away and you have one pot, the crock, to wash up. With a single pot doing the cooking for you, that crock pot comfort food is even more comforting.

The crock pot is a great tool, not only for making good food, but also giving you time back to

spend with your family. Throwing your favorite foods into the crock pot before heading out the door will give you the slow-cooked taste without the effort. Don't slave over a hot stove just to feed your family their favorite comfort foods. Use your crock pot to give them the comfort foods you enjoyed growing up, and savor the aromas and flavors of a hearty meal and the comfort of family time.

Healthy Food from Your Crockpot? Yes!

Crock pot cooking can be a real time saver when it comes to preparing a hearty meal for your family. Set the temperature and it basically cooks for you. You can go out and run your errands instead of watching over a simmering pot. Although your crock pot is the ultimate in convenience, oftentimes you'll see recipes that use too many prepackaged ingredients, purported to make the meal faster and easier. However, you don't have to sacrifice eating healthy for quick meal preparation. Here are a few ideas for ingredients to add, and some to eliminate, in order to keep your crock pot cooking as healthy as possible:

Add This

Kick up the flavor with herbs and spices instead of prepackaged flavorings. Either snip a few fresh herbs or sprinkle in some dried herbs to boost the flavor of your crock pot creation. Dried herbs are a good choice because they stand up well to the long cooking. If you use fresh herbs it's normally best to wait for the last half hour or so to add them to the crock pot. Mix and match a variety of herbs and seasonings like black pepper, garlic, and onion, to give your crock pot meal layers of flavor without using preservative and additive packed ready mixes.

Use fresh meats and vegetables rather than canned or other prepackaged food. With a little prep work, you can have a crock pot meal that is nutritious and delicious without relying on processed ingredients. You can control the amount of salt and completely remove the preservatives from your family meals by using fresh meats, vegetables, and even fruit. If you're used to canned and frozen food, this may taste a little different than you are used to. But, it won't be long before you learn the pleasures of digging into a meal that's closer to what your grandparents used to enjoy.

Lean meats, when cooked in the oven, can dry out. You have to be watchful, perhaps basting with drippings or butter to keep the meat moist. This is not only tedious, but covering meat in butter to keep it juicy defeats the purpose of eating lean meat for your health. The crock pot's unique cooking method keeps the moisture in the meat, recycling the juices over and over with the lid's condensation. Surround some skinless chicken breasts with fresh cut veggies and a sprinkle of herbs, put on the lid, and you'll have the juiciest lean chicken possible.

Eliminate That

The 'Cream Of' soups are often a staple of crock pot recipes. You'll find many crock pot dishes call for cream of mushroom, chicken, or celery soup to make a dish thick and creamy. Canned soups are often loaded with additives you can't pronounce and don't want to feed your family.

These chemical additives are avoidable when you learn a few simple methods to whip up an alternative for the creamy base. A quick whisk of flour, butter or oil, and milk or broth in a saucepan will produce the same ingredient without the additives.

Most serious cooks know that salted butter is another thing you can do without. Unsalted butter is the best way to go, giving you the creamy flavor while still allowing you to control what goes into your crock pot. Using unsalted butter keeps your food from sticking better than salted butter and also keeps your sodium content at your discretion, not the food manufacturer's.

Processed canned foods; vegetables, fruit, and meat, can be over-processed and may contain extra ingredients that just don't do well in the crock pot. This leads to disaster, both in terms of nutrition and texture. In order to get the healthiest meal possible in your crock pot, ban food items that have been processed and canned in oil, sugary syrups or, even worse, artificial additives to keep the colors bright. There is no room for these kinds of foods in your healthy crock pot cooking.

Start Cooking Healthy Today

Controlling what goes into a meal is key to healthy crock pot cooking. You have the ability to keep the flavors high and the artificial preservatives low just by choosing the right ingredients. Once you get used to cooking with healthy ingredients, you'll find there is not much of a difference in time or trouble between a stew made with fresh wholesome ingredients, and stew made by opening cans and other packages and dumping it all in the crock pot.

Use fresh ingredients and leave out the processed foods to make the most of your crock pot meals. Slow cooking was designed for fresh food; picture your grandparents patiently stirring a pot full of fresh ingredients to feed the family a healthy meal. Follow their lead to bring back the joys of your grandparent's time around the dinner table.

Using Your Crockpot for Breakfast & Brunch

Most of us think of the crock pot as getting dinner on the table. Throw the ingredients together in the morning, set the crock pot to cook, and when you walk in the door after work, dinner is ready to be served. But, what about putting your crock pot to work for you at breakfast time or brunch time? Let's take a look at a few ideas for the morning meals:

Breakfast While You Get Ready

If you are looking for a hearty breakfast, one that cooks itself while you get ready for the day, you may want to put your crock pot to work. While your breakfast is cooking, you'll have the freedom to dry your hair, read the paper, and even help with last minute homework.

Feel like a cheesy hash brown casserole or a quick quiche? How about a couple poached eggs? You can get these cooking first thing so they'll be ready when you are. Even a batch of quick cooking oatmeal is a breeze in the crock pot, and you don't have to worry about forgetting about

a pot boiling on the stove during your busy morning rush. Just put the oatmeal in the crock pot, add the water and any flavorings you like, and set the crock pot on high. You'll have a hot breakfast waiting for you and your family before you head out the door.

