

SOUPS & STEW

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Ask any BLT lover—bacon and tomatoes are a match made in food heaven. Here the duo works its magic on a rib-sticking stew.

BACON BEEF STEW

PREP:

30 minutes

COOK:

Low 9 hours, High 4½ hours

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 6 slices bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1½ pounds boneless beef sirloin steak, cut 1 inch thick
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into ¾-inch pieces
- 2 cups packaged peeled baby carrots
- 1½ cups loose-pack frozen small whole onions
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes with basil, oregano, and garlic, undrained
- 1 12-ounce jar brown gravy

1 In a large skillet cook bacon over medium heat until crisp. Drain bacon on paper towels, reserving 1 tablespoon drippings in skillet. Wrap bacon and chill until ready to serve. Trim fat from beef. Cut beef into 1-inch pieces. In the same skillet brown beef, half at a time, in hot drippings. Drain off fat. Set aside.

2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine potatoes, carrots, and frozen onions. Add beef. In a medium bowl combine undrained tomatoes and gravy; stir into beef mixture in slow cooker.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4½ to 5 hours. Sprinkle individual servings with bacon.

Per serving: 326 cal., 12 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 77 mg chol., 883 mg sodium, 26 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 30 g pro.

It's easy to feed a houseful of fans with this great-tasting recipe. Prepare your choice of toppers and simmer the lively meat-and-bean combo ahead of time. Come serving time, set out the toppers, the lime slices, and a stack of bowls.

GAME DAY CHILI

- 2 pounds boneless beef round steak or boneless pork shoulder roast
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 2 large yellow, red, and/or green sweet peppers, chopped
- 2 15-ounce cans chili beans with chili gravy
- 2 14½-ounce cans Mexican-style stewed tomatoes, undrained, cut up
- 1 15-ounce can kidney beans or pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup beer or beef broth
- 1 to 2 tablespoons chopped canned chipotle chile peppers in adobo sauce*
- 2 teaspoons garlic salt
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano, crushed
- 1 recipe Cilantro Sour Cream, Cheese 'n' Nuts, Avocado-Tomato Salsa, Crunchy Corn Topper, and/or Hotter-than-Heck Topper (optional)
- Lime slices (optional)

1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ½-inch cubes. In a 5½- or 6-quart slow cooker combine meat, onions, sweet peppers, undrained chili beans with chili gravy, undrained tomatoes, kidney beans, beer, chipotle chile peppers, garlic salt, cumin, and oregano.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours. Spoon off fat. Serve with desired toppers and, if desired, lime slices.

Per serving: 294 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 52 mg chol., 823 mg sodium, 32 g carbo., 8 g fiber, 29 g pro.

***NOTE:** Because chile peppers contain volatile oils that can burn your skin and eyes, avoid direct contact with them as much as possible. When working with chile peppers, wear plastic or rubber gloves. If your bare hands do touch the peppers, wash your hands and nails well with soap and warm water.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 10 hours, High 5 hours

MAKES:
10 to 12 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
5½- or 6-quart

CILANTRO SOUR CREAM:
In a small bowl combine one 8-ounce carton dairy sour cream and ¼ cup snipped fresh cilantro.

CHEESE 'N' NUTS: In a small bowl combine 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, Monterey Jack cheese, or Mexican cheese blend (4 ounces) and ½ cup finely chopped walnuts, toasted.

AVOCADO-TOMATO SALSA:
In a medium bowl combine 1 ripe yet firm avocado, peeled, pitted, and chopped; 1 cup yellow and/or red cherry tomatoes, quartered; 1 tablespoon lemon juice or lime juice; and 1 fresh jalapeño chile pepper, seeded and chopped.*

CRUNCHY CORN TOPPER:
In a medium bowl combine 1 cup corn chips, slightly crushed, and 1 cup dried corn.

HOTTER-THAN-HECK TOPPER: In a small bowl combine ½ cup sliced pickled jalapeño chile peppers; ½ cup chopped, peeled jicama; and ¼ cup snipped fresh cilantro.

If you like chili with plenty of kick, use two chile peppers. For a chili kids will enjoy, leave the chile peppers out altogether.

DOUBLE-BEAN CHILI

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 9 hours, High 4½ hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

- 1 pound boneless beef top round steak
- 2 14½-ounce cans diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 14-ounce can beef broth
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 or 2 fresh jalapeño or serrano chile peppers, seeded and finely chopped*
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
- 1½ teaspoons dried oregano, crushed
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 15-ounce can pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed and drained
- Lime wedges (optional)
- Dairy sour cream (optional)
- Fresh cilantro or parsley leaves (optional)
- Tortilla chips (optional)

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch pieces. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat, undrained tomatoes, broth, onion, chile peppers, garlic, chili powder, brown sugar, oregano, cumin, and black pepper.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 11 hours or on high-heat setting for 4½ to 5½ hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in pinto beans and black beans. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more. If desired, serve individual servings with lime wedges and sour cream and garnish with cilantro or parsley and tortilla chips.

Per serving: 280 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 42 mg chol., 931 mg sodium, 35 g carbo., 9 g fiber, 28 g pro.

***NOTE:** Because chile peppers contain volatile oils that can burn your skin and eyes, avoid direct contact with them as much as possible. When working with chile peppers, wear plastic or rubber gloves. If your bare hands do touch the peppers, wash your hands and nails well with soap and warm water.

For authentic old-world flavor be sure to use Hungarian paprika and include the caraway seeds.

GOULASH STEW

- 2** pounds boneless beef top round roast
- 3** medium carrots, chopped
- 2** medium potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1½** cups chopped onion
- 1** tablespoon paprika
- 2** cloves garlic, minced
- ½** teaspoon dried marjoram, crushed
- ¼** teaspoon caraway seeds, crushed (optional)
- ¼** teaspoon black pepper
- 1** bay leaf
- 2** 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 2** 14½-ounce cans diced tomatoes, undrained
- 3** tablespoons tomato paste
- ½** cup dairy sour cream

- 1** Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ½-inch cubes. In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine meat, carrots, potatoes, onion, paprika, garlic, marjoram, caraway seeds (if desired), pepper, and bay leaf. Pour broth over all.
- 2** Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
- 3** In a small bowl combine undrained tomatoes and tomato paste; add to slow cooker and stir to combine. If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Cook for 30 minutes more. Discard bay leaf. Top individual servings with sour cream.

Per serving: 330 cal., 7 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 94 mg chol., 873 mg sodium, 26 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 39 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:
6 to 8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

Start this quick-to-assemble recipe before you head out for a busy Saturday at the game or running errands, and supper will be ready and waiting when you return.

BUSY-DAY BEEF-VEGETABLE SOUP

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:
4 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

- 1 pound boneless beef chuck roast
- 3 medium carrots, cut into ½-inch-thick slices
- 2 small potatoes, peeled if desired and cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 14½-ounce cans diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 cup water
- ½ cup loose-pack frozen peas
- Fresh parsley sprigs (optional)

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into bite-size pieces. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat, carrots, potatoes, and onion. Sprinkle with salt and thyme. Add bay leaf. Pour undrained tomatoes and the water over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
- 3 Discard bay leaf. Stir in frozen peas. If desired, garnish with parsley.

Per serving: 269 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 67 mg chol., 746 mg sodium, 29 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 28 g pro.

Unlike most beef-and-potato stews, this version is creamy and shows stew in a new light. Thanks to some cream and a dose of crushed dried thyme, this hearty dish is smooth and has a delicious herbal undertone.

CREAMY BEEF & POTATO STEW

12 ounces boneless beef chuck
1 16-ounce package frozen cut green beans
1 5- to 5½-ounce package dry au gratin potato mix
½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
3 cups water
1½ cups half-and-half or light cream
Finely shredded Parmesan cheese

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ¾-inch pieces. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat, frozen green beans, dry potato mix (including contents of sauce packet), and thyme. Pour the water over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.
- 3 If using high-heat setting, turn to low-heat setting. Stir in half-and-half. Cover and cook for 15 minutes more to heat through. Sprinkle individual servings with Parmesan cheese.

Per serving: 388 cal., 16 g total fat (9 g sat. fat), 86 mg chol., 907 mg sodium, 39 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 27 g pro.

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours;
plus 15 minutes on Low

MAKES:

4 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

You'll want to serve this wonderful stew with crusty Italian bread so you can soak up every drop.

BEEF STEW WITH RED WINE GRAVY

 **30 minutes**

 **COOK:**
Low 12 hours, High 6 hours

 **MAKES:**
6 main-dish servings

 **SLOW COOKER:**
4½ to 6-quart

- 2 pounds boneless beef chuck roast
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons dried Italian seasoning, crushed
1 teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 large onions, cut into thin wedges
8 ounces parsnips, peeled, quartered lengthwise, and halved
8 ounces carrots, quartered lengthwise and halved
8 ounces Jerusalem artichokes, peeled and coarsely chopped
1 cup dry red wine or beef broth
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup beef broth
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup tomato paste
Chopped tomatoes, golden raisins, and/or red wine vinegar or balsamic vinegar (optional)

1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. In a large resealable plastic bag combine flour, Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper. Add meat cubes, a few at a time, shaking to coat meat cubes. In a 12-inch skillet heat 1 tablespoon of the oil over medium-high heat. Brown half of the meat in hot oil, turning to brown evenly. Remove meat from skillet. Brown remaining meat in remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Drain off fat.

2 Meanwhile, in a 4½- to 6-quart slow cooker combine onions, parsnips, carrots, and Jerusalem artichokes. Add meat to slow cooker. Pour wine and broth over all.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 12 to 14 hours or on high-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours. Stir in tomato paste. If desired, sprinkle individual servings with tomatoes, raisins, and/or vinegar.

Per serving: 356 cal., 9 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 90 mg chol., 601 mg sodium, 26 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 35 g pro.

Pork stew meat or boneless lamb are equally as good as beef in this colorful stew. The cooking times are the same for all types of meat.

OLD-FASHIONED BEEF STEW

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
12 ounces beef stew meat cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes
2 tablespoons cooking oil
1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
3 cups cubed potatoes (about 3 medium)
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups loose-pack frozen cut green beans
1 cup loose-pack frozen whole kernel corn
2 medium carrots, sliced
2 cups vegetable juice
1 cup water
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons instant beef bouillon granules
1 teaspoon dried oregano, crushed
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried marjoram, crushed
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
1 bay leaf

1 Place flour in a resealable plastic bag. Add meat cubes, a few at a time, shaking to coat meat cubes. In a large saucepan brown meat in hot oil. Drain off fat.

2 In a $3\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart slow cooker layer browned meat, onion, potatoes, green beans, corn, and carrots. In a medium bowl combine vegetable juice, the water, Worcestershire sauce, bouillon granules, oregano, marjoram, pepper, and bay leaf. Pour over beef and vegetables in slow cooker.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours. Discard bay leaf.

Per serving: 331 cal., 13 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 744 mg sodium, 36 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 18 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes
COOK:
Low 10 hours, High 5 hours
MAMES:
5 main-dish servings
SLOW COOKER:
 $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4-quart

Instant coffee crystals and a trio of spices—cumin, ginger, and allspice—create a rich, brown color and a piquant flavor in this meaty vegetable soup.

ZESTY BEEF SOUP

PREP:

30 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 pound beef stew meat cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 12 ounces tiny new potatoes, halved or quartered
- 4 medium carrots, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes with chili spices, undrained
- 1 14-ounce can beef broth
- 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- 1½ teaspoons instant coffee crystals
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice

1 Place flour in a large resealable plastic bag. Add meat pieces a few at a time, shaking to coat meat pieces. In a large skillet heat 1 tablespoon of the oil over medium-high heat. Brown half of the meat in hot oil, turning to brown evenly. Remove meat from skillet. Brown remaining meat in remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Drain off fat.

2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine potatoes, carrots, and onion. Add meat.

3 In a large bowl stir together undrained tomatoes, broth, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, coffee crystals, cumin, ginger, and allspice. Pour over meat and vegetables.

4 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.

Per serving: 257 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 45 mg chol., 663 mg sodium, 27 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 19 g pro.

Cooking for hours in a slow cooker makes the beef or pork fork-tender. Serve biscuits and a mixed green salad to accompany the stew.

HOMESTYLE BEEF STEW

- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 pound beef or pork stew meat cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 2 cups cubed, peeled potatoes
- 4 medium carrots, sliced
- 2 stalks celery, sliced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons instant beef bouillon granules
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried basil, crushed
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- 2½ cups vegetable juice

- 1 Place flour in a large resealable plastic bag. Add meat pieces a few at a time, shaking to coat meat pieces. In a large skillet heat 1 tablespoon of the oil over medium-high heat. Brown half of the meat in hot oil, turning to brown evenly. Remove meat from skillet. Brown remaining meat in remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Drain off fat.
- 2 Meanwhile, in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker layer potatoes, carrots, celery, and onion. Sprinkle with bouillon granules, garlic, basil, and thyme; add meat. Pour vegetable juice over meat.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4½ hours.

Per serving: 485 cal., 28 g total fat (9 g sat. fat), 77 mg chol., 978 mg sodium, 34 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 25 g pro.

PREP:

35 minutes

COOK:

Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:

4 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

Canned beets and tomatoes as well as convenient coleslaw mix make this full-bodied meal-in-a-bowl super easy.

BEEF & BEET SOUP

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 9 hours, High 4½ hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:

8 to 10 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

5- to 6-quart

2½ pounds beef stew meat cut into ¾- to 1-inch cubes

2 14½-ounce cans diced beets, undrained

2 14-ounce cans beef broth

1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained

1½ cups water

1½ cups chopped onion

½ teaspoon dried dill

¼ teaspoon black pepper

4 cups packaged shredded cabbage with carrot
(coleslaw mix)

½ cup dairy sour cream

1 In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine meat, undrained beets, broth, undrained tomatoes, the water, onion, dill, and pepper.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 11 hours or on high-heat setting for 4½ to 5½ hours.

3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in coleslaw mix. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more. Top individual servings with sour cream.

Per serving: 270 cal., 8 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 89 mg chol., 806 mg sodium, 15 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 33 g pro.

Make your own beef stew meat by cutting beef chuck or shoulder roast into 1-inch pieces.

HEARTY BEEF STEW WITH GREEN BEANS

- 1 pound beef stew meat cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 pound small red potatoes, quartered (about 2 cups)
- 4 medium carrots, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 1 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ -ounce can condensed cream of mushroom or cream of celery soup
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry red wine or water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- 1 envelope regular onion soup mix
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried marjoram or thyme, crushed
- 1 9-ounce package frozen cut green beans, thawed

- 1 In a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat, potatoes, and carrots.
- 2 In a bowl combine mushroom or celery soup, wine, the water, dry onion soup mix, and marjoram or thyme. Pour soup mixture over meat mixture in slow cooker.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
- 4 Stir in thawed green beans. Cover and cook for 10 minutes more.

Per serving: 358 cal., 9 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 70 mg chol., 1,345 mg sodium, 36 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 28 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours plus 10 minutes,
High 4 hours plus 10 minutes

MAKES:
4 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart

If you have leftovers, create another meal by spooning this zesty chili over baked potatoes.

MEXICAN CHILI

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

SERVES:
8 to 10 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 6-quart

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 3 14½-ounce cans Mexican-style stewed tomatoes, undrained, cut up
- 2 15½-ounce cans red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup water
- 1 6-ounce can tomato paste
- 1 4-ounce can diced green chile peppers, undrained
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese (4 ounces)
- ½ cup dairy sour cream
- Fresh cilantro sprigs (optional)

- 1 In a large skillet cook ground beef until brown. Drain off fat.
- 2 Meanwhile, in a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker combine undrained tomatoes, beans, celery, onion, the water, tomato paste, undrained chile peppers, garlic, chili powder, and cumin. Stir in cooked ground beef.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours. Serve with shredded cheddar cheese and sour cream. If desired, garnish with cilantro.

Per serving: 340 cal., 13 g total fat (7 g sat. fat), 56 mg chol., 695 mg sodium, 34 g carbo., 9 g fiber, 25 g pro.

