

Simply Scrumptious Slow~cooker Recipes



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About this eBook and Disclaimers

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Introduction

Congratulations on purchasing this eBook!

If you are anything like me, a busy mom (or dad or person!), you're probably always on the lookout for ways to make your life easier – especially in the kitchen. And, you probably want to make healthy but delicious meals for your family, but just don't have the time to spend hours over the stove, right? Than this eBook is for you! All you have to do is throw in a few ingredients, turn the slow-cooker on in the morning, and at the end of the day you have a healthy, hearty meal all ready for you. *Poof!*

Well, as you know, it's not quite that simple. If it were, then most people wouldn't let their slow-cooker gather dust in the back of their cabinet! It helps if you a few recipes and ideas of what to put in the slow-cooker. ☺ And, getting foods ready for the slow-cooker does take a little prep time, but not more than it would to make any other meal.

In this eBook, I provide you with some tried and true family-favorite recipes that I hope will inspire you to dust off your slow-cooker and start using it! If you don't have a slow-cooker yet, and wondering which type to buy, on page 17 I offer some advice on how to choose a slow-cooker. And, as a little bonus, I offer a few time-saving tips that I use to make preparing meals for the slow-cooker efficient and easy on page 19.

How this eBook came to be

I often make crock-pot meals for dinner guests, pot-lucks or to bring to home-bound friends (such as new moms, etc.). They are always a hit and I can't tell you how often I am hounded for the recipes. ☺ So, that was the inspiration for this eBook. I have put together a collection of my best-loved recipes together to share, not only with my friends, but with you as well.

Another reason I decided to make this eBook is because I want to encourage others to actually start using their slow-cooker! I personally use my slow-cooker at least once a week.

Benefits of using a slow~cooker

1. **Saves you time.** All the prep work is done the night before, which only leaves you to though the ingredients in the pot and turn it on the next day. If you are having a particularly busy – or stressful – day, it is nice to have a warm, inviting meal waiting for you.
2. **Saves you money.** With the low and slow process of a slow-cooker you can use less expensive cuts of meat with delectable results. It also saves you money on your energy bill; in spite of being on for 6, 8 or 10 hours, the wattage is still lower than if you used your electric oven.

3. **Saves on clean-up.** It is one-pot cooking at its best. 😊 If you have a slow-cooker with a removable insert (and you should!), all you have to do is rinse and put it in the dishwasher. Even if you wash by hand it is quick and easy.

4. **Keeps you comfortable.** Okay, not *exactly*. 😊 But, that's my way of saying that the slow-cooker isn't just for winter soups. Slow-cooker meals are great for the summer, because you can make some great dishes without adding extra heat to your house from the oven.

5. **Easily adaptable.** You'll be surprised how easy it is to convert your regular recipes for the slow-cooker, especially soups. A lot of my recipes are exactly that, regular recipes that I tweaked for my slow-cooker.

These are just a couple of reasons. I'm confident that once you start using your slow-cooker you'll be hooked and find your own benefits.

About these recipes

For the recipes in this book, I use a **6 quart oval Rival® slow cooker** because I like to make sure I have enough for leftovers to freeze for future meals. (That and because it's the only slow-cooker I have! *LOL!*) If you have a smaller or round slow-cooker, you **should** be able to scale the recipes down, *but I make no guarantee, so do so at your own risk.* 😊 By the way, in case you missed it, I give some advice on how to choose a slow-cooker if you don't already have one on page 17.

These recipes are either a combination of several recipes of I've tried over the years that I've re-arranged into my own recipe, or recipes I've come up with out of a need to change up our usual meal plan. 😊

Let's go!

It is my hope that you will enjoy these recipes as much as my family and I have. It is also my hope that you will be inspired by these recipes to create your own slow-cooker favorites, as well. Now, let's get cooking!

Taste and see how good the Lord is; happy the man who takes refuge in him. Psalm 34:9

Apricot Pork Loin

Ingredients:

- 1 large onion chopped
- 2 tablespoons spicy mustard
- 1 can (10 ¾ oz) vegetable broth
- 1 jar (18 oz) apricot preserves
- 4 black peppercorns
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 bay leaf
- 3-4 lb boneless pork loin

Directions:

1. Mix first seven (7) ingredients in slow-cooker.
2. Add pork loin, turning to coat well.
3. Cover. Cook on low 8-10 hours.
4. Cover. Cook on low 10 hours (or high for 6 hours).
5. Remove bay leaf before serving.
6. Drizzle sauce over pork slices.