Breakfast While You Sleep

Can you imagine waking up to a fresh pot of coffee and a perfectly cooked breakfast in the morning? Imagine the aromas from savory sausage or maple syrup wafting down the hall and into your room. Doesn't that sound like a great way to wake up? With a slow cooker, that's entirely possible.

Waking up to a hearty breakfast is the perfect start to a perfect day. A cold morning instantly becomes warm when there is a delicious meal waiting for you. If your family enjoys a big eggs and sausage breakfast, put together a breakfast casserole the night before, set it on low, and in the morning you can dig right in. If a big bowl of nutty five grain cereal is your idea of a hearty breakfast, fill your crock pot the night before with the ingredients, set it to low, and in the morning all you'll need to do is get out the milk. Have a hot and hearty breakfast waiting for you when you wake up and start your day out right.

The Brunch Connection

There are times when when your first meal of the day doesn't come so early in the morning. Perhaps you and your family have a few days off from work and school. You're all going to sleep in and enjoy a meal a bit later in the day. Maybe it's a special occasion and you're sharing a late morning meal with friends. Either way, your crock pot can be put to work to help create dishes that satisfy your appetite that rests somewhere between breakfast and lunch.

Brunch is a great excuse to put your crock pot to work. There are many recipes perfectly suited for this late morning meal. One favorite brunch time dish is quiche. Throw together a cheesy quiche packed with vegetables and bacon, and you have a brunch dish that naturally satisfies both breakfast and lunch cravings. If a brunch buffet isn't complete without sliced ham and hash browns in your book, you can easily create these two favorites in a wonderful casserole in your crock pot.

Use your crock pot to help get off to a better start in the morning. With a little prep work, you can enjoy a world class cuisine before heading out the door. You have better things to do in the morning than stand over a pan or pot, flipping or stirring. And, you and your family deserve a better breakfast experience. After all, how do you expect to accomplish all you need to do during your busy day without a hearty morning meal? Your crock pot is not just for dinner anymore!

And Side Dishes, Too!

Soups, stews and roasts are all great dishes to fix in your crock pot. But what about side dishes? Slow cookers are there to help you out in the kitchen. When you are busy doing other things, like cooking a turkey or baking a loaf of bread, your crock pot can perform some of the

smaller tasks, like side dishes. Let's take a look at some of the possibilities for side dishes you can make in your slow cooker:

Everyday Side Dishes

Baked beans, German potato salad, and glazed carrots are a breeze in the slow cooker. Just drop in the ingredients and let time take care of the rest. Your side dishes should not be difficult or time consuming for you. After all, you are busy doing other things you would rather do – like relaxing.

Scalloped potatoes are incredibly easy in a crock pot. Not only are they easy, but they are a hearty side dish. Great with almost any main course, this creamy potato creation will have your family wondering how you found time to slave over a hot stove with your busy schedule.

You don't have to juggle dishes in and out of the oven when you have a crock pot cooking the side dishes for you. You can even bake potatoes in your crock pot.

Holiday Side Dishes

Classic holiday dishes are another great match for your crock pot. Green bean casserole in a crock pot is quite heavenly. The extended cooking time enhances the smooth, yummy goodness of this creamy classic. You'll want to make an extra big batch so you have plenty for leftovers. Other holiday side dish favorites like stuffing, creamed corn, macaroni and cheese, and rice pudding can be relegated to the crock pot, freeing up valuable stove top and oven space for your main holiday fare.

If your holiday dishes include soups, like matzo ball soup or French onion soup, then the crock pot can be your best friend. Instead of having to keep an eye on the stove for extended periods of time, try plugging in your crock pot near the dining room table. Then you can sit down and relax while you prepare a great holiday feast for your family.

Old Fashioned Side Dishes

Some of the best side dishes are slow cooked. When your parents and grandparents used to make your favorite dishes, they would often use a nice, heavy Dutch oven and cook it for a long, long time over very low heat. Unless you have inherited their Dutch oven, it is difficult to replicate the same taste of these slow cooked specialties.

Luckily, your crock pot comes close in recreating these wonderful side dishes you remember. Because of the long cooking time, your side dishes will taste like they have the same amount of love poured into them as if you stirred the pot for hours.

The crock pot seems to have been designed for old fashioned side dishes. Dishes like corn pudding, black-eyed peas, green beans and hamhocks, red beans and rice, and calico beans are a few sides that are reminiscent of old time kitchens. Typically, these old fashioned side dishes require quite a bit of preparation work and attention. With a crock pot, once the ingredients are in, your work is done – no stirring and no worrying over the heat setting. You can walk away and return to your favorite side dish from days gone by.

Go ahead and put your roast or chicken in the oven, then put your crock pot to work slow simmering your favorite side dish. Enjoy a filling meal without all the fuss, but with all the flavor.