This easy soup, full of beef and beans, is sure to become a popular choice at your dinner table, especially if you top each serving with a generous dollop of sour cream and a few tortilla chips.

BEEFY TACO SOUP

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 15½-ounce can black-eyed peas
- 1 15-ounce can black beans
- 1 15-ounce can chili beans with chili gravy
- 1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
- 1 14½-ounce can Mexican-style stewed tomatoes, undrained
- 1 11-ounce can whole kernel corn with sweet peppers
- 1 1¼-ounce package taco seasoning mix
- Dairy sour cream (optional)
- Tortilla chips (optional)

- 1 In a large skillet cook ground beef until brown; drain off fat.
- 2 Transfer meat to a 3½- to 6-quart slow cooker. Stir in undrained black-eyed peas, undrained black beans, undrained chili beans, undrained garbanzo beans, undrained tomatoes, undrained corn, and taco seasoning mix.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours. If desired, top individual servings with sour cream and tortilla chips.

Per serving: 392 cal., 13 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 41 mg chol., 1,294 mg sodium, 49 g carbo, 12 g fiber, 24 g pro.

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ to 6-quart

This recipe makes a whole mess of chili and freezes well. If you like spicy chili, add more cayenne.

GIDDYUP CHILI

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

10 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

5- to 6-quart

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 1/4 cup chopped green or red sweet pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 2 15-ounce cans dark red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 6-ounce can tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ to ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Shredded cheddar cheese

- 1 In a very large skillet cook ground beef, onion, sweet pepper, and garlic until meat is brown. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine meat mixture, broth, kidney beans, Great Northern beans, undrained tomatoes, tomato paste, mustard, chili powder, cumin, salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
- 4 Top individual servings with cheese.

Per serving: 411 cal., 17 g total fat (8 g sat. fat), 75 mg chol., 827 mg sodium, 34 g carbo., 9 g fiber, 33 g pro.

The exotic flavor of this hearty stew comes from allspice, the berries of the pimiento tree. Allspice, available whole or ground, tastes like a mix of cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves—hence its name.

ALLSPICE MEATBALL STEW

- 2 16-ounce packages frozen cooked Italian-style meatballs, thawed
- 1 14-ounce can beef broth
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon ground allspice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 16-ounce package frozen cut green beans
- 2 14½-ounce cans stewed tomatoes, undrained, cut up

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine thawed meatballs, broth, carrots, Worcestershire sauce, allspice, and cinnamon. Top with frozen green beans (do not stir).
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in undrained tomatoes. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more.

Per serving: 406 cal., 26 g total fat (12 g sat. fat), 73 mg chol., 1,225 mg sodium, 20 g carbo., 7 g fiber, 21 g pro.

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours; plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:

8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

If you could capture the flavor of autumn in a food, this is what it would taste like: hearty, spicy, and earthy. With big chunks of sweet potatoes, this stew even offers the colors of the season.

HEARTY PORK-BEER STEW

PREP:

35 minutes

COOK:

Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:

8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

5- to 6-quart

- 1 pound boneless pork shoulder roast
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 medium parsnips, peeled and cut into ¾-inch-thick slices
- 2 small green apples, cut into wedges
- 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
- 3 cups vegetable broth or chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon-style mustard
- 1½ teaspoons dried thyme, crushed
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 12-ounce can (1½ cups) beer or 1½ cups vegetable broth or chicken broth
- 4 large plum tomatoes, cut up

1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ¾-inch pieces. Lightly coat an unheated large skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat over medium-high heat. Add meat; cook and stir until meat is brown. Set aside.

2 In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine sweet potatoes, parsnips, apples, and onion. Add meat. In a medium bowl whisk together broth, brown sugar, mustard, thyme, garlic, and crushed red pepper. Pour over meat along with the beer.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Stir in tomatoes.

Per serving: 209 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 37 mg chol., 471 mg sodium, 27 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 14 g pro.

This pork stew is served with cheesy cornmeal dumplings. For a fuller flavor, use sharp cheddar.

PORK STEW WITH CORNMEAL DUMPLINGS

- 1 pound boneless pork shoulder roast
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 4 medium carrots, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 12-ounce can (1½ cups) beer or 1½ cups apple juice or apple cider
- ¼ cup quick-cooking tapioca
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese (2 ounces)
- ⅓ cup yellow cornmeal
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 1 beaten egg
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 2 tablespoons shredded cheddar cheese

1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine meat, undrained tomatoes, carrots, potatoes, beer, tapioca, Worcestershire sauce, thyme, garlic, the ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon *black pepper*.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 11 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.

3 For dumplings, in a medium bowl stir together flour, the ½ cup cheddar cheese, the cornmeal, baking powder, the ⅛ teaspoon salt, and a dash *black pepper*. In a small bowl combine beaten egg, milk, and oil. Add to flour mixture; stir with a fork just until combined.

4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir stew; drop dumplings by tablespoonfuls onto stew into 6 mounds. Cover and cook for 50 minutes more (do not lift cover). Sprinkle dumplings with the 2 tablespoons cheddar cheese.

Per serving: 417 cal., 16 g total fat (6 g sat. fat), 100 mg chol., 707 mg sodium, 40 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 23 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 9 hours, High 4 hours;
plus 50 minutes on High

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings
SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

Here's a delicious way to use pork shoulder—one of the best bargains at the meat counter. Often this cut is on special, so take advantage of its value and flavor.

PORK & SWEET POTATO STEW

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:
6 to 8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

- 2 pounds boneless pork shoulder roast
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup dried apples, coarsely chopped
- 1 tablespoon quick-cooking tapioca
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried sage, crushed
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cardamom
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup apple juice or apple cider

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.
 - 2 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker stir together meat, sweet potatoes, onion, dried apples, tapioca, garlic, sage, cardamom, and pepper. Add broth and apple juice or cider and stir to combine.
 - 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
- Per serving:** 377 cal., 11 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 99 mg chol., 507 mg sodium, 35 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 32 g pro.

Select firm tomatillos with tight-fitting, dry husks. Avoid shriveled or bruised ones.

CHILI VERDE

- 1½ pounds boneless pork shoulder roast
1 tablespoon olive oil
12 ounces fresh tomatillos, husked and chopped, or two 11- to 13-ounce cans tomatillos, drained and coarsely chopped
1 15½-ounce can Great Northern beans or one 16-ounce can navy beans, rinsed and drained
1 medium onion, chopped
1 4-ounce can diced green chile peppers, undrained
2 cloves garlic, minced
¾ teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon salt
1 14-ounce can chicken broth
1 cup chopped fresh spinach
2 teaspoons lime juice
Snipped fresh cilantro (optional)
Dairy sour cream (optional)

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ¾-inch pieces. In a large skillet heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat, tomatillos, beans, onion, undrained chile peppers, garlic, cumin, and salt. Pour broth over all.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.
- 4 Stir in spinach and lime juice. If desired, top individual servings with cilantro and sour cream.

Per serving: 300 cal., 11 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 76 mg chol., 606 mg sodium, 21 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 29 g pro.

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

FOR 5- TO 6-QUART

SLOW COOKER:

Increase to 2 pounds pork and brown in an extra-large skillet. Use 1¼ pounds fresh tomatillos or three 11- to 13-ounce cans tomatillos, two 15½-ounce cans Great Northern beans, ¾ cup chopped onion, 3 cloves garlic, 1 teaspoon ground cumin, two 14-ounce cans chicken broth, 2 cups chopped fresh spinach, and 1 tablespoon lime juice. (Do not change the amounts of olive oil, green chile peppers, and salt.) Makes 8 main-dish servings.

Per serving: 348 cal., 11 g total fat

(3 g sat. fat), 77 mg chol., 680 mg sodium, 30 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 32 g pro.

Versatile pork pairs with golden squash in this sage-scented stew. Serve over noodles or rice and set out sliced pears with pecans for dessert.

PORK & WINTER SQUASH STEW

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

2½ pounds boneless pork shoulder roast

Nonstick spray coating

1½ pounds winter squash (such as butternut), peeled, seeded, and cut into 1½- to 2-inch pieces**2 tablespoons** quick-cooking tapioca**1 teaspoon** ground sage**1 10½-ounce can** condensed French onion soup**½ cup** water**3 cups** hot cooked noodles or rice

1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat in 1-inch cubes. Lightly coat an unheated large skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat over medium heat. In hot skillet cook meat, half at a time, until brown. Drain off fat.

2 Place squash in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Sprinkle with tapioca and sage. Add meat. Pour French onion soup and the water over all.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours. Serve over hot cooked noodles or rice.

Per serving: 449 cal., 13 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 150 mg chol., 520 mg sodium, 39 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 43 g pro.

Serve this meat-filled chili at an after-the-game open-house or for a bowl-watching party. Set out an assortment of the toppers so guests can personalize their bowls of chili.

HEARTY PORK CHILI

- 1½ pounds boneless pork shoulder roast
- 2 15-ounce cans black, kidney, and/or garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drained and rinsed
- 2 14½-ounce cans diced tomatoes with onions and garlic, undrained
- 1 10-ounce can chopped tomatoes and green chile peppers, undrained
- 1½ cups chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped green sweet pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano, crushed
- 2 cups vegetable juice or tomato juice

Toppers

(such as shredded Mexican-blend cheese or cheddar cheese, dairy sour cream, thinly sliced green onion, snipped fresh cilantro, thinly sliced jalapeño chile peppers,* and/or sliced pitted ripe olives) (optional)

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine meat, beans, undrained tomatoes, celery, sweet pepper, garlic, chili powder, cumin, and oregano. Stir in vegetable juice.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours. If desired, serve with toppers.

Per serving: 251 cal., 6 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 55 mg chol., 1,126 mg sodium, 28 g carbo., 8 g fiber, 27 g pro.

***NOTE:** Because chile peppers contain volatile oils that can burn your skin and eyes, avoid direct contact with them as much as possible. When working with chile peppers, wear plastic or rubber gloves. If your bare hands do touch the peppers, wash your hands and nails well with soap and warm water.

PREP:

30 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

5- to 6-quart

The Peruvian Rub adds spicy flavor as well as just-right heat to this intriguing stew.

ANDES PORK STEW

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 5-quart

- 1¼ pounds lean boneless pork
- 1 recipe Peruvian Rub
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 14-ounce can beef, chicken, or vegetable broth
- 1 12-ounce can light beer (1½ cups)
- 1 medium sweet potato (about 8 ounces), peeled and cut into chunks
- 2 medium carrots, coarsely chopped
- 8 ounces pearl onions, peeled, or 1 small white onion, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 small turnip or rutabaga (about 6 ounces), cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 stalks celery, cut into ½-inch-thick slices
- 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 1 15-ounce can hominy, rinsed and drained
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh cilantro
- 4 teaspoons lemon juice

1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. Place Peruvian Rub in a resealable plastic bag. Add meat cubes, a few at a time, shaking to coat meat cubes. Coat an unheated large nonstick skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat over medium heat. Brown meat, half at a time, in hot skillet. Transfer meat to a 3½- to 5-quart slow cooker. Add broth, beer, sweet potato, carrots, pearl onions, turnip or rutabaga, celery, and brown sugar. Stir until combined.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Stir in hominy, cilantro, and lemon juice.

PERUVIAN RUB: In a small bowl combine 2 cloves garlic, minced; 1 teaspoon ground cumin; ¾ teaspoon salt; ¾ teaspoon dried oregano, crushed; ½ teaspoon ground ginger; ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper; ¼ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed; and ¼ teaspoon ground allspice.

Per serving: 273 cal., 6 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 52 mg chol., 738 mg sodium, 26 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 24 g pro.

Cabbage, cumin, and hot pepper sauce take traditional split pea soup to new flavor heights.

DUTCH SPLIT PEA SOUP WITH PORK

- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1 pound pork stew meat cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 cup chopped cooked ham (5 ounces)
- 1 medium carrot, sliced
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 1½ cups dry split peas, rinsed and drained
- ½ teaspoon dried sage, crushed
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 bay leaves
- Several dashes bottled hot pepper sauce
- 3 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 2 cups coarsely chopped cabbage
- Snipped fresh chives (optional)

- 1 In an extra-large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat in hot oil. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine browned meat, ham, carrot, onion, split peas, sage, thyme, cumin, bay leaves, and bottled hot pepper sauce. Pour broth over all.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours.
- 4 Add cabbage; cover and cook 30 to 60 minutes more or until cabbage is tender. Discard bay leaves. If desired, sprinkle individual servings with chives.

Per serving: 362 cal., 10 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 65 mg chol., 1,170 mg sodium, 35 g carbo., 14 g fiber, 32 g pro.

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours plus 30 minutes,
High 4 hours plus 30 minutes

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

If your supermarket doesn't routinely carry smoked pork hocks, plan ahead and ask the butcher to order some for you.

CURRIED SPLIT PEA SOUP

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 9 hours, High 4½ hours

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

5- to 6-quart

- 1 pound dry split peas, rinsed and drained
- 1 pound smoked pork hocks or meaty ham bone
- 1½ cups cubed cooked ham (about 8 ounces)
- 1½ cups chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped carrot
- 3 to 4 teaspoons curry powder
- 1 tablespoon dried marjoram, crushed
- 2 bay leaves
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 6 cups water

- 1 In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine split peas, pork hocks, ham, celery, onion, carrot, curry powder, marjoram, bay leaves, and pepper. Stir in the water.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 11 hours or on high-heat setting for 4½ to 5½ hours.
- 3 Discard bay leaves. Remove pork hocks. When pork hocks are cool enough to handle, remove meat from bones; discard bones. Coarsely chop meat. Return meat to soup.

Per serving: 379 cal., 6 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 32 mg chol., 788 mg sodium, 54 g carbo., 22 g fiber, 29 g pro.

To round out a meal featuring this hearty soup, serve popovers and a tossed salad

HAM & LENTIL SOUP

- 1 cup dry brown or yellow lentils
- 4 cups water
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 2 teaspoons instant chicken bouillon granules
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon finely shredded lemon peel
- ¼ to ⅓ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 cups torn fresh spinach leaves
- 1 cup cubed cooked ham (5 ounces)

- 1 Rinse and drain lentils. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine lentils, the water, onion, celery, carrots, bouillon granules, garlic, salt, lemon peel, and cayenne pepper.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.
- 3 Stir in spinach and ham. Serve immediately.

Per serving: 251 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 19 mg chol., 1,238 mg sodium, 36 g carbo., 17 g fiber, 20 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:
4 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Bake some corn muffins to go with this zesty meal-in-a-bowl.

WHITE BEAN-GARLIC SOUP

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 4 hours, High 2 hours

MAKES:

8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

5- to 6-quart

- 3 15- to 16-ounce cans navy beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 14½-ounce cans stewed tomatoes, undrained, cut up
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth with roasted garlic or regular chicken broth
- 2 cups cubed cooked ham (about 10 ounces)
- 1 10¾-ounce can condensed cream of potato soup
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed

- 1 In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine beans, undrained tomatoes, broth, ham, cream of potato soup, garlic, and rosemary.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours.

Per serving: 333 cal., 6 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 24 mg chol., 2,059 mg sodium, 51 g carbo., 10 g fiber, 21 g pro.

Ten minutes of boiling on the range top gives the black-eyed peas a head start on the rest of the soup ingredients and ensures they'll be tender at serving time.

HAM & BLACK-EYED PEA SOUP

4 cups water
12 ounces dry black-eyed peas (2 cups)
2 14-ounce cans reduced-sodium chicken broth
1 cup ham cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces (5 ounces)
4 medium carrots, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick slices
2 stalks celery, sliced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried minced onion
1 teaspoon dried sage, crushed
1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water
1 tablespoon lemon juice

- 1 In a 3-quart saucepan combine the 4 cups water and black-eyed peas; bring to boiling. Boil, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Drain and rinse.
- 2 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine broth, ham, carrots, celery, dried minced onion, sage, thyme, and cayenne pepper. Stir in the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water. Stir in black-eyed peas.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 11 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
- 4 Stir in lemon juice.

Per serving: 131 cal., 2 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 13 mg chol., 654 mg sodium, 20 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 8 g pro.