Notes:

> To make a thicker sauce: Mix 2 tablespoons of cornstarch with 2 tablespoons of apricot sauce in a small bowl until smooth. Stir into slow-cooker and cover. Cook for 10 minutes or until mixture boils and thickens, stirring frequently.

Beef and Barley Soup

Ingredients:

2-3 lbs beef stew (cut into bite-sized pieces)
3 cans beef broth
28 oz can crushed tomatoes
1 large onion, chopped
3 carrots, sliced
2 celery stalks, sliced
2 cloves, minced
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon each thyme and basil
¾ - 1 cup regular barley (NOT the quick cooking kind)
¼ cup flour
½ teaspoon each salt and pepper

Directions:

1. Put meat in slow-cooker.
2. Mix flour, salt and pepper in separate bowl.
3. Pour flour mixture over meat, mixing to coat evenly.
4. Add remaining ingredients.
5. Cover and cook on low 8-10 hours (or high for 4-6 hours).
6. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Notes:

> If you use the quick-cooking barley, don't add it to soup until about 10-20 minutes before end of cooking time.

Beef Stew

Ingredients:

2 lbs beef stew meat (cut into bite-size chunks)
¼ cup flour
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black pepper
2 cups beef broth
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon each thyme, marjoram (you'll find it in the spice isle)
½ teaspoon each dill, sage, and oregano
4 carrots, large chopped
3 potatoes, large diced
1 red onion, chopped
2 stalks celery, sliced
1 16 oz bag frozen peas

Directions:

1. Put meat in slow-cooker.
2. Mix flour, salt and pepper in separate bowl.
3. Pour flour mixture over meat, mixing to coat evenly.
4. Add remaining ingredients and mix well.
5. Cover and cook on low 10 hours (or high for 6 hours).
6. Remove bay leaves and stir stew thoroughly before serving.

Notes:

> If you like your stew more “soupy” add 2 to 4 cups of water to stew.

Chicken Cacciatore

Ingredients:

1 lb skinless chicken thighs
1 6 oz can mushrooms, drained
1 6 oz can tomato paste
1 14 oz can chicken broth
1 bay leaf
½ teaspoon each dried sage and dill

Directions:

1. Put chicken in slow-cooker and add remaining ingredients.
2. Cover. Cook on low for 8 hours.
3. 15 minutes before serving, remove chicken and keep warm.
4. Increase heat setting to high.
5. In a small bowl, mix ¼ cup sauce from slow-cooker with ¼ teaspoon cornstarch until smooth.
6. Stir mixture back into slow-cooker.
7. Cover. Cook 10 minutes more, stirring frequently.
8. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Notes:

- > Serve this over your favorite pasta, such as spaghetti, or rice.
- > If you don't have a lot of heat control with your slow-cooker, you can dump the sauce from the slow-cooker into a medium-sized pot (after removing the chicken), combine the sauce and cornstarch in small bowl and return mixture to medium-sized pot. Cook for the 10 minutes over medium to medium-low heat, stirring frequently.

Chicken Noodle Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 whole cooking chicken (NOT a roasting chicken)
- 2-3 carrots, cut in chunks
- 2 celery stalks, cut into large pieces
- 1 sweet onion, diced
- 2 parsnips, cut in chunks
- 2 turnips, cut in quarters
- 1 tomato, cut in quarters (or ½ package of grape tomatoes)
- 1 bunch escarole, washed and stems removed
- 1 bunch each fresh dill and parsley, stems removed
- 1 package egg noodles

Directions:

1. Add chicken to slow-cooker.
2. Add rest of ingredients, except egg noodles.
3. Add enough water to cover the ingredients.
4. Cover and cook on low 10 hours.
5. Ten (10) minutes before end of cooking time add the egg noodles.
6. Before serving, **carefully remove all chicken bones.**

Notes:

> If you prefer, cook noodles according to package directions in a separate pot and then add to soup before serving.