Even Holidays & Special Occasions

You know how useful they are for getting meals on the table for your family during those hectic everyday evenings. Why do the holidays have to be any different? Wouldn't it be great to actually be able to spend time with friends and family during the holiday seasons instead of slaving over the hot stove all day? You can. If you have a crock pot, put it to work so you can go and play! Let's take a look at a few ways you can turn your crock pot into a holiday helper:

Drinks

Hot drinks are great to have when you come in from a day of sledding or shopping. Everything from apple cider to a toasty adult beverage can be simmering while you are out doing your thing. By choosing a crock pot with an adjustable temperature setting, you can simmer your beverage, then keep your drinks warm while you gather to enjoy. Add a couple sticks of cinnamon or a few cloves to your drink and the whole house will smell like the holidays as the aromatics begin to warm up.

Appetizers

Nothing gets your appetite warmed up like a hot dip or your favorite holiday appetizer. Little smokey sausages cooked in barbecue sauce or a warm spinach and artichoke dip can help shake off the chill of a cold winter. Even something as simple as a bowl of assorted nuts gets better when toasted first in the crock pot with a blend of spicy or sweet spices. The best thing about appetizers in a crock pot is they are self serving. Friends and family can come by and help themselves while you relax nearby. Effortless entertaining, freeing up your time and stove top for the rest of the meal.

Soups

You can fix almost all of the traditional holiday staples in a crock pot. From matzo ball soup to the classic chowders, a wide variety of soups can be put together ahead of time and left to cook while you are watching the ball games or playing with your new gadgets. If watching the Bowl Games is a part of your holiday tradition, just think how nice it would be to quickly and easily mix up a batch of chili to feed all your favorite fans.

Side Dishes

What do green bean casserole, macaroni and cheese, scalloped potatoes, candied yams, and brown sugar glazed carrots all have in common? That's right. They can all be made, rather effortlessly, in a slow cooker while you are doing something you enjoy. Your side dishes can take care of themselves. Of course, it may feel a bit odd at first to be out of the kitchen during a holiday get-together, but I'm sure you could get used to relaxing and enjoying the day while the

crock pot works to keep your family well-fed.

Main Course

Now, there is no way you can fit an entire turkey into a crock pot, so your main course will have to get a little creative. But it can be done. For smaller gatherings, you can opt for turkey breast or parts in the crock pot instead of a large turkey. For larger gatherings, you may want to make several smaller main dishes, such as a chicken in the crock pot in addition to the big turkey. If you are having ham, you might want to think about slicing the ham first or buying a precooked ham you only need to warm up.

The point is, you shouldn't have to slave over the stove while everyone else is hanging out and having a good time. Your crock pot can be your best friend during the holidays. Just plug it in, turn up the heat and join your family for some quality time.

5 Easy Crock Pot Tapas

Spain is where this current craze originated, if slightly by accident or, more accurately, as a necessity. The word tapas derives from the word tapar, meaning "to cover." Some stories say that tapas originated when small pieces of bread or meat were placed on top of glasses of wine. These tapas were placed on the glasses at taverns or restaurants, and replaced there after each sip by the patron. The purpose was to keep the flies out of the drink while providing a snack for the guest.

These small treats are popular in Spain for other reasons now. It is customary for many families in Spain to eat their evening meal very late, leaving room between lunch and dinner for satisfying their appetite with little snacks, usually while socializing.

At its simplest definition, tapas are little snacks that can be easily enjoyed while mingling. You can make a meal out of them, or eat them as little snacks before a large meal. The best part about tapas is there is no limit to them! Take this simple idea from Spain and make it even better by using your crock pot to take the work out of making this fun food. Here are a couple quick ideas to get you started with your own tapas adventure:

Mini Meatballs

Always a crowd favorite, mini meatballs are not only simple, they basically take care of themselves in a crock pot. You can buy frozen meatballs and add salsa, sweet and sour sauce, or even barbecue sauce. Or you can easily make up a batch yourself if you want to create a more versatile meatball, even including ingredients like chopped vegetables or cheese.

Little Dippers

Dipping little pieces of food is a fun experience for all involved. This kind of tapas is a relationship builder. Everyone is around the crock pot, dipping and talking, then dipping some more. If you want to learn more about your guests, then a dip or fondue is a great way to get

everyone in a social mood. There are many dip recipes to try in your crock pot and just as many foods to try dipping. Let your imagination soar beyond cheese and bread cubes and see what you can create.

Muscles or Clams

There's nothing prettier or more aromatic than a nice big pot of muscles or clams. It's easy to do, too, when you let your crock pot do the work. By changing the ingredients you put in to the broth, you can make hundreds of different flavor combinations to satisfy anyone. And, not only will your crock pot cook them perfectly, it will also keep them warm for your guests. You don't have to worry about your guests getting cold food, or the broth boiling away.

Bacon Wrapped Bits

Bacon is a well-loved favorite. Making savory tapas wrapped in bacon is sure to be a crowd pleaser at just about any gathering. Take bite-sized pieces of chicken, steak, figs, pineapple, water chestnuts, or even the old-school classic, Vienna sausages, wrap them in bacon, and let your crock pot do the rest of the work. Set your crock pot on high, get the bacon browned, then turn down to low and your tapas are ready when your guests are.