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 9 hours, High 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

Longtime old-country favorites—sausage, potatoes, and sauerkraut—are stars in this soup.

SAUSAGE-SAUERKRAUT SOUP

PREP:*30 minutes***COOK:***Low 10 hours, High 5 hours***MAKES:***6 main-dish servings***SLOW COOKER:***4- to 5-quart*

- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 14- to 16-ounce can sauerkraut, rinsed and drained
- 12 ounces cooked Polish sausage, chopped
- 1 10½-ounce can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 8 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 2 medium stalks celery, chopped
- 1 medium potato, cut into small cubes
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 2 teaspoons dried dill
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 slices bacon, crisp-cooked, drained, and crumbled (optional)

- 1 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker stir together broth, sauerkraut, Polish sausage, cream of mushroom soup, mushrooms, carrots, celery, potato, onion, vinegar, dill, and pepper.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours.
- 3 If necessary, skim off fat before serving. If desired, sprinkle individual servings with bacon.

Per serving: 295 cal., 20 g total fat (7 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 1,960 mg sodium, 18 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 12 g pro.

This lively soup boasts six seasonings plus Italian sausage. Vary the spiciness by choosing either sweet or hot sausage.

"IT'S ITALIAN" SAUSAGE SOUP

- 1 pound Italian sausage (casings removed if present)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 8-ounce can tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano, crushed
- ½ teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
- ½ teaspoon dried basil, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon fennel seeds, crushed
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- ½ cup dried orzo pasta or finely broken cappellini pasta
- Finely shredded Parmesan cheese (optional)

- 1 In a large skillet combine Italian sausage, onion, and garlic. Cook over medium heat until sausage is brown. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 4½- to 6-quart slow cooker combine carrots and celery. Place sausage mixture on top of vegetables in slow cooker. In a medium bowl combine undrained tomatoes, tomato sauce, oregano, rosemary, basil, thyme, fennel seeds, and bay leaf. Pour over sausage mixture. Pour broth over all.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
- 4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Add pasta; cover and cook for 20 minutes more. Discard bay leaf. If desired, serve with Parmesan cheese.

Per serving: 250 cal., 13 g total fat (5 g sat. fat), 38 mg chol., 923 mg sodium, 17 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 12 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours;
plus 20 minutes on High

MAKES:
8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4½- to 6-quart

Tender lamb dressed up with flavorful spices, dried apricots, and dates adds up to a hearty meal with great taste. Serve it with couscous, a semolina product that's a staple in North African cuisine.

MOROCCAN LAMB & FRUIT STEW

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

- 2 pounds boneless leg of lamb or beef bottom round roast
- ½ to 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- ¾ teaspoon ground turmeric
- ¾ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or cooking oil
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 14-ounce can beef broth
- 2 tablespoons cold water
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 cup pitted dates
- 1 cup dried apricots, halved
- Hot cooked couscous or rice
- ¼ cup slivered almonds, toasted

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1- to 1½-inch pieces. In a shallow bowl combine crushed red pepper, turmeric, ginger, cinnamon, and salt. Sprinkle red pepper mixture evenly over meat. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat, one-third at a time, in the hot oil.
- 2 Transfer meat to a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Add onions and garlic; stir to combine. Pour broth over all.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4½ hours.
- 4 Skim fat from cooking juices. In a small bowl combine cold water and cornstarch; stir into mixture in slow cooker. Add dates and dried apricots; stir to combine. If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Cover and cook about 30 minutes more or until mixture is slightly thickened and bubbly.
- 5 Serve stew over hot cooked couscous. Sprinkle with almonds.

Per serving: 508 cal., 13 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 95 mg chol., 541 mg sodium, 63 g carbo., 7 g fiber, 38 g pro.

Team this lamb-and-bean combo with slices of focaccia or garlic bread.

ITALIAN LAMB SOUP

- 1 pound boneless lamb shoulder
- 2 14-ounce cans beef broth
- 1 15-ounce or 19-ounce can white kidney beans (cannellini beans), rinsed and drained
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ½ cup dry red wine
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups kale or fresh spinach, chopped

1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch pieces. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat, broth, white kidney beans, undrained tomatoes, onion, wine, tomato paste, garlic, Italian seasoning, and salt.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 11 hours or on high-heat setting for 4½ to 5½ hours.

3 If using kale and if using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in kale. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more. If using spinach, stir in just before serving.

Per serving: 202 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 48 mg chol., 879 mg sodium, 19 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 22 g pro.

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 9 hours, High 4½ hours;
plus 30 minutes on High (if using kale)

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

Mango chutney weaves its velvety sweet-sour flavor throughout this thick, brown stew.

NORTH AFRICAN LAMB STEW

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

2¾ pounds boneless lamb shoulder

Nonstick cooking spray

3 medium carrots, thinly sliced

2 stalks celery, sliced

2 cups water

1 9-ounce jar (¾ cup) mango chutney

2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca

2 to 3 cups hot cooked couscous

1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ¾- to 1-inch pieces. Lightly coat an unheated 12-inch skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat over medium heat. Cook meat in hot skillet until light brown. Drain off fat.

2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine carrots and celery. Add meat. In a medium bowl combine the water, chutney, and tapioca; pour over meat and vegetables in slow cooker.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours. Serve over hot cooked couscous.

Per serving: 404 cal., 9 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 131 mg chol., 282 mg sodium, 35 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 45 g pro.

If you prefer, make this first-rate stew with boneless lean beef instead of lamb.

HEARTY LAMB STEW

- 6 cups water
- 2 cups dry navy beans
- 1 pound lean boneless lamb
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1 cup chopped carrot
- 1 cup chopped peeled parsnip
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon dried sage, crushed
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 2 cups chopped fresh spinach

- 1 Rinse beans. In a large saucepan combine the water and beans. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Cover and let stand for 1 hour. Drain and rinse beans.
- 2 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ¾-inch pieces. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.
- 3 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine drained beans, lamb, carrot, parsnip, onion, garlic, salt, rosemary, thyme, sage, and pepper. Pour broth over all.
- 4 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.
- 5 Stir in spinach.

Per serving: 382 cal., 7 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 50 mg chol., 799 mg sodium, 49 g carbo., 18 g fiber, 32 g pro.

- **PREP:**
30 minutes
- **STAND:**
1 hour
- **COOK:**
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours
- **MAKES:**
6 main-dish servings
- **SLOW COOKER:**
3½- or 4-quart

This no-tend recipe is an updated version of traditional Scottish lamb-and-barley soup.

SCOTCH BROTH

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

- 1 pound lean boneless lamb
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil (optional)
- 1 cup dry yellow split peas
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- ½ cup regular barley (not quick-cooking)
- 2 32-ounce cartons (8 cups) chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon dried leaf sage, crushed

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ½-inch pieces. If desired, in a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat; brown meat in hot oil. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine meat, split peas, celery, carrots, onion, and barley. Stir in broth and sage.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.

Per serving: 245 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 46 mg chol., 1,017 mg sodium, 28 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 24 g pro.

This no-tend recipe is an updated version of traditional Scottish lamb-and-barley soup.

SCOTCH BROTH

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

- 1 pound lean boneless lamb
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil (optional)
- 1 cup dry yellow split peas
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- ½ cup regular barley (not quick-cooking)
- 2 32-ounce cartons (8 cups) chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon dried leaf sage, crushed

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ½-inch pieces. If desired, in a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat; brown meat in hot oil. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine meat, split peas, celery, carrots, onion, and barley. Stir in broth and sage.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.

Per serving: 245 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 46 mg chol., 1,017 mg sodium, 28 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 24 g pro.

For an exceptional meal, serve this intriguing stew with hot cooked jasmine rice and pita bread.

INDIAN LAMB STEW

- 2 pounds lean boneless lamb
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 2 cups chopped potatoes
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried plums, coarsely snipped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon finely shredded lemon peel
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons curry powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 1 cup loose-pack frozen peas
- Snipped fresh mint

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ - to 1-inch pieces. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown lamb, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine lamb, potatoes, carrots, onion, dried plums, lemon peel, lemon juice, garlic, curry powder, ginger, salt, and cinnamon. Pour broth over all.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours.
- 4 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn slow cooker off. Stir in frozen peas; let stand for 5 minutes before serving. Sprinkle individual servings with mint.

Per serving: 315 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 97 mg chol., 764 mg sodium, 26 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 35 g pro.

- **PREP:**
20 minutes
- **COOK:**
Low 10 hours, High 5 hours
- **STAND:**
5 minutes
- **MAKES:**
6 main-dish servings
- **SLOW COOKER:**
4- to 5-quart

Barley is a good choice for a slow-cooker stew because it retains its shape and chewy texture during the long cooking.

LAMB & BARLEY STEW WITH MINT

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

4 to 6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1½ pounds lean boneless lamb | 2½ cups chicken broth |
| 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained | 1 medium onion, chopped |
| ½ cup regular barley (not quick-cooking) | ¼ cup dry white wine (optional) |
| 4 cloves garlic, minced | 2 tablespoons snipped fresh dill or
1½ teaspoons dried dill |
| ½ teaspoon salt | ¼ teaspoon black pepper |
| 1 7-ounce jar roasted red sweet peppers,
drained and thinly sliced | ¼ cup snipped fresh mint |
- 1** Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat, broth, undrained tomatoes, onion, barley, wine (if desired), garlic, dried dill (if using), salt, and black pepper.
- 2** Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
- 3** To serve, stir in the fresh dill (if using), roasted peppers, and mint.
- Per serving:** 370 cal., 10 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 113 mg chol., 1,216 mg sodium, 28 g carbo., 7 g fiber, 41 g pro.

The easiest way to crush tapioca is to use a mortar and pestle, or place the tapioca between layers of waxed paper and crush it with a rolling pin.

IRISH STEW

- 1 pound lean boneless lamb
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 2 medium turnips, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 2 medium carrots, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 2 medium onions, cut into thin wedges
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup quick-cooking tapioca, crushed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- 2 14-ounce cans beef broth

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut into 1-inch pieces. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain well.
- 2 In a $3\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart slow cooker combine turnips, carrots, potatoes, onions, tapioca, salt, pepper, and thyme. Stir in meat and broth.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 11 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Per serving: 234 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 49 mg chol., 784 mg sodium, 21 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 19 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 10 hours, High 5 hours

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
 $3\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart

This comforting one-dish meal gets its appealing golden color from carrots, winter squash, apricots, orange peel, and orange juice.

FRUITED SOUTHWESTERN LAMB STEW

PREP:

30 minutes

COOK:

Low 10 hours, High 5 hours

MAKES:

6 to 8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1½ pounds lamb stew meat cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 cups winter squash peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ½ cup dried apricots, snipped
- 1 teaspoon finely shredded orange peel
- ¼ cup orange juice
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons ground ancho chile pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- Toasted pumpkin seeds (optional)

1 In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.

2 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine meat, winter squash, carrots, onion, dried apricots, orange peel, orange juice, cumin, ancho chile pepper, cinnamon, salt, and pepper. Pour broth over all.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours.

4 If desired, sprinkle individual servings with toasted pumpkin seeds.

Per serving: 233 cal., 7 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 75 mg chol., 823 mg sodium, 16 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 25 g pro.

This comforting one-dish meal gets its appealing golden color from carrots, winter squash, apricots, orange peel, and orange juice.

FRUITED SOUTHWESTERN LAMB STEW

PREP:

30 minutes

COOK:

Low 10 hours, High 5 hours

MAKES:

6 to 8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1½ pounds lamb stew meat cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 cups winter squash peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ½ cup dried apricots, snipped
- 1 teaspoon finely shredded orange peel
- ¼ cup orange juice
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons ground ancho chile pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- Toasted pumpkin seeds (optional)

- 1 In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine meat, winter squash, carrots, onion, dried apricots, orange peel, orange juice, cumin, ancho chile pepper, cinnamon, salt, and pepper. Pour broth over all.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours.
- 4 If desired, sprinkle individual servings with toasted pumpkin seeds.

Per serving: 233 cal., 7 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 75 mg chol., 823 mg sodium, 16 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 25 g pro.

If you prefer, substitute skinless, boneless thighs for the chicken breast halves.

CHICKEN-PASTA SOUP

- 1 tablespoon olive oil or cooking oil
- 1½ pounds skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried basil, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 1½ cups dried rotini pasta

- 1 In a 10-inch skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook chicken, half at a time, in hot oil about 2 minutes or until browned (chicken will not be cooked through).
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine celery, carrots, and onion. Arrange chicken over vegetables. Sprinkle with basil and pepper. Pour chicken broth over all.
- 3 Cover and cook on high-heat setting* for 4½ to 5½ hours. Stir in uncooked pasta; cook about 30 minutes more or until tender.

Per serving: 248 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 68 mg chol., 879 mg sodium, 20 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 30 g pro.

***NOTE:** Cook this soup only on the high-heat setting. Our Test Kitchen does not recommend the low-heat setting because the pasta does not cook as well, even if the slow cooker is turned to high when the pasta is added.

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
High 4½ hours plus 30 minutes

MAMES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Stirring in the spinach just before serving gives this home-style soup a fresh-from-the-garden accent.

CHICKEN & GARBANZO BEAN SOUP

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast halves or thighs, cut into bite-size pieces
 - 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
 - 1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drained
 - 2½ cups sliced carrots
 - 1 cup sliced celery
 - 1 large onion, cut into thin wedges
 - ½ cup water
 - 1 teaspoon dried marjoram, crushed
 - 1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
 - ½ teaspoon black pepper
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
 - 1 cup shredded fresh spinach or escarole
- 1 In a large skillet heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Brown chicken in hot oil until no longer pink. Drain off fat.
 - 2 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine chicken, broth, beans, carrots, celery, onion, the water, marjoram, thyme, pepper, and salt.
 - 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
 - 4 Stir in spinach or escarole.

Per serving: 201 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 45 mg chol., 992 mg sodium, 20 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 23 g pro.

Taco seasoning mix provides great south-of-the-border flavor and eliminates the need to measure lots of herbs and spices.

MEXICAN CHICKEN CHOWDER

- 1½ pounds skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 14-ounce can reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 11-ounce can whole kernel corn with sweet peppers
- 1 10¾-ounce can condensed cream of potato soup or one 10¾-ounce can reduced-fat and reduced-sodium condensed cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup water
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- ½ cup chopped celery
- 1 4-ounce can diced green chile peppers, undrained
- ½ of a 1¼-ounce package taco seasoning mix (about 2 tablespoons)
- 1 8-ounce carton dairy sour cream
- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese (2 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh cilantro
- Tortilla chips (optional)

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine chicken, broth, corn, cream of potato soup, the water, onion, celery, undrained chile peppers, and taco seasoning mix.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.
- 3 Stir 1 cup of the hot mixture into sour cream. Stir sour cream mixture into mixture in slow cooker. Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Sprinkle individual servings with cheddar cheese and cilantro. If desired, serve with tortilla chips.

Per serving: 349 cal., 18 g total fat (9 g sat. fat), 121 mg chol., 1,189 mg sodium, 16 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 30 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

STAND:
5 minutes

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Although chicken soup is comforting when you're under the weather, don't wait until you're sick to enjoy this version. Its delightful blend of herbs makes it terrific any time.

HERBED CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 1 hour on High

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 10½-ounce can condensed cream of chicken soup
- 2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
- 2 medium carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 4½-ounce can (drained weight) sliced mushrooms, drained
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon dried sage, crushed
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- ½ of a 16-ounce package frozen homestyle egg noodles (about 3 cups)

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine chicken, cream of chicken soup, celery, carrots, onion, drained mushrooms, garlic, sage, thyme, rosemary, and pepper. Pour broth over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in frozen noodles. Cover and cook for 1 hour more.

Per serving: 241 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 103 mg chol., 1,115 mg sodium, 22 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 20 g pro.

A spoonful of sour cream and a sprinkling of avocado and tortilla chips on each serving helps tame this lively Tex-Mex medley.

