



NEWS RELEASE

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Fast, Easy and Healthy Crock Pot Meals

Winter time is a perfect time for digging out your crock pot and coming home to a nice hot yummy meal. Cooking at home saves time, money and makes it easier to eat healthy. A crock pot can help you save even more money. Here are some hints to help this handy kitchen appliance earn its keep in your home:

Soups and Stews:

Save leftovers such as vegetables, meats, sauces, rice, pasta and potatoes and throw them into the crock pot with additional liquid such as chicken broth to make wonderful hearty soups and stews.

Scalloped Potatoes and Ham:

Spray the inside of your crock pot with cooking spray. Layer sliced potatoes and cubed ham. Top with cream of mushroom soup and put on low for 6-8 hours or until done. Top with grated reduced fat cheddar cheese before serving.

Pork and Sauerkraut:

Cooking lean cuts of pork with sauerkraut is a great way to serve pork. You can save money when you buy a whole pork loin and cut it into steaks yourself. Place the pork steaks in the bottom of the crock pot and add a can of sauerkraut. Place potatoes that have been cut into 1/2's or 1/4's (unpeeled red potatoes work very well with this dish) on top of the sauerkraut. Cook for 8 hours on low. The acid from the sauerkraut tenderizes the meat and the meat juices mellow the flavor of the sauerkraut.

Chicken and Sauce:

Place chicken pieces in the bottom of the crock pot and top with your favorite sauce. Cook for 6-8 hours on low.

Deep Pit Meat:

Using your crock pot is the easiest way to make deep pit meat. You can use whole turkey, turkey breast, pork knuckles (the pork equivalent to tri-tip) or less tender cuts of beef such as chuck roast. Liberally coat the meat with the following seasonings; liquid smoke, ground cumin, garlic and onion powder, season salt, and pepper. Depending on the size of your crock pot and how much meat you use, cook for 12-18 hours. Let cool, remove any bones or skin. Use a fork to separate the meat and shred. This will make enough for a large crowd or leftovers. Cool the leftover meat in the refrigerator overnight and remove the fat, place meat and juice in freezer containers. Serve with beans, salsa and a salad.

Beans:

Any kind of beans can be cooked in a crock pot. Prepare as you would to cook on the stove top, add seasoning and cook on low for 8 hours.

Saving time and money never tasted so good.

Source: Margaret Johns Nutrition Family EFNEP Administrator Consumer Science Advisor, Kern County