Mini Sandwiches

Use your slow cookers to create tender, shredded meat for little sandwiches. Add a pork loin, a beef roast, or a chicken to your crock pot the day before the party, pour in a can of broth, and let it cook for about eight hours. Once it's cooked, cool and shred the meat and put it back in the crock pot with a jar of salsa or barbecue sauce. Stir it up and set your crock pot to low. Let this simmer until your guests arrive, then get out the little dinner rolls and your mini sandwiches are ready. Your guests will wonder how you ever found the time to cook these succulent hot sandwiches while getting everything else ready.

Take this idea from Spain, but give it your own little twist by using your crock pot. Why worry over boiling pots when you have family and friends to enjoy?

Crock Pot Fondue – Easy Does It Classic Dipping

There are three basic cooking medium for fondue: cheese, chocolate, and oil. Since all three can be successfully heated in a crock pot, the crock pot is a natural fit for fondue. Add that to the fact that a crock pot is portable and has the ability to keep foods at a steady temperature for a long period of time, and who would want to fondue any other way. Considering also that the crock pot doesn't use an exposed flame and the outside surface is somewhat cooler to the touch, you've got yourself a perfect party-time fondue set up. Let's take a look at how to go about creating your own fondue using any of the three basic elements:

Cheese

When you are making cheese fondu in a crock pot, it is important to know about the cheese you

are heating. Will it get stringy? Will it release a lot of oil? How easy will it melt? All great questions to ask when choosing what cheese to use in a fondue. Knowing your cheese will help you pick out the perfect complement to your fondue. Will it have a smokey flavor, or be a little sharp or salty? Basic cheese fondue recipes call for cheeses like sharp Cheddar, Gruyere, and Swiss, often with other ingredients like white wine, garlic, and even a touch of flour to bind the cheeses together.

Another thought to consider when planning a cheese fondue is what types of food to dip. The classic hearty bread chunks is the first thought, of course. But what else can you dip in hot cheese? Naturally, fresh vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower come to mind, but there are other foods that are less common. Consider crisp Granny Smith apples, for instance, or sweet red bell peppers. Be creative; fondue is nothing if not fun.

Chocolate

Always a crowd pleaser, chocolate fondue can work as an appetizer or a dessert. Your slow cooker makes an excellent chocolate fondue pot due to the fact that it will melt the chocolate at a low, steady temperature, which lessens the risk of scalding the chocolate. You'll also be able to keep the chocolate warm for a long period of time, keeping it in its liquid state rather than becoming solid again. The recipe can be as simple as melting chunks of chocolate with a little cream, or you can kick it up a bit with ingredients like coffee, liqueur, or even a pinch of chili pepper.

What you choose to dip in the chocolate depends on your own preference. The classic chocolate dipped strawberries would be first on any list. Be sure to add apples, bananas, cherries, pineapple, or any fruit you want to try to that list. You may also want to dip chunks of bread or a sturdy Angel Food cake or pound cake. Don't forget pretzels or cookies; you'll just have to get creative when it comes to the utensils you'll use to dip them.

Oil

Making fondue with oil can be a bit tricky, if not downright dangerous. In a tiny fondue pot on little legs, one small bump and the whole pot could tip over. On the other hand, a crock pot is a solid appliance which won't be likely to topple. This fact alone makes this vessel a great container for your oil fondue. Add in the ability to hold a steady temperature over a long period of time and your fondue decision has never be easier. With oil, you want to bring it up to temperature, then hold the heat steady. In some crock pots that requires the temperature to be set at high, then turned to low. Each crock pot is different, so be sure to experiment before the party. Also, choose a high-heat oil, such as peanut oil, so you won't end up with a smoky crock pot.

This cooking method is all about meat and seafood. Use lean cuts of beef, like the tenderloin, for best results. Be sure to cut the meat into uniform pieces. Shrimp should be on the small side so they cook all the way through quickly. You may also want to cook up some mushrooms and vegetables for a feast fit for royalty. It's best to let the raw food sit out for a bit at room temperature to take off the chill, as extremely cold food will cause the oil temperature to drop, resulting in soggy or undercooked food. On a side note, you can also use this same method and replace the oil with broth for a healthier take on this classic fondue favorite.

Having the ability to use your crock pot for a variety of different fondue dishes gives you the flexibility to keep your guests entertained and still serve great food. Many people don't understand how valuable their slow cooker can be when it comes to having a fondue party. Whether it is cheese, chocolate, or oil, your crock pot can handle it all.

Unusual Crock Pot Cuisine – Let Your Imagination Soar

Your crock pot is a master at culinary diversity. With a collection of recipes using unusual ingredients, you can accomplish feats of cooking delights you might not have imagined, making the crock pot the most treasured possession in your kitchen. So, put away your cans of cream of blank soup now, and get creative.