Chili

Ingredients:

2 lbs ground beef
1 onion, chopped
1 green pepper, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
1 cup water
1 can chili beans (undrained)
1 can pinto beans (undrained)
2 cans diced tomatoes (with juice)
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 teaspoon each thyme and salt
½ teaspoon each cumin and oregano
¼ teaspoon each dry mustard and black pepper

Directions:

1. Sauté ground beef, onion and green pepper in skillet until meat is browned. Drain off grease.
2. Pour meat into slow-cooker and add remaining ingredients. Stir well to combine.
3. Cover. Cook on low 8 hours.
4. Stir before serving over rice or with cornbread.

Notes:

> Feel free to add your favorite toppings such as sour cream, cheddar cheese or chopped green onion.

Ham and Cabbage

Ingredients:

- 1 medium-size cabbage cut into large chunks
- 2-3 carrots, sliced
- 1 onion, sliced
- 2-3 potatoes, cut into large cubes
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 lb smoked ham
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard

Directions:

1. Place vegetables and bay leaves in bottom of slow-cooker.
2. Place ham on top and pour water over it.
3. Sprinkle the brown sugar and then dry mustard over ham.
4. Cover. Cook on low 8-10 hours.
5. Remove bay leaves and pour juices over ham and vegetables before serving.

Notes:

- > Can substitute corned beef for the ham. Makes a great meal for St. Patrick's Day. 😊

Lentil Soup (Vegetarian)

Ingredients:

1 lb package lentils
8 cups water (or vegetable broth)
1 10oz can diced tomatoes, with juice
1 onion, diced
2 carrots, chopped
1 celery stalk, sliced
½ large green pepper, chopped
2 gloves garlic, minced
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
¼ teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper

Directions:

1. Examine, sort and rinse lentils. (No need to soak overnight.)
2. Put all ingredients in slow-cooker and stir well.
3. Cover and cook on low for 8-10 hours.
4. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Notes:

> For a meaty version, add 1 lb of sliced smoked sausage.

Moist Crock~Pot Chicken

Ingredients:

1 whole chicken (intact)
1 cup water
Olive oil
1-2 teaspoons each dried rosemary, thyme and garlic powder

Directions:

1. Make 3 balls of aluminum foil and place in bottom of slow-cooker.
2. Clean chicken and pat dry.
3. Rub chicken with the oil.
4. In a small bowl, mix spices to combine and then rub over chicken. Add water.
5. Put chicken in crock-pot and cover. Cook on high 6 hours.
6. Remove skin before serving.

Notes:

> This makes a very moist, fall-off-the-bone chicken. So good!

Red-Bean Soup

Ingredients:

1 package (16 oz bag) dry Pinto beans
1 package (16 oz bag) dry dark red beans
1 tablespoon Herbs de Provence (you'll find it in the spice aisle)
2 cans vegetable broth
Water (enough to cover beans completely)
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 small onion, diced
½ small green bell pepper, diced
1 bay leaf
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Soak beans in water overnight.
2. Add all ingredients to slow-cooker.
3. Add enough water to cover beans completely (about one (1) inch from top of slow-cooker).
4. Cover. Cook on low 10 hours (or high for 6 hours).
5. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Notes:

- > This makes a thick, hearty soup – almost like a stew.
- > Add water if needed to keep beans covered during cooking.

Split Pea Soup (Vegetarian)

Ingredients:

1 16oz package split peas (sorted and rinsed)
1 onion chopped
4 cups vegetable broth
4 cups water
3 carrots, chopped
2 potatoes, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon each oregano, basil, sage, and thyme
½ teaspoon cumin
¼ teaspoon each dill and marjoram (you'll find it in the spice isle)
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in slow-cooker and stir well.
2. Cover and cook on low 8-10 hours.
3. Remove bay leaves before serving.

Notes:

> For a meaty version, add a ham bone or hock (with meat) to crock-pot with the vegetables.

White-Bean Soup

Ingredients:

2 lbs (32 oz) dry great northern beans
2 tablespoons Herbs de Provence (you'll find it in the spice isle)
Water (enough to cover beans completely)
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 large onion, diced
2 carrots, diced
2 celery stalks, diced
1 bay leaf
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Soak beans in water overnight.
2. Add all ingredients to slow-cooker.
3. Add enough water to cover beans completely.
4. Cover. Cook on low 8-10 hours (or high for 6 hours).
5. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Notes:

- > This makes a thick, hearty soup – almost like a stew.
- > Add water, if needed, to keep beans covered during cooking.