CHICKEN TORTILLA SOUP

- 1½ pounds skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
1 10-ounce can diced tomatoes and green chiles, undrained
1 cup loose-pack frozen whole kernel corn
1 medium red sweet pepper, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
2 tablespoons snipped fresh cilantro
1 tablespoon lime juice
Tortilla chips with lime or regular tortilla chips, broken (optional)
Chopped avocado (optional)
Dairy sour cream (optional)

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine chicken, broth, undrained tomatoes and green chiles, frozen corn, sweet pepper, garlic, and cumin.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.
- 3 Stir in cilantro and lime juice. Serve with broken tortilla chips, chopped avocado, and sour cream.

Per serving: 188 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 92 mg chol., 854 mg sodium, 10 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 25 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Reminiscent of chicken pot pie, this satisfying soup is bound to become a favorite with your family.

COCK-A-LEEKY SOUP

PREP:*35 minutes***COOK:***Low 6 hours, High 3 hours***MAKES:***6 main-dish servings***SLOW COOKER:***3½ or 4-quart*

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 6 medium leeks, thinly sliced (2 cups)
- 1 medium carrot, coarsely shredded
- 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ½ teaspoon dried marjoram, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 1 10¾-ounce can condensed cream of onion soup
- 1 cup milk

1 In a large skillet heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Brown chicken, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.

2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine chicken, leeks, carrot, onion, thyme, marjoram, and salt. Stir in broth and cream of onion soup.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.

4 Skim off fat. Stir milk into chicken mixture in slow cooker.

Per serving: 307 cal., 12 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 130 mg chol., 1,119 mg sodium, 14 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 34 g pro.

Leeks and carrots add a fresh-from-the-garden note to the chewy barley and tender chicken.

CHICKEN, BARLEY & LEEK STEW

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 49-ounce can chicken broth
- 1 cup regular barley (not quick-cooking)
- 3 medium leeks, halved lengthwise and sliced
- 2 medium carrots, thinly sliced
- 1½ teaspoons dried basil or Italian seasoning, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon cracked black pepper
- Salt
- Cracked black pepper
- Slivered fresh basil or snipped fresh parsley (optional)

- 1 In a large skillet heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Cook chicken in hot oil until browned, turning to brown evenly.
- 2 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine chicken, broth, barley, leeks, carrots, basil, and the ¼ teaspoon cracked black pepper.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours or until barley is tender. Season to taste with salt and additional cracked black pepper. If desired, garnish with basil or parsley.

Per serving: 253 cal., 7 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 63 mg chol., 1,027 mg sodium, 27 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 21 g pro.

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 4 hours, High 2 hours

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

You'll love the way this soup hits so many flavor buttons—a little heat from the spices, a bit of sweetness from the coconut milk, and some nuttiness from the peanuts. Together the flavors work distinct charm on the vibrant, colorful veggies.

CURRIED CHICKEN SOUP

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours;
plus 15 minutes on High**MAKES:**

8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

- 1½ to 2 pounds skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 3 cups cauliflower florets (1 small head)
- 3 stalks celery, sliced
- 1 medium red or yellow sweet pepper, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 13½-ounce can unsweetened light coconut milk
- 2 medium zucchini or yellow summer squash, halved lengthwise and sliced (2½ cups)
- Chopped peanuts (optional)

- ① In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine chicken, broth, cauliflower, celery, sweet pepper, onion, garlic, curry powder, salt, cumin, and crushed red pepper.
- ② Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ hours.
- ③ If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in coconut milk and zucchini. Cover and cook for 15 to 30 minutes more or until zucchini is tender. If desired, sprinkle individual servings with peanuts.

Per serving: 226 cal., 13 g total fat (9 g sat. fat), 69 mg chol., 654 mg sodium, 8 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 20 g pro.

Add a bit of savory contrast by sprinkling herb-seasoned croutons onto each serving.

CHICKEN FLORENTINE SOUP

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 pounds skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 2 14½-ounce cans diced tomatoes with basil, oregano, and garlic, undrained
- 1 15- to 19-ounce can white kidney beans (cannellini beans), rinsed and drained
- ½ teaspoon finely shredded lemon peel
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups chopped zucchini
- 2 cups chopped fresh spinach

- 1 In a large skillet heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Brown chicken, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine chicken, broth, undrained tomatoes, beans, lemon peel, lemon juice, garlic, Italian seasoning, and salt.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.
- 4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in zucchini. Cover and cook about 15 minutes more or until zucchini is tender. Stir in spinach.

Per serving: 240 cal., 7 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 92 mg chol., 1,168 mg sodium, 18 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 28 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes

Cook:
Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours;
plus 15 minutes on High

Makes:
8 main-dish servings

Slow Cooker:
5- to 6-quart

Canned coconut milk is available in the baking aisle of the supermarket.

MULLIGATAWNY

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 15 minutes on High

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 cups chopped potato
- 1 medium Granny Smith apple, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 1 teaspoon finely shredded lime peel
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1½ teaspoons curry powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- ½ cup purchased unsweetened coconut milk
- ½ cup instant white rice

1 In a large skillet heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Brown chicken, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.

2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine chicken, potato, apple, onion, carrots, lime peel, lime juice, curry powder, and salt. Pour broth over all.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.

4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in coconut milk and uncooked rice. Cover and cook about 15 minutes or until rice is tender.

Per serving: 250 cal., 10 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 62 mg chol., 701 mg sodium, 22 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 18 g pro.

Olives give an unusual flair and grand flavor to this Spanish-inspired chicken stew.

SPANISH CHICKEN STEW

- 1½ pounds skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into 1½-inch pieces
12 ounces red-skinned potatoes, cut into ½-inch-thick wedges
1 medium onion, thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
1 cup chicken broth
1 medium red sweet pepper, cut into ¼-inch-wide strips
⅓ cup small pimiento-stuffed olives, cut up

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine chicken, potatoes, onion, garlic, thyme, salt, and black pepper. Add undrained tomatoes and broth.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in sweet pepper and olives. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more.

Per serving: 288 cal., 7 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 118 mg chol., 856 mg sodium, 24 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 31 g pro.

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 Hours, High 3½ hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:
4 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

One taste lets you in on the surprise—this mild but richly flavored chili contains chicken and white beans.

WHITE SURPRISE CHILI

PREP:
25 minutes

STAND:
1 hour

COOK:
Low 12 hours, High 6 hours

MAKES:
10 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
5- to 6-quart

- 6 cups water
- 1 pound dry Great Northern beans
- 6 cups chicken broth
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 4-ounce cans diced green chile peppers, undrained
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano, crushed
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 6 cups chopped cooked chicken
- Shredded Monterey Jack cheese (optional)
- Sliced green onions (optional)

1 Rinse beans. In a 5- to 6-quart Dutch oven combine the water and beans. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Cover and let stand for 1 hour. Drain and rinse beans.

2 In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine drained beans, broth, onion, garlic, undrained green chile peppers, oregano, cumin, salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper. Stir in cooked chicken.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 12 to 14 hours or on high-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours. If desired, sprinkle individual servings with cheese and green onions.

Per serving: 340 cal., 7 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 76 mg chol., 865 mg sodium, 32 g carbo., 10 g fiber, 35 g pro.

Here's a tasty soup that's brimming with tender noodles and vegetables. Add a few drops of teriyaki or soy sauce for another layer of flavor.

ASIAN CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

6 cups water
2 3-ounce packages chicken-flavored ramen noodles
1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
2 cups chopped cooked chicken (10 ounces)
1 16-ounce package frozen broccoli stir-fry vegetables
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced green onions
Crushed red pepper
Teriyaki sauce or soy sauce

- 1 In a 3½- to 4½-quart slow cooker combine the water, seasoning packets from the ramen noodles (set noodles aside), and ginger. Stir in cooked chicken and frozen vegetables.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in the ramen noodles. Cover and cook for 10 to 15 minutes more or just until noodles are tender. Stir in green onions. Sprinkle individual servings with crushed red pepper and serve with teriyaki sauce.

Per serving: 249 cal., 9 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 42 mg chol., 818 mg sodium, 23 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 19 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours;
plus 10 minutes on High

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 4½-quart

Dress up individual servings of this full-flavored soup with spoonfuls of sour cream on top and tortilla chips on the side.

MEXICAN TURKEY-VEGETABLE SOUP

PREP:
35 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

Makes:
4 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

**FOR A 5- TO 6-QUART
SLOW COOKER:**

Use three 1-pound turkey thighs, 2 cups loose-pack frozen whole kernel corn, 1 large onion, 3 stalks celery, 2 medium carrots, 1 large red sweet pepper, 3 tablespoons tomato paste, 1 teaspoon finely shredded lime peel, 2 tablespoons lime juice, 3 cloves garlic, 2 teaspoons ground ancho chile pepper,* 1½ teaspoons ground cumin,* ½ teaspoon salt, three 14-ounce cans chicken broth, and 2 tablespoons snipped fresh cilantro. Makes 6 or 7 main-dish servings.

Per serving: 319 cal., 10 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 102 mg chol., 1,149 mg sodium, 25 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 34 g pro.

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 1-pound turkey thighs, skinned, boned, and cut into ¾-inch pieces
- 1 cup loose-pack frozen whole kernel corn
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, sliced
- 1 medium carrot, sliced
- 1 small red sweet pepper, chopped
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- ½ teaspoon finely shredded lime peel
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1½ teaspoons ground ancho chile pepper*
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin*
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh cilantro

- 1 In a large skillet heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Brown turkey, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine corn, onion, celery, carrot, sweet pepper, tomato paste, lime peel, lime juice, garlic, ancho chile pepper, cumin, and salt. Arrange turkey over corn mixture; pour broth over.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Stir in cilantro.

Per serving: 299 cal., 11 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 102 mg chol., 1,097 mg sodium, 18 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 33 g pro

***NOTE:** If desired, omit the ground ancho chile pepper and the cumin and add 1 tablespoon chili powder for the 3½- to 4-quart slow cooker or 4½ teaspoons chili powder for the 5- to 6-quart slow cooker.

Cod, orange roughy, halibut, and haddock are all excellent fish choices for this creamy chowder.

CREAMY FISH & POTATO STEW

- 1½ pounds potatoes, peeled and chopped (4 cups)
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 1 12-ounce can tomato juice
- 1½ pounds fresh or frozen firm white fish
- ½ cup half-and-half or light cream
- 1 tablespoon snipped flat-leaf parsley

① In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine potatoes, carrots, onion, tomato paste, thyme, salt, pepper, and bay leaf. Pour broth and tomato juice over all.

② Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours. Discard bay leaf.

③ Thaw fish, if frozen. Cut fish into 1-inch pieces.

④ Mash potato mixture in slow cooker slightly with a potato masher. If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir fish and half-and-half into potato mixture in slow cooker. Cover and cook about 15 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Stir in parsley.

Per Serving: 291 cal., 9 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 74 mg chol., 869 mg sodium, 26 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 26 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 15 minutes on High

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Ginger, jerk seasoning, lime, and garlic turn simple white fish into a tropical delight

CARIBBEAN FISH STEW

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 15 minutes on High

Makes:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

- 2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 large red sweet pepper, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- ½ teaspoon finely shredded lime peel
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 teaspoon Jamaican jerk seasoning
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 pound fresh or frozen firm white fish
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh cilantro

- 1 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine sweet potatoes, sweet pepper, onion, ginger, lime peel, lime juice, jerk seasoning, and garlic. Pour broth and undrained tomatoes over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
- 3 Thaw fish, if frozen. Cut into 1-inch pieces.
- 4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in fish. Cover and cook about 15 minutes more or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Sprinkle individual servings with cilantro.

Per serving: 232 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 45 mg chol., 792 mg sodium, 29 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 17 g pro.

Because this sensational soup serves a crowd, it's ideal for toting to potlucks, church suppers, or family get-togethers.

FISH CHOWDER

- 3 pounds fresh or frozen fish fillets (such as cod, haddock, or orange roughy)
- 2 pounds potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 3 large onions, chopped
- ¾ cup chopped celery
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ¾ teaspoon dried dill
- ¾ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 cups water
- ¾ cup dry vermouth, dry white wine, or water
- 3 cups whipping cream, half-and-half, or light cream
- ½ cup snipped fresh parsley

- 1 Thaw fish, if frozen. Rinse fish; pat dry with paper towels. Cut fish into 2-inch pieces; cover and chill.
- 2 In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine potatoes, onions, celery, butter, bay leaves, salt, dill, and pepper. Stir in the water and vermouth.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ hours.
- 4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Place fish on top of vegetable mixture in slow cooker. Cover and cook for 30 to 45 minutes more or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Discard bay leaves. Using a fork, break fish into bite-size pieces. Stir in cream and parsley.

Per serving: 396 cal., 25 g total fat (15 g sat. fat), 136 mg chol., 680 mg sodium, 17 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 23 g pro.

PREP:
35 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:
12 main-dish servings
SLOW COOKER:
5- to 6-quart

Easy is right! The dry scalloped potato mix makes this wonderful dill-infused salmon chowder as simple as can be.

EASY POTATO & SALMON CHOWDER

PREP:

15 minutes

Cook:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 20 minutes on High

MAMES:

8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 1½ cups loose-pack frozen whole kernel corn
- 3 medium carrots, thinly sliced
- 1½ cups water
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 4.9-ounce package dry scalloped potato mix
- 2 teaspoons dried dill
- 2 cups half-and-half or light cream
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 6-ounce cans skinless, boneless salmon, drained

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine broth, corn, carrots, the water, onion, dry potato mix (including contents of seasoning packet), and dill.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. In a medium bowl whisk together half-and-half and flour. Gradually stir into vegetable mixture in slow cooker. Gently stir in salmon. Cover and cook for 20 to 30 minutes more or until thickened.

Per serving: 269 cal., 10 g total fat (5 g sat. fat), 45 mg chol., 827 mg sodium, 32 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 14 g pro.

Old Bay seafood seasoning originated in the Chesapeake Bay area. You'll find it with the herbs and spices at the supermarket.

SHRIMP BISQUE

- 3 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 large potato, peeled and chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ½ teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 12 ounces fresh or frozen medium shrimp
- ⅔ cup half-and-half or light cream
- Crisp-cooked bacon, crumbled

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine carrots, potato, celery, onion, tomato paste, thyme, Old Bay seasoning, and salt. Stir in broth and undrained tomatoes.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours. Cool slightly.
- 3 Thaw shrimp, if frozen. Peel and devein shrimp; halve shrimp lengthwise. Rinse shrimp; pat dry with paper towels. Transfer one-quarter of the soup mixture to a blender or food processor. Cover and blend or process until smooth. Repeat with remaining soup mixture, one-quarter at a time, until all of the soup is blended.
- 4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Return pureed soup to slow cooker. Stir in shrimp and half-and-half. Cover and cook about 45 minutes more or until shrimp is opaque. Sprinkle individual servings with bacon.

Per serving: 185 cal., 6 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 80 mg chol., 988 mg sodium, 18 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 13 g pro.

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 45 minutes on High

MAKES

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

Andouille sausage is a smoked sausage often used in Cajun cooking. This shrimp dish combines andouille with Cajun seasoning for plenty of zing.

CAJUN SHRIMP SOUP

PREP:

30 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 5 minutes on High

MAMES:

4 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 8 ounces andouille sausage or other cooked smoked sausage, halved lengthwise and cut into ½-inch-thick slices
- 2 14½-ounce cans diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 medium sweet red pepper, chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 stalk celery, sliced
- 1 teaspoon Cajun seasoning
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon bottled hot pepper sauce
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 12 ounces medium fresh or frozen shrimp
- ¾ cup instant white rice
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh parsley

1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine sausage, undrained tomatoes, sweet pepper, onion, celery, Cajun seasoning, garlic, bottled hot pepper sauce, and bay leaf. Pour broth over all.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.

3 Thaw shrimp, if frozen. Peel and devein shrimp. Rinse shrimp; pat dry with paper towels.

4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir shrimp and uncooked rice into mixture in slow cooker. Cover and cook for 5 to 10 minutes more or until shrimp is opaque. Discard bay leaf. Stir in parsley.