From appetizers, to the main course, and on to the dessert, your slow cooker can do it all. Not to mention, you can travel the world of cuisine with just this one kitchen appliance. Let's take a look at some of the unusual crock pot cuisine you can dish up for your next meal:

Appetizers

Your slow cooker can do routine appetizers, and more, extremely well, so don't limit your crock pot to tiny sausages. Instead, create a whole array of different flavored chicken wings in the crock pot. How about Lumpia, Egg Rolls, or Wasabi peas? They are all possible with your trusty crock pot.

The crock pot can easily accommodate a number of appetizers with its steady heat, portable nature and ease of use. No matter what you are in the mood for, chances are your slow cooker can help create your favorite pre-meal snack, even those exotic snacks you crave but have been hesitant to try.

Main Course

The main dish is where your crock pot can really shine. You will be surprised at the number of different countries you can visit from the comfort of your own kitchen with the help of a simple slow cooker and a few unusual ingredients. From France to India, you can go on a world tour with only the amount of money needed to prepare the dish. From capers to curry, your creativity is the only limit.

Don't stop there. Use the foods you may be familiar with, too, in a whole new way. Tenderize meat by cooking in a cola drink. Choose fun fruit, like papaya and star fruit, in your crock pot to give your regular Hawaiian Chicken dish a new look, and taste. Cook with wine. Buy fresh herbs and add them to the last half hour of cooking and taste the flavor explosion. Your crock pot is the star chef, but you get all the credit. Try outrageous ingredients in a whole new way to create a wonderfully delicious dish.

Dessert

We know you can make a simple apple crisp in the crock pot, but what can you make that will surprise your family and friends? Try a bread and butter pudding, or how about a chocolate coffee pudding, carrot souffle, or a variety of tiramisu. All of these interesting desserts can be cooked to perfection in your crock pot.

All desserts are not necessarily cakes, pies, or pudding. How about a nice bowl of warm, mixed nuts spiced to perfection in your crock pot. You can enjoy warm granola cooked in your crock pot, served over a bowl of Gelato. Choose unusual fruits and simmer slowly until you have a nice compote to serve over rich ice cream or alone with just a swirl of heavy cream on top. Quite a change from ice cream and chocolate syrup. And, speaking of chocolate, don't forget your crock pot is the perfect appliance for melting dipping chocolate. Perhaps dessert tonight could be a chocolate fondue event.

The next time you automatically grab the same old ingredients to throw into your crock pot, stop. Look around your refrigerator and pantry and rethink those recipes. Instead of apples, how about cherries. Instead of parsley, how about cilantro. Instead of hot sauce, how about ginger. Instead of rice, how about quinoa. And by all means, instead of cream or anything soup, how about a nice roux. You can do it all with your crock pot!

Recipes

Sweet Mustard Glazed Ham

3 to 5 lb. cooked ham
1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
1 TBSP Dijon mustard
3 TBSP orange juice
1 TBSP cold water
1 TBSP cornstarch

Place ham in crockpot.

In separate bowl, mix together brown sugar, mustard, and orange juice.

Pour mixture over ham, put cover on crockpot, and cook on HIGH for 1 hour.

Turn crockpot down to LOW temperature and cook for 6 to 7 hours.

Remove ham from crockpot and keep warm, and turn crockpot to HIGH.

Mix cold water and cornstarch in small bowl until cornstarch is dissolved.

Whisk cornstarch mixture into drippings in crockpot, cook until sauce begins to thicken, whisking several times.

Serve ham with thickened glaze spooned over slices.

Apple Raisin Holiday Ham

1 (1.5 lb) honey baked ham
1 can apple pie filling
1/2 cup golden raisins
1/2 cup orange juice
1/4 cup water

Mix together the apple pie filling, raisins, orange juice, and water. Set ham in crockpot and spread mixture over ham. Set crockpot to Low heat, cover, and cook for 4 to 5 hours. This makes a nice dish for any special occasion.

Tangy Cranberry Pot Roast & Gravy

3 lb. beef chuck roast
2 TBSP cooking oil
1/4 cup diced green onion
1 can (16 oz) whole cranberry sauce
3 TBSP water
1 1/2 tsp salt
1/8 tsp black pepper
2 TBSP cold water
2 TBSP cornstarch

In large heavy skillet, brown both sides of chuck roast in hot oil over medium high heat.

When browned, turn off heat, remove meat to plate and set aside.

In same skillet with heat off, mix in the green onion, cranberry sauce, water, salt, and pepper, stirring until mixed well and the brown bits on pan are loosened; then spoon mixture into crockpot.

Put small rack in crockpot and place browned meat on rack.

Put cover on and set crockpot to LOW and cook for 7 to 8 hours.

When meat is done cooking, remove meat and rack from crockpot; put meat on serving platter and keep warm.

In small bowl, mix together the cold water and cornstarch until completely dissolved.

Slowly drizzle the cornstarch into the liquid in crockpot, stirring constantly; continue stirring until mixture thickens and forms gravy.

Serve the gravy over mashed potatoes alongside the beef roast.

Apple Brats & Kraut

1 lb. bratwursts, cut in fourths on a diagonal

4 tart apples (like Granny Smith) cored, and sliced into 8 wedges each

1 (27 oz) can sauerkraut

1/4 cup brown sugar, packed

1/4 cup water

Put all ingredients in crockpot. Add 1/4 cup water and stir gently. Put cover on and let cook on LOW for 3 to 4 hours.