How to Choose a Slow~cooker

With so many slow-cookers available, how do you know which one to choose? It can be rather confusing, so here's a little slow-cooker 101 to help you choose the best slow-cooker for your needs.

Continuous verses intermittent slow~cookers:

A **continuous type of slow-cooker** is the kind that has the heating elements that wrap around the sides of a slow-cooker and remain on throughout the whole cooking time. The ceramic insert may or may not be removable. This is the preferred type of slow-cooker and all the recipes from this eBook (and most all of the slow-cooker recipes I know of) are made in this type of slow-cooker.

An **intermittent type of slow-cooker** is the kind that has its heating elements on the bottom of the food container. The heating element cycles on and off during the cooking process and normally indicates the cooking temperatures in degrees. This type of slow-cooker is not recommended for most slow-cooker recipes. As a matter of fact, these type of slow-cookers are becoming more rare, so you may not even come across this type of slow-cooker.

Oval verses round slow~cookers:

For most recipes it won't matter if you use an oval or round slow-cooker. However, if you plan to make a lot of whole chickens or roasts, you will want an oval one so they will fit the slow-cooker properly.

Capacity and price:

Slow-cookers come in all sizes, from 1 quart all the way up to 8 quarts. The average size slow-cooker for a family of four (4) would be about 4-6 quarts. Smaller sized slow-cookers are great for dips, fondues and hot beverages (such as mulled wine). Larger-sized slow-cookers are great for larger families and entertaining. We are a family of three (3) but, like I mentioned before, I use a larger 6 quart slow-cooker and freeze the leftovers for future meals.

Depending on the size and features of a particular slow-cooker, they can range anywhere from \$20 to \$200 or more. In autumn and early winter you can usually find slow-cookers on sale.

FYI: slow-cookers work best when they are filled at least half-filled, so make sure you get a slow-cooker that fits the amount of food you will be cooking.

Temperature Controls and Features

The newer slow-cookers are equipped with all sorts of controls and features, many of which, (although helpful), really aren't necessary. The main type of control you need is a temperature control that has a low, high and warm setting.

Some newer, and pricier, models come with digital controls, automatic timers and automatic temperature switch (that switches from low to high or vice versa in the middle of the cooking process). Some even have built-in thermometers that check the internal temperatures of the food that is cooking.

My recommendation? If you are just starting out with slow-cooker cooking stick with the simpler, middle-sized oval models that have a three (3) setting gauge of low, high and warm – preferably one that switches to warm automatically when the cooking time is finished.

A word about lids:

There are two (2) types of lids, glass and plastic. The right lid is important, and if you can afford it, I highly recommend getting a glass cover. Most manufacturers make plastic lids because they are cheaper, but they do not seal as well as the glass ones. You want a lid that will trap and contain the heat so it doesn't leak out of the slow-cooker, making it less efficient.

Ask yourself this:

Here are a few things to think about when choosing the perfect slow-cooker for you:

- > What types of food will you be cooking in your slow-cooker?
- > How many people will you be feeding most often?
- > Do you want to make sure you have leftovers?
- > Are you home most of the day or are you out most of the day. (If you are out most of the day, making sure you have a slow-cooker with an automatic warming control will be important.)
- > How much money are you willing to spend on your slow-cooker?

Time Saving and Other Tips

Here are a few time~saving steps and other tips that I use:

1. **Plan ahead.** Each Saturday, I prepare a weekly menu (if not written, I at least have an idea for my upcoming meals each week) for the following week. This way I know ahead of time what ingredient items I have on hand and what items I still have to buy at the store. The trick is to make sure you buy the ingredients a day or two **before** you plan to use the slow-cooker!
2. **Complement the meal.** Although most of the recipes are stand-alone (especially the soups and stews), many of them are complemented by some homemade bread and/or a salad.
3. **Chop ahead.** While preparing dinner the night before I plan to use the slow-cooker, I chop enough for both meals. For example, while chopping carrots for a salad, I'll chop extra for the slow-cooker recipe, bag it and put it in the refrigerator so it's all ready to go.
4. **Fill the pot.** Better yet, for some recipes, you can chop and prepare all the ingredients of a meal, put it all in the slow-cooker and then put the whole slow-cooker insert into the refrigerator. The next morning you are all set, just put the insert into the cooking element. Done!
5. **Keep those lids closed!** As tempted as you may be to open the lid and stir the contents, or to check on the food or whatever, don't! When you do that, except in certain circumstances (like the bean soup recipes), a lot of heat escapes, which can lengthen the cooking time. Also, the lid collects steam which condenses and helps keep the food inside moist, so unless you want a dry chicken or roast, keep that lid closed! 😊
6. **A word about beans.** Beans soak up a lot of water, so it is important to keep them covered during cooking. When making the bean soup, make sure the beans are covered completely, especially at the beginning of the cooking process. Add water as needed, depending on the consistency you want your soup.