Per serving: 294 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 146 mg chol., 1,698 mg sodium, 33 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 28 g pro.

Take the chill off a cold, blustery day with this creamy golden chowder accented with bits of red sweet pepper and bacon.

CORN & CLAM CHOWDER

- 2 6½-ounce cans chopped clams
- 1 8-ounce bottle clam juice
- 2 cups water
- 2 15-ounce cans cream-style corn
- 1 10¾-ounce can condensed cream of onion or cream of celery soup
- 1 10-ounce package frozen whole kernel corn
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ½ cup chopped red sweet pepper
- 1 small fresh jalapeño chile pepper, seeded and finely chopped*
- ½ cup half-and-half or light cream
- 2 slices bacon, crisp-cooked, drained, and crumbled

- 1 Drain clams, reserving juice. Cover and chill clams. In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine reserved clam juice, bottled clam juice, the water, cream-style corn, cream of onion soup, frozen corn, onion, sweet pepper, and chile pepper.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in clams, half-and-half, and bacon. Cover and cook for 10 minutes more.

Per serving: 234 cal., 6 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 37 mg chol., 706 mg sodium, 35 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 15 g pro.

***NOTE:** Because chile peppers contain volatile oils that can burn your skin and eyes, avoid direct contact with them as much as possible. When working with chile peppers, wear plastic or rubber gloves. If your bare hands do touch the peppers, wash your hands and nails well with soap and warm water.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 10 minutes on High

MAKES:
8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

This creamy clam soup with bacon and half-and-half is slightly smoky and extra rich.

POTATO-CLAM CHOWDER

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 3 slices bacon, cut up, or 4 ounces salt pork, diced
- 2 6½-ounce cans minced clams
- 3 medium potatoes (1 pound), peeled and cut into bite-size pieces (3 cups)
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup coarsely shredded carrot
- 1 10¾-ounce can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 cups half-and-half or light cream

- 1 In a skillet cook bacon or salt pork until crisp; drain off fat. Drain clams, reserving liquid; add enough water to clam liquid to measure 1¾ cups total liquid. Cover clams; chill.
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine reserved clam liquid, potatoes, onion, and carrot. Stir in cream of mushroom soup and pepper. Add bacon or salt pork.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
- 4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in clams and half-and-half. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more.

Per serving: 339 cal., 19 g total fat (10 g sat. fat), 76 mg chol., 558 mg sodium, 26 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 17 g pro.

Your taste buds will dance among the sweet, spicy, and savory flavors in this truly unique soup. Apples, raisins, and apple pie spice enhance the olives, tomatoes, and chili.

PICADILLO SOUP

- 2 15-ounce cans chili without beans
- 1 14½-ounce can Mexican-style stewed tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cups water
- 2 large cooking apples, peeled, cored, and coarsely chopped (2¼ cups)
- ½ cup golden raisins
- ½ teaspoon apple pie spice or pumpkin pie spice
- Sliced pitted ripe olives

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine chili, undrained tomatoes, the water, apples, raisins, and spice.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Top individual servings with olives.

Per serving: 377 cal., 22 g total fat (10 g sat. fat), 37 mg chol., 1,040 mg sodium, 31 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 16 g pro.

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

The easy dumplings are the only last-minute preparations. For the rest of the meal, serve a packaged salad and dressing, fresh pineapple, and cookies.

SOUTHWESTERN BEAN STEW

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:
4 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

- 1 15-ounce can red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, pinto beans, or Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 14½-ounce can Mexican-style stewed tomatoes, undrained, cut up
- 1 14-ounce can vegetable broth or chicken broth
- 1 10-ounce package frozen whole kernel corn
- 2 medium carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 large onion, chopped
- ½ cup water
- 1 4-ounce can diced green chile peppers, undrained
- 2 to 3 teaspoons chili powder
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup yellow cornmeal
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- Dash salt
- Dash black pepper
- 1 beaten egg white
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine kidney beans, black beans, undrained tomatoes, broth, corn, carrots, onion, the water, undrained chile peppers, chili powder, and garlic.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
- 3 For dumplings, in a medium bowl stir together flour, cornmeal, baking powder, salt, and black pepper. In a small bowl combine egg white, milk, and oil. Add egg white mixture to flour mixture; stir with a fork just until combined.
- 4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Drop the dumpling mixture by rounded teaspoonfuls to make eight mounds on top of stew. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more (do not lift cover).

Per serving: 396 cal., 6 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 1 mg chol., 1,406 mg sodium, 78 g carbo., 15 g fiber, 22 g pro.

Taste this robust chili and you'll agree that three beans are better than one. Each type has a distinctive flavor and texture, making every spoonful of this meatless meal-in-a-bowl an adventure.

BEAN MEDLEY CHILI

- 1 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can dark red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans (chickpeas), rinsed and drained
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 1 large red sweet pepper, chopped
- 1 large green sweet pepper, chopped
- 3 tablespoons chili powder
- 12 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 canned chipotle chile pepper in adobo sauce, finely chopped*
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 14½-ounce cans diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 14-ounce can chicken broth
- ¼ cup snipped fresh cilantro
- Hot cooked white or brown rice (optional)

1 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine black beans, kidney beans, garbanzo beans, onions, red sweet pepper, green sweet pepper, chili powder, garlic, chipotle chile pepper, cumin, and salt. Add undrained tomatoes and broth.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours. Stir in cilantro. If desired, serve bean mixture with hot cooked rice.

Per serving: 226 cal., 2 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 1 mg chol., 1,081 mg sodium, 46 g carbo., 12 g fiber, 12 g pro.

***NOTE:** Because chile peppers contain volatile oils that can burn your skin and eyes, avoid direct contact with them as much as possible. When working with chile peppers, wear plastic or rubber gloves. If your bare hands do touch the peppers, wash your hands and nails well with soap and warm water.

prep:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

Makes:
8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

Minestrone is Italian for "big soup" and this one is big indeed. It's full of tomatoes, beans, onion, carrot, barley, spinach, and zucchini.

CHUNKY MINESTRONE

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:

8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

- 2 14-ounce cans vegetable broth
- 2 14½-ounce cans diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 15- to 16-ounce can navy beans or one 15- to 19-ounce can white kidney beans (cannellini beans), rinsed and drained
- 1½ cups chopped onion
- ¾ cup water
- 1 large carrot, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced (about ¼ cup)
- ½ cup regular barley
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning, crushed
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 cups shredded fresh spinach
- 1 medium zucchini, quartered lengthwise and sliced (about 1½ cups)
- Salt (optional)
- Black pepper (optional)
- Grated Parmesan cheese

- 1 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine broth, undrained tomatoes, beans, onion, the water, carrot, barley, Italian seasoning, garlic, and the ¼ teaspoon pepper.
 - 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
 - 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in spinach and zucchini. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more. If desired, season with salt and additional pepper. Sprinkle individual servings with Parmesan cheese.
- Per serving:** 174 cal., 1 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 2 mg chol., 877 mg sodium, 32 g carbo., 7 g fiber, 8 g pro.

Kick the flavor of this soup up a notch with a sprinkling of cilantro and a squirt of lime juice.

SOUTHWESTERN PINTO BEAN SOUP

- 2 cups dry pinto beans
- 5 cups cold water
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- ½ cup water
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 14½-ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes, undrained
- Shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- Snipped fresh cilantro
- Lime wedges

- 1 Rinse dry beans. In a Dutch oven combine beans and the 5 cups cold water. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Cover and let stand for 1 hour. Drain and rinse beans.
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine beans, broth, the ½ cup water, the onion, garlic, cumin, and cayenne pepper.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
- 4 Stir in undrained tomatoes; cover and cook for 30 minutes more. If desired, partially mash mixture with a potato masher, leaving soup chunky. Top individual servings with cheese and cilantro. Serve with lime wedges.

Per serving: 309 cal., 5 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 14 mg chol., 772 mg sodium, 46 g carbo., 10 g fiber, 18 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

STAND:
1 hour

COOK:
Low 8 hours plus 30 minutes,
High 4 hours plus 30 minutes

MAKES:
6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

If you think all-vegetable chili tends to be bland, try this one. Tomatoes with green chile peppers punch up the flavor.

TWO-BEAN CHILI

 PREP

15 minutes

 COOK:

Low 9 hours, High 4½ hours

 MAKES:

8 main-dish servings

 SLOW COOKER:

4- or 4½-quart

- 2 15-ounce cans garbanzo beans (chickpeas), rinsed and drained
- 2 15-ounce cans red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 14-ounce cans beef broth
- 2 11-ounce cans whole kernel corn with sweet peppers, drained
- 1 10-ounce can diced tomatoes and green chile peppers, undrained
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 teaspoons chili powder
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper (optional)
- Dairy sour cream (optional)
- Corn chips (optional)

1 In a 4- or 4½-quart slow cooker combine garbanzo beans, kidney beans, broth, corn, undrained tomatoes and green chile peppers, onion, chili powder, garlic, black pepper, and, if desired, crushed red pepper.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4½ to 5 hours. If desired, top individual servings with sour cream. If desired, serve with corn chips.

Per serving: 267 cal., 2 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 1 mg chol., 1,294 mg sodium, 53 g carbo., 14 g fiber, 16 g pro.

A takeoff on the French classic, cassoulet, this stew features a trio of beans simmered with leeks, carrots, celery, and turnips.

VEGETABLE STEW WITH PARMESAN TOAST

- 2 14-ounce cans vegetable broth
- 1 15- to 16-ounce can navy beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15- to 16-ounce can white kidney beans (cannellini beans), rinsed and drained
- 1 15- to 16-ounce can butter beans, rinsed and drained
- 4 medium leeks, sliced
- 4 medium carrots, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick slices
- 4 stalks celery, sliced
- 2 medium turnips, peeled and diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons dried Italian seasoning, crushed
- 2 bay leaves
- $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 teaspoon cracked black pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 16 slices baguette-style French bread
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely shredded Parmesan cheese (2 ounces)
- 1 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes or diced tomatoes, drained

- 1 In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker stir together broth, navy beans, white kidney beans, butter beans, leeks, carrots, celery, turnips, garlic, Italian seasoning, bay leaves, pepper, and salt.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 11 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
- 3 For Parmesan toast, preheat oven to 400°F. Brush baguette slices with olive oil; sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Place on a baking sheet and bake about 7 minutes or until lightly toasted and cheese is melted.
- 4 Discard bay leaves. Stir drained tomatoes into bean mixture in slow cooker. Serve stew in shallow bowls with Parmesan toast.

Per serving: 288 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 4 mg chol., 1,409 mg sodium, 50 g carbo., 10 g fiber, 15 g pro.

PREP:
35 minutes
COOK:
Low 10 hours, High 5 hours
BAKE:
7 minutes
OVEN:
400°F
SERVES:
8 main-dish servings
SLOW COOKER:
5- to 6-quart

This soup tickles the taste buds with the robust elements of southwestern cuisine—jalapeño chile pepper, black beans, cilantro, and chili powder.

VEGGIE SOUTHWEST SOUP

PREP:*30 minutes***COOK:***Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours***MAKES:***8 main-dish servings***SLOW COOKER:***5- to 6-quart*

- 4 14½-ounce cans stewed tomatoes, undrained, cut-up
- 2 15-ounce cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups water
- 1 15¼-ounce can whole kernel corn, drained
- 2 large green sweet peppers, chopped
- 1 fresh jalapeño chile pepper, seeded and finely chopped*
- 1 teaspoon dried cilantro, crushed
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried basil, crushed
- ½ teaspoon chili powder

- 1 In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine undrained tomatoes, beans, the water, corn, sweet peppers, chile pepper, cilantro, garlic powder, black pepper, basil, and chili powder.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.

Per serving: 192 cal., 2 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 715 mg sodium, 39 g carbo., 8 g fiber, 10 g pro.

***NOTE:** Because chile peppers contain volatile oils that can burn your skin and eyes, avoid direct contact with them as much as possible. When working with chile peppers, wear plastic or rubber gloves. If your bare hands do touch the peppers, wash your hands and nails well with soap and warm water.

Sharp cheddar and American cheese team up to make this creamy pleaser extra rich.

BROCCOLI CHEESE SOUP

- 6 cups chopped broccoli stems and florets
- 8 ounces potatoes (2 small), peeled and chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 3 14-ounce cans reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 8 ounces process American cheese, cut into ½-inch cubes
- ½ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese (2 ounces)
- 1 cup half-and-half or light cream

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine broccoli, potatoes, onion, garlic, and cayenne pepper. Pour broth over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.
- 3 Add American cheese and cheddar cheese, stirring until melted; stir in half-and-half.

Per serving: 310 cal., 20 g total fat (13 g sat. fat), 62 mg chol., 1,150 mg sodium, 16 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 18 g pro.

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

MAMES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

With two types of cheese, this sophisticated soup is full of body. For a milder flavor, substitute regular beer for the ale.

CHEESE ALE SOUP

prep:

25 minutes

cook:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

makes:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

- 1½ pounds potatoes, chopped
- 4 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ¼ to ⅓ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 1 cup ale
- 1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese (6 ounces)
- 1 3-ounce package cream cheese, cut up

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine potatoes, carrots, onion, celery, garlic, mustard, thyme, and cayenne pepper. Pour broth and ale over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours.
- 3 Add cheddar cheese and cream cheese; stir until melted.

Per serving: 300 cal., 15 g total fat (9 g sat. fat), 47 mg chol., 830 mg sodium, 28 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 12 g pro.

Even kids will eat their veggies when they're cloaked in a creamy, cheesy bowlful of soup. Serve it with fresh fruit and corn bread.

CHEESY VEGETABLE SOUP

- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped (3 cups)
- 4 carrots, chopped
- 1 16-ounce package frozen whole kernel corn
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cups water
- 1 10½-ounce can condensed cream of chicken soup
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 8 ounces American cheese, cubed

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine potatoes, carrots, frozen corn, and onion. Stir in the water, cream of chicken soup, thyme, and pepper.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours.
- 3 Stir cheese into hot soup until melted.

Per serving: 349 cal., 16 g total fat (8 g sat. fat), 40 mg chol., 968 mg sodium, 41 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 14 g pro.

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

6 to 8 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

There's nothing fancy or surprising about this soup. It's tried and true, and kids of all ages love it.

CHEESY POTATO SOUP

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours plus 1 hour,
High 4 hours plus 30 minutes

MAKES:

6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 6 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped (6 cups)
- 2½ cups water
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons instant chicken bouillon granules
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1½ cups shredded American cheese (6 ounces)
- 1 12-ounce can (1½ cups) evaporated milk

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine potatoes, the water, onion, bouillon granules, and pepper.
 - 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours.
 - 3 Stir American cheese and evaporated milk into potato mixture in slow cooker. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 1 hour more or on high-heat setting for 30 minutes more. If desired, mash potatoes slightly.
- Per serving:** 308 cal., 13 g total fat (8 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 765 mg sodium, 35 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 14 g pro.

Grated fresh ginger, curry powder, and a jalapeño chile pepper deftly season this hearty, meatless soup.

CURRIED LENTIL SOUP

- 2 medium sweet potatoes (about 1 pound), peeled and coarsely chopped
 - 1 cup dry brown or yellow lentils, rinsed and drained
 - 1 medium onion, chopped
 - 1 medium fresh jalapeño chile pepper, seeded and finely chopped*
 - 3 cloves garlic, minced
 - 3 14-ounce cans vegetable broth or chicken broth
 - 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
 - 1 tablespoon curry powder
 - 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- Plain yogurt or dairy sour cream (optional)

- 1 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine sweet potatoes, lentils, onion, jalapeño chile pepper, and garlic. Add broth, undrained tomatoes, curry powder, and ginger.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours. If desired, top individual servings with yogurt or sour cream.

Per serving: 316 cal., 2 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 1,425 mg sodium, 60 g carbo., 18 g fiber, 18 g pro.

***NOTE:** Because chile peppers contain volatile oils that can burn your skin and eyes, avoid direct contact with them as much as possible. When working with chile peppers, wear plastic or rubber gloves. If your bare hands do touch the peppers, wash your hands and nails well with soap and warm water.