Turkey Tropicale

3 to 4 lb. turkey breast

1 can (8 oz) crushed pineapple

1 jar (10 oz) cherry preserves

1 TBSP lemon juice

pinch salt

Place turkey in crockpot.

Mix together the remaining ingredients in separate bowl, then pour over turkey.

Cover crockpot and cook on LOW heat for 7 to 8 hours.

Serve with wild and brown rice side dish.

Great Northern Bean and Sausage Soup

3 small breakfast sausage links, cut into small pieces

1/2 cup chopped onion

2 cans (15 oz size) Great Northern beans, undrained

1 can (16 oz) Fire Roasted diced tomatoes with garlic
2 cups water
salt and pepper to taste

Turn crockpot on HIGH and put sausage and onion in to cook, stirring frequently, until sausage is browned a bit and onion is transparent.
Dump in the beans, diced tomatoes, and water, stir and cover.
Turn heat down to LOW and cook for 5 to 6 hours.

Cherry Cherry Pork Chops

6 pork chops (3/4 inch thick)
1 cup cherry pie filling
2 tsp lemon juice
1/2 tsp chicken bouillon
salt and pepper to taste

Season pork chops with salt and pepper, then brown in vegetable oil in heavy skillet over medium high heat, turning once.
In crockpot, mix together the cherry pie filling, lemon juice, and chicken bouillon granules.
Place browned pork chops on top of mixture in crockpot.
Cover crockpot and set temperature to LOW.
Cook on LOW for 4 to 5 hours.
Spoon cherry sauce over pork chops when served.

Island View Pork Roast

3 lb. boneless pork roast
1/2 cup soy sauce
2 TBSP brown sugar
1 can (8 oz) crushed pineapple
dash ground ginger
salt and pepper to taste

Put pork roast in a glass bowl.
In separate bowl, whisk together the remaining ingredients, then pour over pork roast; cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.
When ready to cook, put pork roast in crockpot, and pour marinade over.
Cover and cook on LOW heat for 6 to 7 hours.
Remove pork roast to platter and spoon sauce over when serving.

Chicken Vino

3 lbs. chicken thighs
4 oz. fresh mushrooms
1 cup dry white wine
1 tsp Italian seasoning
salt and pepper to taste

Season chicken with salt and pepper, then brown in oil in heavy skillet over medium high heat. Place browned chicken in crockpot.

In same skillet, add mushrooms and saute over medium high heat until browned slightly.

Add wine to skillet and scrape browned bits from bottom.

Pour mushroom-wine mixture over chicken in crockpot and sprinkle Italian seasoning over the top.

Cover and cook on LOW for 8 to 9 hours.

Serve with rice.

Corn Stuffed Pork Chops

4 double pork chops, for stuffing
1 bag (16 oz) frozen whole kernel corn, thawed
1 1/2 cups herbed stuffing mix
1 can (8 oz) tomato sauce
salt and pepper to taste

Cut pork chops to form pocket. Season with salt and pepper.

In bowl, combine corn and stuffing mix.

Stuff pork chops with mixture and close pork chops up with wooden toothpicks.

Put any extra stuffing mixture into bottom of crockpot and lay pork chops on top.

Spoon tomato sauce over each pork chop.

Cover and cook on LOW for 8 to 10 hours.

Easy Spaghetti & Meatballs

1 lb. frozen precooked meatballs
1 jar (26 oz) favorite spaghetti sauce
1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1/2 cup water

Put frozen meatballs, spaghetti sauce, onion, garlic, and water into crockpot. Cover and cook on LOW for 6 to 7 hours.

Cook favorite pasta according to directions on package.

Serve pasta with hot spaghetti sauce and meatballs with Parmesan cheese on top if desired.

Beefy Black-eyed Pea Stew

2 lbs. beef stew meat
1 bag (16 oz) dried black-eyed peas
1 can (10 oz) beef broth
5 carrots, cleaned and diced
4 cups water
salt and pepper to taste
flour
oil

Dredge beef stew meat in flour, salt and pepper, then brown in heavy skillet in oil. Meanwhile, rinse and sort the black eyed peas to remove stones, then drain. Put the browned beef, peas, broth, carrots, and water in crockpot. Cover crockpot and cook on LOW for 9 to 10 hours or until black eyes peas and beef are both tender.

Southwest Chicken Chili

2 lbs. chicken thighs, bones and skin removed, then diced
3 cans (14 oz size) diced tomatoes with chilies and garlic, undrained
1 pkg. (1 oz) taco seasoning mix
2 cans (15 oz size) Great Northern beans, drained
3 cups water

Put everything in crockpot and give it a stir.
Cover, and cook on LOW for 6 to 8 hours or until chicken is tender.

