

Food Bytes

HEALTH & NUTRITION PROGRAM, SNAP EDUCATION



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA | EXTENSION



Cooking safely in a slow cooker

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

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



Tips for successful slow cooking

- For easier cleanup, spray the inside of the cooker with nonstick cooking spray before adding ingredients.
- Most vegetables take longer to cook. Place them on the bottom of cooker under meat.
- To avoid pasta and rice from becoming gummy, precook these ingredients.
- To avoid curdling, add milk during last hour of cooking or use evaporated milk.
- Trim visible fat on meat. Cook and drain ground meats before adding to cooker.
- One hour on HIGH = two hours on LOW.
- The lid is an important part of the cooking process, trapping steam which helps to cook the food. If you remove the lid during the cooking, the steam is lost and it takes 15 to 20 minutes to regain the lost temperature and steam!



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



SLOW COOKER BBQ PINTO BEANS

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| 1 lb. dried pinto beans, rinsed and picked over | $\frac{3}{4}$ cup barbecue sauce |
| 4 cups hot water | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ketchup |
| 2 onions, chopped | 1½ Tbsp prepared mustard |
| 1 Tbsp chili powder | $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon hot red pepper sauce, or to taste |

Combine first 4 ingredients in an electric slow cooker on low heat. Cover and cook about 7 hours or until beans are tender. Drain cooking liquid. Stir in remaining ingredients. Set on high heat and cook uncovered 10 to 15 minutes, or until heated through.

Serves: 8; Cal 265; Fat 1; Carbs 53; Sodium 497; Protein 13

BBQ CHICKEN LEGS

8 chicken legs
1 bottle barbecue sauce

Put chicken legs in the slow cooker. Pour the barbecue sauce over them.

Cook on low for 7 to 8 hours.

Serves 8; Cal 255; Carbs 26; Fat 7; Protein 21; Sodium 708

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