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

4 to 6 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

"Provencal" means this stew is typical of the cooking of the Provence region of France. The area's cuisine often features tomatoes and garlic.

PROVENÇAL VEGETABLE STEW

PREP:

30 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

BAKE:

6 minutes

OVEN:

400°F

MAKES:

4 main-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

- 2 baby eggplants or 1 very small eggplant (about 8 ounces)
- 1 large zucchini, quartered lengthwise and cut into ½-inch-thick slices
- 1 large yellow summer squash, quartered lengthwise and cut into ½-inch-thick slices
- 1 15- to 19-ounce can white kidney beans (cannellini beans) or Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon dried rosemary or thyme, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried basil, crushed
- 1½ cups tomato juice
- 1 tablespoon white or regular balsamic vinegar
- 4 ½-inch-thick slices baguette-style French bread
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons finely shredded Romano or Parmesan cheese

- 1 If desired, peel eggplant. Cut eggplant into ¾-inch pieces (you should have about 3 cups).
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine eggplant, zucchini, yellow summer squash, white kidney beans, tomato, garlic, rosemary, pepper, and dried basil (if using). Stir in tomato juice.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours. Stir in fresh basil (if using) and balsamic vinegar.
- 4 Meanwhile, for croutons, preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly brush bread slices with oil. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of the Romano cheese. Place bread slices on baking sheet. Bake for 6 to 8 minutes or until toasted.
- 5 To serve, ladle vegetable mixture into bowls. Top with croutons and sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons Romano cheese.

Per serving: 220 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 3 mg chol., 630 mg sodium, 40 g carbo., 9 g fiber, 12 g pro.

Pair this full-flavored soup with your family's favorite sandwich for a complete meal.

BARLEY-VEGETABLE SOUP

4 cups tomato juice
2½ cups chopped zucchini
2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
1½ cups coarsely chopped yellow and/or red sweet peppers
1 large onion, chopped
½ cup regular barley (not quick-cooking)
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
3 cloves garlic, minced

- 1 In a 3½- to 5-quart slow cooker combine tomato juice, zucchini, chicken broth, sweet peppers, onion, barley, salt, black pepper, and garlic.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours.

Per serving: 88 cal., 1 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 1 mg chol., 803 mg sodium, 19 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 3 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:
8 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 5-quart

Full-flavored cousins of the white mushroom, cremini give this soup a deep, rich woodsy flavor.

MUSHROOM-BARLEY SOUP

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:
8 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

12 ounces cremini or button mushrooms, sliced (about 4 cups)

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup regular barley

2 medium carrots, sliced

1 large onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper

3 14-ounce cans beef broth

1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained

2 cups shredded fresh spinach

1 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine mushrooms, barley, carrots, onion, garlic, thyme, and pepper. Stir in broth and undrained tomatoes.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.

3 Stir in spinach before serving.

Per serving: 96 cal., 1 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 655 mg sodium, 17 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 5 g pro.

Beets, apples, and potatoes combine with delectable results in this creative ginger-and curry-seasoned side dish.

CURRIED APPLE BEET SOUP

2 pounds beets, peeled and chopped
2 medium cooking apples, chopped
1 cup chopped round red potatoes
1 medium onion, chopped
1 tablespoon curry powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
2 cloves garlic, minced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
1 cup apple juice or apple cider
1 8-ounce carton dairy sour cream
Crisp-cooked and crumbled bacon
Dairy sour cream (optional)

- 1 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine beets, apples, potatoes, onion, curry powder, ginger, garlic, and salt. Pour broth and apple juice over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 hours.
- 3 In a small bowl stir together the 8-ounce carton sour cream and about 1 cup of the hot cooking liquid. Stir sour cream mixture into mixture in slow cooker. Top individual servings with crisp-cooked bacon. If desired, serve with additional sour cream.

Per serving: 142 cal., 7 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 15 mg chol., 528 mg sodium, 17 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 4 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours

MAKES:
10 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

Cubes of firm tofu will hold together better than softer versions as they simmer in this soup.

HOT & SOUR SOUP

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:

8 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup bias-sliced carrots
- 1 8-ounce can bamboo shoots, drained
- 1 8-ounce can sliced water chestnuts, drained
- 1 4-ounce can (drained weight) sliced mushrooms, drained
- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar or white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons cold water
- 8 ounces frozen peeled and deveined uncooked shrimp
- 4 ounces refrigerated water-packed firm tofu, drained and cubed
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh parsley or cilantro

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine broth, carrots, drained bamboo shoots, drained water chestnuts, drained mushrooms, vinegar, soy sauce, sugar, and crushed red pepper.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. In a small bowl stir together cornstarch and cold water; stir into broth mixture in slow cooker. Add frozen shrimp and tofu. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more. Sprinkle with parsley.

Per serving: 80 cal., 1 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 44 mg chol., 718 mg sodium, 9 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 7 g pro.

This lively chowder uses the "three sisters" of Native American cooking: corn, beans, and squash.

THREE SISTERS CORN CHOWDER

- 3 large red-skinned potatoes, peeled if desired and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes (about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups loose-pack frozen whole kernel corn
- 1 cup loose-pack frozen baby lima beans
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped fresh Anaheim or poblano chile pepper* or green sweet pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped red sweet pepper
- 1 4-ounce can diced green chile peppers, drained
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 14-ounce cans vegetable broth or chicken broth
- 1 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ -ounce can cream-style corn
- 1 small zucchini, halved lengthwise and sliced
- 1 cup whipping cream

1 In a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker combine potatoes, frozen corn, frozen lima beans, onion, fresh chile pepper, red sweet pepper, canned chile peppers, garlic, and salt. Pour broth over all.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

3 If using low-heat setting, turn cooker to high-heat setting. Stir in cream-style corn and zucchini. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more. Stir in whipping cream.

Per serving: 383 cal., 17 g total fat (9 g sat. fat), 55 mg chol., 1,073 mg sodium, 54 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 10 g pro.

***NOTE:** Because chile peppers contain volatile oils that can burn your skin and eyes, avoid direct contact with them as much as possible. When working with chile peppers, wear plastic or rubber gloves. If your bare hands do touch the peppers, wash your hands and nails well with soap and warm water.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:
6 to 8 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 6-quart

Fit this classic into your schedule by cooking it for as little as 2½ hours or as long as 10 hours.

FRENCH ONION SOUP

PREP:

30 minutes

COOK:

Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

BROIL:

2 minutes

MAKES:

8 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

3 tablespoons butter or margarine

4 to 6 onions, thinly sliced (4 to 6 cups)

1 clove garlic, minced

4½ cups beef broth

1½ teaspoons Worcestershire sauce

¼ teaspoon black pepper

8 1-inch-thick slices French bread

1 cup shredded Swiss or Gruyère cheese (4 ounces)

1 In a large skillet melt butter over medium-low heat. Add onions and garlic; cover and cook about 20 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Transfer onion mixture to a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Add broth, Worcestershire sauce, and pepper.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.

3 Before serving soup, toast bread slices. Preheat broiler. Arrange bread slices on a baking sheet and sprinkle with cheese. Broil 3 to 4 inches from heat for 2 to 3 minutes or until cheese is lightly browned and bubbly.

4 Ladle soup into bowls; top with toast slices.

Per serving: 255 cal., 10 g total fat (6 g sat. fat), 24 mg chol., 876 mg sodium, 31 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 10 g pro.

FOR 5- OR 6-QUART SLOW COOKER:

Use ¼ cup butter or margarine; 6 to 8 thinly sliced onions (6 to 8 cups); 1 clove garlic, minced; 6 cups beef broth; 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce; ¼ teaspoon black pepper; 12 slices 1-inch-thick French bread; and 1½ cups shredded Swiss or Gruyère cheese (6 ounces). Prepare as above, except use a very large skillet to cook onions and garlic. Makes 12 side-dish servings.

Per serving: 250 cal., 10 g total fat (5 g sat. fat), 23 mg chol., 816 mg sodium, 31 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 10 g pro.

The classic potato-and-leek soup is traditionally served chilled but, as this recipe proves, it's also great warm.

WARM VICHYSSOISE

2½ pounds Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
2 cups sliced leeks (about 6 leeks)
1 medium onion, chopped
½ cup water
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
¾ cup half-and-half or milk
Half-and-half or milk (optional)
1 tablespoon snipped fresh chives

- 1** In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine potatoes, broth, leeks, onion, the water, salt, and white pepper.
- 2** Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours. Stir in ¾ cup half-and-half or milk. Cool slightly.
- 3** Transfer about one-third of the soup mixture to a blender or food processor. Cover and blend or process until smooth. Transfer to a large serving bowl. Repeat with remaining soup mixture until all of the soup is blended.
- 4** If desired, thin with additional half-and-half or milk. Serve immediately. Sprinkle individual servings with chives.

Per serving: 138 cal., 3 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 9 mg chol., 490 mg sodium, 25 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 4 g pro.

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:
8 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

Caraway seeds and a horseradish-sour cream topping add distinctive flavor to this fabulous cabbage concoction.

CABBAGE & POTATO SOUP

PREP:**30 minutes****COOK:****Low 6 hours, High 3 hours****MAKES:****6 to 8 side-dish servings****SLOW COOKER:****3½ or 4-quart**

- 1 small head green cabbage, chopped
- 1½ cups chopped round red potatoes
- 1 cup thin bite-size carrot strips
- 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
- 3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 2 tablespoons dry sherry (optional)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon caraway seeds
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- ½ cup half-and-half or light cream
- ½ cup dairy sour cream
- 2 tablespoons prepared horseradish

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine cabbage, potatoes, carrots, onion, tapioca, sherry (if desired), lemon juice, caraway seeds, salt, and pepper. Pour broth over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours. Stir half-and-half into mixture in slow cooker.
- 3 In a small bowl combine sour cream and horseradish. Serve soup with sour cream mixture.

Per serving: 152 cal., 6 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 17 mg chol., 951 mg sodium, 21 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 4 g pro.

Maple syrup complements the naturally sweet potatoes, while bacon gives them a salty, savory edge.

NEW ENGLAND SWEET POTATO SOUP

- 2½** to 3 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
1 medium onion, chopped
¼ cup maple-flavored syrup
1 clove garlic, minced
½ teaspoon dried sage, crushed
¼ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon black pepper
2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
1 cup water
½ cup half-and-half or light cream
5 slices bacon, crisp-cooked and crumbled

- 1** In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine sweet potatoes, onion, maple-flavored syrup, garlic, sage, salt, and pepper. Pour broth and the water over all.
- 2** Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
- 3** Using a potato masher, mash the soup until desired consistency.* Whisk in half-and-half until well mixed. Top individual servings with crumbled bacon.

Per serving: 137 cal., 3 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 10 mg chol., 517 mg sodium, 24 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 4 g pro.

***NOTE:** For a smoother texture, use an immersion blender to puree the soup.

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

10 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

This easy-to-fix soup goes together in almost no time because the pumpkin pie mix already includes seasonings—so there's no need to measure them.

PUMPKIN BISQUE

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 4 hours, High 2 hours

MAKES:

10 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 1 30-ounce can pumpkin pie mix
- 1 15-ounce can pumpkin
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- ½ cup water
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup half-and-half or light cream
- Dairy sour cream (optional)

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine pumpkin pie mix, pumpkin, broth, the water, salt, and pepper.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours. Stir in half-and-half. If desired, top individual servings with sour cream.

Per serving: 144 cal., 4 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 9 mg chol., 578 mg sodium, 27 g carbo., 8 g fiber, 3 g pro.

The bounty here is fresh veggies—tomatoes and your choice of carrots, celery, sweet peppers, fennel, and/or onion. A classic grilled cheese sandwich is the perfect accompaniment.

GARDEN BOUNTY TOMATO SOUP

- 2 pounds plum tomatoes, chopped
- 2 cups finely chopped fresh vegetables
(such as carrots, celery, sweet peppers, fennel, and/or onion)
- 2 14-ounce cans beef broth
- 1 6-ounce can tomato paste
- 1 to 2 teaspoons sugar

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine tomatoes, desired fresh vegetables, broth, tomato paste, and sugar.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.

Per serving: 58 cal., 0 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 407 mg sodium, 11 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 3 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:
8 to 10 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

The splash of cream added before serving helps round out the flavor of this curry-flavored soup.

WINTER SQUASH BISQUE

PREP:*15 minutes***COOK:***Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours***MAKES:***6 side-dish servings***SLOW COOKER:***3½ or 4-quart*

- 2 12-ounce packages frozen cooked winter squash, thawed
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 3 medium cooking apples, peeled, cored, and chopped
- 2 teaspoons curry powder
- ½ cup whipping cream

Dry-roasted, shelled sunflower seeds (optional)

- 1 Place squash in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Stir broth into squash; stir in chopped apples and curry powder.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3½ hours.
- 3 Before serving, stir in whipping cream. If desired, sprinkle individual servings with sunflower seeds.

Per serving: 193 cal., 9 g total fat (5 g sat. fat), 27 mg chol., 561 mg sodium, 28 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 4 g pro.

At your next dinner party, serve this sophisticated blend of winter squash, potato, and corn as the first course.

GOLDEN SQUASH BOWL

- 1½ pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 large potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 8¼- or 8½-ounce can cream-style corn
- 1 cup loose-pack frozen whole kernel corn
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon dried leaf sage, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- ½ cup dairy sour cream
- 3 slices bacon, crisp-cooked and crumbled

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine squash, potato, cream-style corn, frozen corn, onion, garlic, sage, salt, and pepper. Pour broth over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.
- 3 In a small bowl combine sour cream and about ½ cup of hot cooking liquid from the slow cooker. Stir into mixture in slow cooker. Cool slightly.
- 4 Transfer about one-third of the mixture to a blender or food processor. Cover and blend or process until smooth. Transfer to a large serving bowl. Repeat with remaining soup until all of the soup is blended. Sprinkle individual servings with bacon.

Per serving: 130 cal., 4 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 10 mg chol., 633 mg sodium, 21 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 4 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:
8 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER
3½- or 4-quart

If you have an immersion blender, use it to puree the soup mixture in the slow cooker instead of transferring it to a blender or food processor.

CURRIED WINTER VEGETABLE SOUP

PREP:

30 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

8 to 10 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

4 cups chopped, peeled celeriac (2 pounds)

3 cups chopped, peeled butternut squash (1 pound)

2 14-ounce cans chicken broth

1 medium onion, chopped

2 tablespoons dry sherry

1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger

2 teaspoons curry powder

2 cloves garlic, minced

½ cup whipping cream

¼ cup sliced green onions

1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine celeriac, butternut squash, broth, onion, sherry, ginger, curry powder, and garlic.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours. Stir in whipping cream. Cool slightly.

3 Transfer half of the soup mixture to a blender or food processor. Cover and blend or process until smooth. Transfer to a large serving bowl. Repeat with remaining soup mixture. Sprinkle individual servings with green onions.

Per serving: 119 cal., 6 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 22 mg chol., 484 mg sodium, 14 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 3 g pro.

Serve this elegant butternut squash soup as an appetizer. Or team it with turkey or ham sandwiches for a light meal.

THAI WINTER SQUASH SOUP

- 2 pounds butternut squash, peeled and cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pieces
- 2 cups thinly sliced bok choy
- 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
- 1 medium fresh jalapeño chile pepper, seeded and finely chopped*
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon finely shredded lime peel
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 14-ounce cans vegetable broth
- 1 cup unsweetened coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh cilantro
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh basil

1 In a $3\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart slow cooker combine squash, bok choy, onion, chile pepper, lime peel, lime juice, ginger, garlic, and salt. Pour broth over all.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 hours.

3 Stir in coconut milk, cilantro, and basil.

Per serving: 99 cal., 6 g total fat (5 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 557 mg sodium, 12 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 2 g pro.

***NOTE:** Because chile peppers contain volatile oils that can burn your skin and eyes, avoid direct contact with them as much as possible. When working with chile peppers, wear plastic or rubber gloves. If your bare hands do touch the peppers, wash your hands and nails well with soap and warm water.