Chicken Drumsticks in Pucker-Up Honey Sauce

3 lb. chicken drummies (drumstick looking part of wings)
2 cups honey
1 cup soy sauce
1/2 cup spicy marinara sauce
1/4 cup vegetable oil
salt and pepper to taste

Put drummies on broiler pan and sprinkle wings with salt and pepper. Cook under the broiler for about 15 minutes or until browned, flipping over once. Put browned chicken drummies in crockpot. In separate bowl, mix together honey, soy sauce, marinara, and oil, then pour over drummies. Cover crockpot and turn heat to LOW and Cook for 4 to 5 hours. Remove from crockpot to platter and serve hot. This makes a full meal when served alongside potato salad or other hearty side dish.

Cheesy Chicken & Ham

1 1/2 lbs. chicken pieces
1 cup diced cooked ham
1 can (10 oz) Cheddar cheese soup, condensed
1 can (14 oz) diced tomatoes
1/2 cup water

Brown chicken pieces in heavy skillet with a little oil. Arrange chicken in crockpot then put ham over chicken. Mix together the soup, tomatoes, and water, then pour over all. Set crockpot to Low and cook covered for 6 to 7 hours or until chicken is cooked thoroughly.

Orange Chicken & Sweet Potatoes

4 sweet potatoes, cleaned and coarse cut
6 chicken thighs, skin off
1 cup orange marmalade
1/2 cup chicken broth
salt and pepper to taste

Put prepared sweet potatoes in crockpot, add salt and pepper to taste. Arrange chicken thighs on top of sweet potatoes, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Mix orange marmalade and chicken broth together in separate bowl, then pour over the chicken. Set crockpot to LOW and cook covered for 6 to 8 hours. Spoon sauce over top of chicken when serving. Serve alongside steamed kale for a complete meal.

Orleans Style Black Bean Andouille Soup

2 cans (15 oz size) black beans, drained and rinsed
2 andouille sausages, bite size cut
1 can (15 oz) fire roasted diced tomatoes with garlic
4 cups chicken broth
salt and pepper to taste

Combine all in crockpot. Set heat to Low and cook covered for 5 to 6 hours.

All American Beef Pot Roast

4 lb. beef roast
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 pkg dry onion soup mix
1/2 cup water
6 small red potatoes, scrubbed
salt and pepper
oil for frying

Put oil in cast iron skillet, salt and pepper roast, and brown over medium heat, turning to brown all sides of roast.

Remove roast to platter and turn heat to low under skillet.

In same skillet mix together soup, dry onion soup mix, and water and stir to mix and get browned bits off bottom.

Pour 1/2 mixture from skillet into crockpot, then lay roast in.

Pour remaining mixture from skillet over the top of roast.

Arrange potatoes around the roast in crockpot.

Cover and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours or until roast falls apart and potatoes are tender.

Serve with candied carrots for a nice combination of sweet and tangy flavors.

Southern Style Beef Stew

1 lb. beef stew meat
1 can (15 oz) diced tomatoes with garlic
2 cups kale, cleaned and chopped
1 can (15 oz) black eyed peas, drained and rinsed
1/4 tsp salt
1/8 tsp black pepper
1/2 cup flour
2 TBSP oil for frying

Put salt, pepper, and flour in paper bag, add beef and shake to combine.

Heat oil in cast iron pan over medium heat, then add beef and brown quickly. Remove beef from skillet with slotted spoon to crockpot.

In same skillet over low heat add can of diced tomatoes and stir to get browned bits from skillet.

To crockpot, add kale and black-eyed peas then pour mixture from skillet over all.

Cover and cook on LOW for 6 to 8 hours until beef is nice and tender.

Saucy Spare Ribs

3 lbs. pork spareribs, cut into serving size pieces
salt and pepper to taste
2 cans (15 oz size) fire roasted garlic diced tomatoes with garlic
1 medium onion, diced
2 stalks celery, chopped
3 Tbsp water
2 Tbsp cornstarch

Put spareribs in heavy skillet with a little oil and cook until browned. Transfer to crockpot, salt and pepper, then add tomatoes, onion, and celery. Mix together water and cornstarch, and pour into skillet, whisking to remove browned bits from skillet. Pour this mixture into the crockpot. Set heat on crockpot to Low and cook, covered, for 6 to 7 hours or until ribs are tender. Remove spareribs to platter and stir mixture in crockpot to combine well, then pour over ribs and serve.

No Grill Smoky BBQ Ribs

3 lbs pork loin ribs, cut into 3 rib sections
1 tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp salt
1 tsp black pepper
1 1/2 cup favorite barbecue sauce
1/2 cup water

Mix together the smoked paprika, salt, and pepper in bowl, then rub into pork loin ribs. Lay ribs in crockpot.
Stir together barbecue sauce and water, and pour over ribs in crockpot. Give the crockpot a little shake to be sure the ribs are completely covered and sauce settles to bottom.
Cook covered on LOW for 8 to 10 hours or until ribs are tender.
Serve alongside favorite potato salad for a summer-like meal anytime.

Smoky Black Bean & Potato Soup

1 lb cooked smoked ham, cubed
2 cans (16 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed
4 medium gold potatoes, diced
2 cans (15 oz size) beef broth
1/2 tsp favorite dry rub for barbecue

Put all ingredients in crockpot and stir slightly to combine.
Cook covered on LOW for 8 to 9 hours.
Top with a dollop of sour cream, parsley, or diced fresh tomatoes to serve.