Also, it is important to soften most dry beans before combining with sugars and /or acidic foods, or they will harden during the cooking process instead of softening. Unless otherwise indicated, make sure you soak the beans overnight. Or, at a minimum, cover the beans with at least 3 times their volume of unsalted water, boil for ten minutes, and then simmer about 2 hours or until beans are tender (in a covered pot).

7. **A word about pasta.** Simmering pasta for hours in a slow-cooker is a big no-no. The pasta will get soggy and glumpy , which is not a tasty treat! Depending on the type of pasta called for in a recipe, wait to add it until that last 10-20 minutes before the end of the cooking time.

Better yet, often what I do is make the enough pasta for one meal in a separate pot and then add it to each bowl. Then I'll make a fresh pot of pasta when we are ready to eat the leftovers. It doesn't change the taste much this way, and prevents soggy pasta, which I am not a fan of!

8. **Dairy breaks down.** Besides pasta, you want to be careful not to add dairy too early. If you put the milk in too early, it can curdle and break down, which believe me, isn't pretty! Follow the recipe as to when to add dairy, or if you are making up your own recipe, wait to add it during the last 15 minutes or so of the cooking time.

9. **About seafood.** In all truth, I don't make seafood recipes in the slow-cooker usually. I have other recipes for seafood that my family prefers. However, you might want to cook seafood your slow-cooker, and if you do, make sure you don't add it in too early; it can overcook – and particularly, with shrimp - turn rubbery. *Can you say, yuck!* Again, follow whatever recipe you are using as to when to add seafood. Or, again, if you are making up your own recipe, wait until at least the last hour of cooking before adding the seafood.

10. **Browning meats.** Most meats fair better in the slow-cooker if you brown them ahead of time. It adds flavor, helps cook the mean more evenly, and gives it a nice color. One way I get around this, thanks to a suggestion in the recipe booklet that came with my slow-cooker, is combine salt, pepper and flour, and coat the meat with the flour mixture. It works best with small cuts, such as stew meat, as you see in my Beef Stew (pg. 8) and Beef and Barley (pg. 7) recipes.

11. **Liquefy you assets.** When cooking roasts or chicken alone, make sure you have add a little water or other liquid. It helps keep them moist and the juice or gravy that it makes is delicious! You can, if you feel you must, cook a roast without liquid if you set the timer on **low**, but I would not recommend it.

Feel free to substitute liquids, too, as long as they are in equal amounts. Substitute wine or broth for water, or one flavor of broth for another (say chicken broth instead of vegetable broth).

12. **Speaking of vegetables.** Veggies take longer to cook than meats or poultry, so don't chop them too large and put them in the bottom and / or sides of the slow-cooker; then put the meat or poultry on top.

13. **Experiment.** Finally, let me encourage you to not be afraid of the slow-cooker! Take one of your favorite chicken or roast or soup recipes and adapt it for the slow-cooker. Many times it is just a matter of taking your current recipe and cooking it on low for 8-10 hours in the slow cooker (or 4-6 hours on high)!

About Carol



Like many of us, Carol is a jack of all trades: wife, homeschooling mother, homemaker, and most importantly, a child of God. She blogs at [Simple Catholic Living](http://www.simplecatholicliving.com/) where you will find articles, freebies, resources, recipes and other tips for living out your womanly Christian vocation.

She is also an administrative support consultant who provides top-notch, administrative support services to coaches, speakers and other motivational professionals. To find out more visit her website at <http://www.carolda.com/>.

~Be in Touch!

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I'm also on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), so meet me there! 😊

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