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours

MAKES:
8 side-dish servings

SLOW COOKER:
 $3\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart

Tart Granny Smith apples are a tasty choice for this creamy soup that's seasoned with an intriguing blend of ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and curry powder.

BUTTERNUT APPLE SOUP

PREP:**25 minutes****COOK:****Low 8 hours, High 4 hours****Makes:****8 side-dish servings****SLOW COOKER:****4- to 5-quart**

- 1 2-pound butternut squash, peeled, halved, seeded, and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 medium cooking apples, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 1 cup apple juice or apple cider
- ½ cup half-and-half or light cream
- Dairy sour cream (optional)
- Green and/or red apple slices (optional)

- 1 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine squash, apples, onion, ginger, curry powder, salt, cinnamon, and cloves. Pour broth and apple juice over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours. Cool slightly.
- 3 Transfer one-third of the soup to a blender. Cover and blend until smooth. Transfer to a large serving bowl. Repeat with remaining soup until all of the soup is blended. Stir half-and-half into blended soup. If desired, top individual servings with sour cream and apple slices.

Per serving: 96 cal., 2 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 7 mg chol., 481 mg sodium, 19 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 2 g pro.

LIGHT
MAIN
DISHES

6

Horseradish is the star in this saucy beef roast. If you prefer even more heat, increase the horseradish to two tablespoons.

SPICY BEEF ROAST

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 10 hours, High 5 hours

MAKES:
10 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 4½-quart

- 1 3½- to 4-pound boneless beef chuck pot roast
- Salt
- Black pepper
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil (optional)
- ½ cup water
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Several dashes bottled hot pepper sauce
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon cold water
- 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish
- ½ teaspoon salt

1 Trim fat from meat. If necessary, cut meat to fit in a 3½- to 4½-quart slow cooker. Sprinkle meat with salt and pepper. If desired, in a large skillet heat oil over medium heat; brown meat in hot oil, turning to brown evenly. Drain off fat. Place meat in slow cooker. In a small bowl combine the ½ cup water, the Worcestershire sauce, tomato paste, garlic, and hot pepper sauce. Pour over meat in cooker.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours.

3 Transfer meat to a serving platter, reserving cooking juices. Cover meat with foil to keep warm.

4 For gravy, strain cooking juices and skim off fat. Transfer strained cooking juices to a medium saucepan. In a small bowl combine cornstarch and the 1 tablespoon cold water; stir into liquid in saucepan. Cook and stir over medium heat until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir for 2 minutes more. Stir in horseradish and the ½ teaspoon salt. Serve gravy with meat.

Per serving: 203 cal., 6 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 94 mg chol., 278 mg sodium, 2 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 34 g pro.

Plum preserves and Marsala add a tantalizing touch of sweetness to this basil-accented, down-home medley of beef and vegetables.

WINE-GLAZED POT ROAST

- 1 3- to 4-pound boneless beef chuck pot roast
- 4 medium potatoes, peeled and cut lengthwise into sixths
- 4 medium carrots, peeled and cut in half lengthwise and crosswise
- 1 rutabaga, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks (about 1 pound)
- 1 medium onion, cut into large wedges
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plum preserves or plum jam
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sweet Marsala
- 2 teaspoons dried basil, crushed
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3 tablespoons cold water

- 1 Trim fat from meat. In a 5- to 7-quart slow cooker combine potatoes, carrots, rutabaga, and onion. Place meat on vegetables. In a small bowl stir together plum preserves, the $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water, the Marsala, basil, garlic salt, and pepper; pour over meat.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 11 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 hours.
- 3 Transfer meat and vegetables to a serving platter, reserving cooking juices. Cover meat with foil to keep warm.
- 4 For gravy, skim fat from cooking juices. In a medium saucepan stir together cornstarch and the 3 tablespoons cold water until smooth; stir into juices in saucepan. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly; cook and stir for 2 minutes more. Serve gravy with meat and vegetables.

Per serving: 375 cal., 6 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 101 mg chol., 268 mg sodium, 37 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 39 g pro.

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 11 hours, High $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours

MAKES:
8 to 10 servings

SLOW COOKER:
5- to 7-quart

Black bean garlic sauce, a staple in Chinese cuisine, gives a rich, exotic flavor to pot roast. Look for the sauce in the supermarket's Asian foods section or in Asian food stores.

ASIAN-STYLE POT ROAST

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 10 hours, High 5 hours;
plus 15 minutes on High

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5½-quart

- 1 2-pound boneless beef chuck pot roast
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1½ cups hot water
- ¼ cup black bean garlic sauce
- 1 teaspoon instant beef bouillon granules
- 1 tablespoon sugar (optional)
- 8 ounces fresh green beans, trimmed
- 1 medium red sweet pepper, cut into thin strips
- ½ of a medium onion, cut into thin strips
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3 tablespoons cold water
- Hot cooked brown rice (optional)

- 1 Trim fat from meat. If necessary, cut meat to fit in a 4- to 5½-quart slow cooker. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat in hot oil, turning to brown evenly. Drain off fat.
- 2 In the slow cooker stir together the 1½ cups water, the black bean garlic sauce, bouillon granules, and, if desired, sugar. Add green beans, sweet pepper, and onion. Place meat on top of vegetables.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours.
- 4 Transfer meat and vegetables to a serving platter, reserving cooking juices; cover meat with foil to keep warm.
- 5 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. For sauce, in a small bowl combine cornstarch and the 3 tablespoons cold water; stir into cooking juices in slow cooker. Cover and cook about 15 minutes more or until sauce is slightly thickened.
- 6 Using 2 forks, separate meat into serving-size pieces. Serve meat with the vegetables, sauce, and, if desired, hot cooked brown rice.

Day cooking: 261 cal., 9 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 89 mg chol., 470 mg sodium, 10 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 34 g pro.

Shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese and light dairy sour cream make great low-fat toppers for this cold-weather favorite.

HEARTY BEEF CHILI

- 1½ pounds beef chuck roast
- 2 cups low-sodium vegetable juice or tomato juice
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 2 15- to 16-ounce cans black beans, red kidney beans, and/or garbanzo beans (chickpeas), rinsed and drained
- 1 14½-ounce can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 medium green sweet peppers, chopped
- 1 10-ounce can diced tomatoes and green chile peppers, undrained
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground chipotle chile pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano, crushed

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. In a 4½- to 6-quart slow cooker combine meat, vegetable juice, onions, beans, undrained no-salt-added tomatoes, sweet peppers, undrained tomatoes and green chile peppers, garlic, ground chipotle chile pepper, cumin, and oregano.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4½ to 5 hours.

Per serving: 226 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 50 mg chol., 467 mg sodium, 27 g carbo., 8 g fiber, 26 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes
COOK:
Low 9 hours, High 4½ hours
MAMES:
8 to 10 servings
SLOW COOKER:
4½- to 6-quart

Chipotle peppers in adobo sauce are doubly delicious. The smoky flavor of the dried jalapeño chiles adds a direct hit of heat, while the adobo sauce produces a slow burn. Together they flavor this chili with a richness that can only be developed during slow cooking.

BEEF & RED BEAN CHILI

PREP:
20 minutes

STAND:
1 hour

COOK:
Low 10 hours, High 5 hours

MAMES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

- 1 cup dry red beans or dry kidney beans
- 2 pounds boneless beef chuck roast
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 14-ounce can beef broth
- 1 or 2 canned chipotle chile peppers in adobo sauce, finely chopped* plus 2 teaspoons adobo sauce
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano, crushed
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes and green chile peppers, undrained
- 1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
- ¼ cup snipped fresh cilantro
- 1 medium red sweet pepper, chopped

1 Rinse beans. Place beans in a large saucepan or Dutch oven. Add enough water to cover by 2 inches. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Cover; let stand for 1 hour.

2 Meanwhile, trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Add half of the meat and the onion; cook until meat is light brown. Transfer to a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Repeat with remaining meat. Add broth, chipotle peppers and adobo sauce, oregano, cumin, and salt to slow cooker. Pour undrained tomatoes and tomato sauce over all; stir to combine. Drain and rinse beans; stir beans into meat mixture in slow cooker.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours. Top individual servings with cilantro and sweet pepper.

Per serving: 278 cal., 6 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 67 mg chol., 708 mg sodium, 23 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 31 g pro.

***NOTE:** Because chile peppers contain volatile oils that can burn your skin and eyes, avoid direct contact with them as much as possible. When working with chile peppers, wear plastic or rubber gloves. If your bare hands do touch the peppers, wash your hands and nails well with soap and warm water.

Barley adds both a chewy texture and a nutty flavor to this stick-to-the-ribs soup. Look for barley next to the rice at your supermarket.

BEEF & BARLEY SOUP

- 12 ounces boneless beef chuck roast
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 4 cups water
- 1 10½-ounce can condensed French onion soup
- 2 medium carrots, shredded
- ½ cup regular barley (not quick cooking)
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme or oregano, crushed
- Salt
- Black pepper

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ½-inch pieces. Lightly coat an unheated large skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat skillet over medium heat. Brown meat in hot skillet; drain off fat.
- 2 In a 3½- to 4½-quart slow cooker combine meat, the water, French onion soup, carrots, barley, and thyme.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Per serving: 252 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 52 mg chol., 684 mg sodium, 29 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 22 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:
4 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 4½-quart

Strong brewed coffee contributes to the fabulous flavor overtones in this steak dish.

SWISS STEAK CAFÉ

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

2 pounds boneless beef round steak,
cut $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick

1 tablespoon cooking oil

3 medium onions, cut into wedges

4 teaspoons quick-cooking tapioca

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 bay leaves

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried oregano, crushed

1 cup strong brewed coffee

1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into serving-size pieces. In a 12-inch skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat pieces on all sides in hot oil (add more oil, if necessary during cooking). Drain off fat.

2 Place onions in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Add meat. Sprinkle with tapioca. Add soy sauce, garlic, bay leaves, and oregano. Pour coffee over all.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.

4 Remove meat and onions to a serving platter. Discard bay leaves. Spoon some of the cooking juices over meat and onions.

Per serving: 256 cal., 9 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 72 mg chol., 399 mg sodium, 6 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 35 g pro.

All it takes is 15 minutes to get the steak and vegetables into a slow cooker, and you're on your way to a great meal.

SO-EASY PEPPER STEAK

- 2 pounds boneless beef round steak, cut $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch thick
- Salt
- Black pepper
- 1 14½-ounce can Italian-style stewed tomatoes, undrained*
- 3 tablespoons Italian-style tomato paste*
- 1 tablespoon quick-cooking tapioca
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 16-ounce package frozen (yellow, green, and red) peppers and onion stir-fry vegetables
- Hot cooked noodles

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 6 serving-size pieces; sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper. Transfer to a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker.
- 2 In a medium bowl stir together undrained stewed tomatoes, tomato paste, tapioca, and Worcestershire sauce; pour over meat in slow cooker. Top with frozen vegetables.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Serve meat, vegetables, and cooking juices over hot cooked noodles.

Per serving: 374 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 114 mg chol., 377 mg sodium, 32 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 39 g pro.

***NOTE:** If you can't find Italian-style stewed tomatoes and tomato paste at your supermarket, buy regular tomato products and add 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning, crushed.

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

Dill mustard adds tremendous flavor to this round steak. Experiment with a different type of mustard, such as a horseradish variety, for a whole new take on the dish.

MUSTARD-SAUDED ROUND STEAK

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 15 minutes on High

MAKES:
4 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

2 pounds boneless beef round steak, cut $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt

2 medium fennel bulbs, trimmed and cut into wedges

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup reduced-sodium beef broth

3 tablespoons dill mustard

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup fat-free half-and-half

1 tablespoon cornstarch

1 Trim fat from meat. Sprinkle both sides of meat with pepper and salt. Cut meat into 4 serving-size pieces. Place fennel in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Arrange meat on top of fennel. In a small bowl combine broth and mustard. Pour over meat.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.

3 Transfer meat and fennel to a serving platter, reserving cooking juices in slow cooker. Cover meat with foil to keep warm.

4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. For sauce, in a small bowl combine half-and-half and cornstarch. Stir into juices in slow cooker. Cover and cook about 15 minutes more or until thickened. Serve sauce with meat and fennel.

Per serving: 237 cal., 7 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 87 mg chol., 438 mg sodium, 7 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 36 g pro.

Dill mustard adds tremendous flavor to this round steak. Experiment with a different type of mustard, such as a horseradish variety, for a whole new take on the dish.

MUSTARD-SAUCE ROUND STEAK

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 15 minutes on High**MAKES:**

4 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

2 pounds boneless beef round steak, cut $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick**½** teaspoon black pepper**¼** teaspoon salt**2** medium fennel bulbs, trimmed and cut into wedges**½** cup reduced-sodium beef broth**3** tablespoons dill mustard**½** cup fat-free half-and-half**1** tablespoon cornstarch

1 Trim fat from meat. Sprinkle both sides of meat with pepper and salt. Cut meat into 4 serving-size pieces. Place fennel in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Arrange meat on top of fennel. In a small bowl combine broth and mustard. Pour over meat.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.

3 Transfer meat and fennel to a serving platter, reserving cooking juices in slow cooker. Cover meat with foil to keep warm.

4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. For sauce, in a small bowl combine half-and-half and cornstarch. Stir into juices in slow cooker. Cover and cook about 15 minutes more or until thickened. Serve sauce with meat and fennel.

Per serving: 237 cal., 7 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 87 mg chol., 438 mg sodium, 7 g carbs., 1 g fiber, 36 g prot.

The sweet-tart blend of vinegar and molasses brings out the flavor of the beef in this stew.

BEEF-MUSHROOM STEW

- 2 pounds boneless beef chuck steak
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons cooking oil
6 medium carrots, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick slices
2 medium onions, chopped
1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cider vinegar
2 tablespoons mild-flavored molasses
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon celery salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground ginger
12 ounces assorted fresh mushrooms
(such as button, shiitake, oyster, and/or brown), halved
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup raisins
Hot cooked noodles, rice, or mashed potatoes (optional)

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. Place flour in a large resealable plastic bag. Add meat cubes, a few at a time, shaking to coat meat cubes. In an extra-large skillet heat 1 tablespoon of the oil over medium-high heat. Brown half of the meat in hot oil. Remove from skillet. Brown remaining meat in remaining 1 tablespoon oil.
- 2 Place carrots and onions in a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker. Add browned meat. In a medium bowl combine undrained tomatoes, cider vinegar, molasses, salt, celery salt, pepper, and ginger; pour over meat.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 hours.
- 4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in mushrooms and raisins. Cover and cook for 1 hour more. If desired, serve over hot cooked noodles, rice, or mashed potatoes.

Per serving: 263 cal., 9 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 67 mg chol., 444 mg sodium, 20 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 27 g pro.

PREP:
40 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours;
plus 1 hour on High

MAMES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

Canned soup makes this stew extra simple. The hardest part is cutting up the meat and mushrooms.

EASY BEEF BURGUNDY

prep:

15 minutes

coo:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

makes:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 1 10¾-ounce can condensed cream of onion soup
 - 1 10¾-ounce can reduced-fat and reduced-sodium condensed cream of mushroom soup
 - ¾ cup Burgundy or other dry red wine
 - 1½ pounds beef stew meat cut into 1-inch cubes
 - 8 ounces fresh mushrooms, quartered (3 cups)
 - 1 medium onion, sliced
 - 6 ounces whole wheat pasta or multigrain pasta, cooked and drained
- 1** In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine cream of onion soup, cream of mushroom soup, and Burgundy. Stir in meat, mushrooms, and onion.
- 2** Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours. Serve over hot cooked pasta.
- Per serving:** 354 cal., 9 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 73 mg chol., 647 mg sodium, 33 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 30 g pro.

A can of your favorite beer is the zesty foundation for this hearty stew. Preshredded cole slaw mix keeps prep quick and simple.

BEEF & CABBAGE STEW

- 1 pound beef stew meat cut into 1-inch pieces
- 4 cups packaged shredded cabbage with carrot (coleslaw mix)
- 3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 1 envelope (1/2 of a 2 1/2-ounce package) dry onion soup mix
- 3 cups water
- 1 12-ounce can beer

- 1 In a 3 1/2- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat and cabbage with carrot. Sprinkle with tapioca and dry onion soup mix. Pour the water and beer over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 1/2 to 4 hours.