Rich Penne Vegetable Soup

2 cans (14 oz size) beef broth
1 can (14 oz) diced tomatoes
1 pkg (16 oz) frozen mixed vegetables for stew
2 cups water
1/2 tsp garlic salt
1/8 tsp black pepper
1 1/2 cups penne noodles, uncooked

In crockpot combine all ingredients EXCEPT penne noodles.
cover and cook on LOW for 8 to 9 hours.

Add penne, cover and cook 30 more minutes or until noodles are tender.

Garnish with parsley and Parmesan cheese if desired and serve hot with crusty bread for a filling meal.

Corn & Sausage Chowder

1 lb breakfast sausage links, cut into bite size pieces
3 cups frozen hash brown potatoes with onions and pepper
1 can (15 oz) creamed corn, undrained
1 can (10 oz) cream celery soup
2 cups water
1/4 tsp salt
1/8 tsp pepper

Put sausage and potatoes in crockpot.

In separate bowl, combine the creamed corn, celery soup, water, salt, and pepper, then pour into crockpot.

Cover and cook on LOW for 8 to 9 hours, stirring before serving.

Easy Beef & Bean Chili

1 lb ground beef
1 TBSP chili powder
1 can (14 oz) diced tomatoes with green chilies
2 cans (15 oz size) kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup water
1 TBSP oil for frying

In crockpot set on HIGH, put oil and ground beef and brown until pink color is gone, stirring frequently. Add more oil if needed.

Turn crockpot to LOW and add the chili powder, tomatoes, kidney beans, and water; stir to combine. Cover and cook on LOW for 6 to 8 hours.

Serve with fresh chopped toppings like green pepper, onion, tomatoes, and a dollop of sour cream with parsley.

Golden Mushroom Beef Stew

1 lb beef stew meat
1 can (10 oz) golden cream of mushroom soup
1 can (4 oz) sliced mushrooms
1 cup water
1/2 tsp onion flakes
salt and pepper to taste
6 cups hot cooked wide egg noodles

In crockpot mix together meat, soup, mushrooms, water, and onion flakes.
Set crockpot to LOW heat, cover and cook for 6 to 8 hours or until meat is tender.
Serve over hot cooked noodles with sprig of parsley.

Curried Pork & Apple Dinner

2 lbs pork stew meat, cubed
2 Tbsp frying oil
salt and pepper to taste
1 cup water
3 Tbsp curry powder
1 Granny Smith apple, cut into 8 wedges
1 medium sweet onion, cut into 8 wedges
hot cooked rice to serve

In skillet, brown pork stew meat in hot oil, then put pork in crockpot and season with salt and pepper.
Mix water and curry powder and pour into same skillet, stirring to combine and loosen bits in bottom.
Add apple and onion to crockpot and pour mixture from skillet over all.
Cover and cook on LOW for 7 to 9 hours or until pork is tender.
Serve over hot cooked rice.

Easiest Marinara Spaghetti Dinner

2 cans (28 oz each) crushed tomatoes
1 small onion, diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp crushed oregano
hot cooked pasta

Put tomatoes, onion, garlic, and oregano in crockpot. Turn heat to low, and let cook for 6 to 9 hours. Serve over hot cooked spaghetti with Parmesan cheese on top.

Corn Chowder Comfort

1 cup frozen hash browns with peppers and onions
1 cup cooked ham, diced
1 pkg (10 oz) frozen corn
1 can (10 oz) cream of mushroom soup
2 to 2 1/2 cups milk
salt and pepper to taste

Put all ingredients in crockpot and stir to combine. Set heat to Low and cook for 5 to 7 hours. Add more salt and pepper if desired.

Mexi Mac N Cheese

3 cups cooked macaroni noodles
3 cups shredded Mexican style cheese combination
2 cups evaporated milk
butter
salt and pepper to taste

Combine all the ingredients together. Lightly spray the crockpot liner with oil. Put mixture in crockpot set on low and cook covered for 4 to 5 hours, stirring several times during cooking.

Recommended Resource

For more yummy crockpot recipes and plenty of tips and ideas for crockpot cooking, take a look at:

[Crockpot Cooking Made Simple](#)

Find out:

- what to look for in a new crockpot
- how to care for your crockpot
- what cooking techniques can turn you into a crockpot pro
- how to easily convert favorite recipes into crockpot recipes

Once you have all these basics down, you'll be ready for the fun. Of course we mean the Recipes! In this resource, you'll find almost **500 recipes** plus tips to make your crockpot meals come out perfect every time.

Here are just a few of the recipes you'll find in this cookbook collection.

- Take It from the Pantry Soup
- Stew Meat Vegetable Soup
- Cheddar, Ham and Broccoli Soup
- Sautéed Curry Chicken Soup
- Kid Favorite Alphabet Soup
- Shepherds Crock Pot Casserole
- Shoestring Potato and Tuna Casserole
- Creamy Mushroom Beef Dinner

Get your copy of "Crockpot Cooking Made Simple" today.

<http://www.hillbillyhousewife.com/ebooks/crockpotcooking.htm>