Per serving: 242 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 67 mg chol., 476 mg sodium, 19 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 26 g pro.

PREP:
10 minutes
Cook:
Low 7 hours, High 3 1/2 hours
Makes:
4 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3 1/2- or 4-quart

A ragout is a rich, well-seasoned stew. Beans and beef star in this tasty version.

BEEF & BEAN RAGOUT

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MARLS:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 1 pound beef stew meat cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 16-ounce can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can tomato sauce with onion and garlic
- 1 14½-ounce can Italian-style stewed tomatoes, undrained
- ½ of a 28-ounce package (about 4 cups) loose-pack frozen diced hash brown potatoes with onion and peppers

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat, beans, tomato sauce, undrained tomatoes, and frozen potatoes.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.

Per serving: 247 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 45 mg chol., 634 mg sodium, 31 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 23 g pro.

Some dishes always seem to taste better made at home rather than at a restaurant. Beef stew is one. Tangy Worcestershire sauce boosts the oomph in this version.

OLD-TIME BEEF STEW

- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1½ pounds lean beef stew meat cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 medium potatoes, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 4 medium carrots, cut into ¼-inch-thick slices
- ½ of a 16-ounce package (about 2 cups) frozen small whole onions
- 3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 14-ounce cans beef broth

- 1 In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 3½- to 5-quart slow cooker combine potatoes, carrots, and frozen onions. Add meat. Sprinkle with tapioca, Worcestershire sauce, dried thyme (if using), salt, and pepper. Add bay leaves. Pour broth over all.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 11 hours or on high-heat setting for 4½ to 5½ hours.
- 4 Discard bay leaves. Stir in fresh thyme, if using.

Per serving: 310 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 53 mg chol., 593 mg sodium, 27 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 31 g pro.

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 9 hours, High 4½ hours

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 5-quart

With this easy-does-it recipe you can make hearty, old-fashioned beef soup without spending hours working in the kitchen.

VEGETABLE-BEEF SOUP

 **20 minutes**

 **Cook:**
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

 **Makes:**
6 servings

 **SLOW COOKER:**
4- to 5-quart

- 1½ pounds beef stew meat cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 large potato, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1½ cups loose-pack frozen whole kernel corn
- 1 cup loose-pack frozen cut green beans
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 4 cups reduced-sodium beef broth
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

- 1 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine meat, potato, onion, carrots, frozen corn, frozen green beans, and celery. Add broth, chili powder, and pepper; stir to combine.
 - 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
- Per serving:** 239 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 67 mg chol., 394 mg sodium, 21 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 29 g pro.

Cincinnati chili parlors offer chili spooned over spaghetti. This totable version has the consistency of a casserole, and with ziti (thick tube shapes) or gemelli (short twists), it's easily spooned up from the potluck table.

CINCINNATI-STYLE CHILI CASSEROLE

- 2 pounds lean ground beef
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 1 26-ounce jar garlic pasta sauce
- 1 15-ounce can red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- ½ cup water
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 tablespoons semisweet chocolate pieces
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon instant beef bouillon granules
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 pound dried cut ziti or gemelli pasta

- 1 In a 12-inch skillet cook ground beef and onions until meat is brown. Drain off fat. Transfer meat mixture to a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker. Stir in pasta sauce, beans, the water, chili powder, semisweet chocolate pieces, vinegar, cinnamon, bouillon granules, cayenne pepper, and allspice.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
- 3 Cook pasta according to package directions; drain well. Add cooked pasta to meat mixture in slow cooker; toss gently to combine.

Per serving: 257 cal., 7 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 36 mg chol., 277 mg sodium, 33 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 17 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes
COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours
MAKES:
16 servings
SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

Toasting the buns keeps them from getting soggy when the barbecue is added.

DOWN-SOUTH BARBECUE

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 10 hours, High 5 hours

MAKES:

16 sandwiches
(about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup meat mixture
per sandwich)

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

- 1 1½-pound boneless pork shoulder roast
- 1 1½-pound boneless beef chuck pot roast
- 1 6-ounce can tomato paste
- ½ cup no-calorie, heat-stable granulated sugar substitute (Splenda®)
- ¼ cup cider vinegar
- ¼ cup water
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 16 whole grain hamburger buns, split and toasted

1 Trim fat from pork and beef roasts. If necessary, cut roasts to fit into a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Place meat in slow cooker. In a small bowl combine tomato paste, sugar substitute, vinegar, the water, chili powder, Worcestershire sauce, dry mustard, and salt. Pour tomato paste mixture over meat in cooker.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours.

3 Remove meat from slow cooker, reserving sauce. Use 2 forks to shred meat. Stir together shredded meat and reserved sauce in slow cooker. Using a slotted spoon, spoon meat mixture onto buns.

Per sandwich: 241 cal., 7 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 53 mg chol., 430 mg sodium, 23 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 22 g pro.

A savory blend of seeds—anise, fennel, caraway, dill, and celery—creates a crustlike coating for this ultra tender pork roast. Apple juice in the cooking liquid lends a pleasantly subtle sweetness.

SEEDED PORK ROAST

- 1 2½- to 3-pound boneless pork shoulder roast
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons anise seeds, crushed
- 2 teaspoons fennel seeds, crushed
- 2 teaspoons caraway seeds, crushed
- 2 teaspoons dill seeds, crushed
- 2 teaspoons celery seeds, crushed
- ½ cup beef broth
- ⅔ cup apple juice or apple cider
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

- 1 Remove netting, if present, from meat; trim fat from meat. If necessary, cut meat to fit in a 3½- to 5-quart slow cooker. Brush meat with soy sauce. On a large piece of foil combine anise seeds, fennel seeds, caraway seeds, dill seeds, and celery seeds. Roll meat in seeds to coat.
- 2 Place meat in slow cooker. Pour broth and ⅓ cup of the apple juice around meat.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 11 hours or on high-heat setting for 4½ to 5½ hours.
- 4 Transfer meat to a serving platter. Cover meat with foil to keep warm.
- 5 For gravy, strain cooking juices and skim off fat. Transfer juices to a small saucepan. In a small bowl combine remaining ⅓ cup apple juice and the cornstarch; add to juices in saucepan. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir for 2 minutes more. Pass gravy with meat.

Per serving: 220 cal., 9 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 92 mg chol., 285 mg sodium, 5 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 29 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

Cook:
Low 9 hours, High 4½ hours

Makes:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 5-quart

Savory and slightly sweet, this pork roast is a surefire family pleaser.

APPLE PORK ROAST & VEGETABLES

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 10 hours, High 5 hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

- 1 2- to 2½-pound boneless pork shoulder roast
- 3 medium parsnips, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces (2 cups)
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 stalks celery, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 1 6-ounce can or ½ of a 12-ounce can frozen apple juice concentrate (¾ cup), thawed
- ¼ cup water
- 1 teaspoon instant beef bouillon granules
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- Salt
- Black pepper
- 1 large green sweet pepper, cut into 1-inch-wide strips

- 1 Trim fat from meat. If necessary, cut meat to fit into a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. In slow cooker combine parsnips, carrots, and celery. Sprinkle with tapioca. Add apple juice concentrate, the water, bouillon granules, and the ¼ teaspoon black pepper. Place meat on top of vegetables. Sprinkle meat lightly with salt and additional black pepper.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Add sweet pepper strips to slow cooker, stirring into juices. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more.
- 4 To serve, transfer meat and vegetables to a serving platter. Slice meat. Strain cooking juices into a serving bowl. Drizzle some of the cooking juices over the sliced meat; pass the remaining cooking juices.

Per serving: 330 cal., 9 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 98 mg chol., 398 mg sodium, 29 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 31 g pro.

Corn bread sticks or muffins are a tasty accompaniment to this inviting sage- and cardamom-seasoned medley.

SAGE, PORK & SWEET POTATO STEW

- 1½ pounds boneless pork shoulder
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 4 medium sweet potatoes (about 1½ pounds), peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 large onion, cut into thin wedges
- ½ cup dried apples
- 2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon dried sage, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 14-ounce can chicken broth
- 1¼ cups apple juice or apple cider

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown meat, half at a time, in hot oil. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker layer sweet potatoes, onion, and dried apples. Add meat. Sprinkle with tapioca, garlic, sage, cardamom, and pepper. Pour broth and apple juice over all.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.

Per serving: 373 cal., 10 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 74 mg chol., 391 mg sodium, 44 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 25 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes
COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours
MAKES:
6 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

A light, sage-infused sauce makes this stew an elegant evening meal. Ladle it over rice, egg noodles, or fluffy mashed potatoes.

PORK & MUSHROOM STEW

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

5 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

1½ pounds lean boneless pork

Nonstick cooking spray

1 16-ounce package frozen small whole onions, thawed**12 ounces whole mushrooms, quartered****1 10¾-ounce can condensed cream of mushroom soup
with roasted garlic****½ teaspoon ground sage**

1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ¾-inch pieces. Lightly coat an unheated 12-inch skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat skillet over medium heat. Brown meat, half at a time, in hot skillet; drain off fat.

2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat, thawed onions, and mushrooms. In a small bowl combine cream of mushroom soup and sage. Pour over meat and vegetables in slow cooker.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.

Per serving: 271 cal., 9 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 77 mg chol., 481 mg sodium, 15 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 33 g pro.

The flavors of India emerge when you mix lamb, potatoes, and tomatoes with garam masala. You'll find garam masala—an Indian spice mix—at ethnic grocers, and many supermarkets stock it too.

INDIAN-FLAVORED LAMB STEW

- 2 pounds lean boneless lamb
- 1 tablespoon garam masala
- 3 cups chopped peeled potatoes (3 medium)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes with garlic and onion, undrained
- ¼ cup water
- ¾ cup plain yogurt (optional)

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. In a large bowl toss meat with garam masala. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine seasoned meat and potatoes. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Pour undrained tomatoes and the water over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours. If desired, top individual servings with yogurt.

Per serving: 282 cal., 8 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 97 mg chol., 538 mg sodium, 18 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 33 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Green onions sprinkled on just before serving add color and zip.

SAUCY CHICKEN & VEGETABLES

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 2 cups bias-sliced carrots
- 2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 2 to 2½ pounds meaty chicken pieces (breast halves, thighs, and drumsticks)
- 1 8-ounce can tomato sauce
- ½ cup plum jam or plum preserves
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 6-ounce package frozen pea pods, thawed
- 3 cups hot cooked rice
- ¼ cup bias-sliced green onions

- 1 Place carrots in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker; sprinkle with tapioca. Arrange chicken pieces on top of carrots.
- 2 In a small bowl combine tomato sauce, plum jam, vinegar, ginger, and cinnamon. Pour tomato sauce mixture over chicken.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Stir in thawed pea pods.
- 4 Arrange chicken over rice on serving platter. Skim fat from cooking juices; pour cooking juices over chicken. Sprinkle with sliced green onions.

Per serving: 324 cal., 3 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 51 mg chol., 271 mg sodium, 52 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 19 g pro.

Serve the flavorful cooking juices of this exotic chicken dish with a side of hot cooked rice or couscous.

MOROCCAN-SPICED CHICKEN

- 1½ teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 3½ to 4 pounds meaty chicken pieces
(breast halves, thighs, and drumsticks), skinned
- ½ cup chicken broth

1 In a small bowl stir together cumin, salt, cinnamon, coriander, turmeric, and pepper. Sprinkle evenly over chicken; rub in with your fingers. Place chicken in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Pour broth over chicken.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.

Per serving: 230 cal., 9 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 108 mg chol., 567 mg sodium, 1 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 35 g pro.

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

Enjoy the tantalizing mix of citrus juices and chili powder in this homey dish.

LEMON-LIME CHILI CHICKEN

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

MAKES:

6 to 8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 to 3½ pounds meaty chicken pieces (breast halves, thighs, and drumsticks), skinned
- 1 medium zucchini or yellow summer squash, halved lengthwise and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, cut into wedges
- ¼ cup reduced-sodium chicken broth
- ¼ cup lime juice
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

- ❶ In a small bowl stir together chili powder, salt, and pepper. Sprinkle evenly over chicken; rub in with your fingers. Place chicken in a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker. Arrange zucchini and onion over chicken. In a small bowl stir together broth, lime juice, lemon juice, and garlic. Pour over chicken and vegetables.
- ❷ Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours. Transfer chicken and vegetables to a serving platter or serving plates; discard cooking liquid.

Per serving: 156 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 76 mg chol., 525 mg sodium, 6 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 24 g pro.

Spicy red pepper pasta sauce is the flavor of choice for this recipe. If you can't find it, use one of your favorite varieties.

SPICY CHICKEN WITH PEPPERS & OLIVES

- 2½ to 3 pounds meaty chicken pieces (breast halves, thighs, and drumsticks), skinned
- Salt
- Black pepper
- 1 small yellow sweet pepper, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup sliced, pitted ripe olives and/or pimiento-stuffed green olives
- 1 26-ounce jar spicy red pepper pasta sauce
- Hot cooked whole wheat pasta (optional)

1 Place chicken in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Sprinkle lightly with salt and black pepper. Add sweet pepper and olives to slow cooker. Pour pasta sauce over chicken mixture in slow cooker.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours. If desired, serve chicken and sauce over hot cooked pasta.

Per serving: 239 cal., 10 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 77 mg chol., 592 mg sodium, 10 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 27 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Its comforting flavor makes this chowder a welcome choice any night of the week.

NACHO CHEESE CHICKEN CHOWDER

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 4 hours, High 2 hours

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cut into ½-inch pieces

2 14½-ounce cans Mexican-style stewed tomatoes, undrained

1 10¾-ounce can condensed fiesta nacho cheese soup

1 10-ounce package frozen whole kernel corn

½ cup shredded taco cheese or cheddar cheese

1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine chicken, undrained tomatoes, fiesta nacho cheese soup, and corn.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours. Sprinkle individual servings with cheese.

Per serving: 244 cal., 6 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 55 mg chol., 647 mg sodium, 24 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 23 g pro.

Two doses of cheese make this dish extra rich. Four cloves of garlic make the flavors soar.

CHEESY GARLIC CHICKEN

- 2 pounds skinless, boneless chicken breast halves,
cut into 1½-inch pieces
1½ cups cauliflower florets
¾ cup reduced-sodium chicken broth
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
¼ teaspoon salt
1½ cups loose-pack frozen cut green beans
½ of an 8-ounce package reduced-fat cream cheese
(Neufchâtel), cubed
⅔ cup chopped plum tomatoes (2 medium)
½ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
(2 ounces)

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine chicken, cauliflower, broth, garlic, tapioca, and salt.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3½ to 4½ hours or on high-heat setting for 1½ to 2 hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir frozen green beans into chicken mixture in slow cooker. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more.
- 4 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Stir cream cheese into chicken mixture in slow cooker. Cover and let stand for 10 minutes. Remove cover and gently stir until cream cheese is melted and sauce is smooth. Sprinkle individual servings with tomatoes and mozzarella cheese.

Per serving: 283 cal., 8 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 108 mg chol., 393 mg sodium, 10 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 41 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 3½ hours, High 1½ hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

STAND:
10 minutes

SERVES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Apricot and mustard flavors come together in this chicken dish. Soak up the flavorful juices with servings of brown rice.

APRICOT CHICKEN

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAMES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 2½ pounds skinless, boneless chicken thighs
- 2 cups loose-pack frozen small whole onions, thawed
- 4 medium carrots, bias-cut into ½-inch-thick slices
- Salt
- Black pepper
- ½ cup chicken broth
- ⅓ cup low-sugar apricot spread
- 2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca, ground if desired
- 1 to 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- Hot cooked brown rice (optional)

- 1 In an extra large skillet heat oil over medium heat. Brown chicken, half at a time, in hot oil. (Add more oil, if necessary.) Set aside.
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine onions and carrots. Arrange chicken over vegetables. Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper. In a small bowl stir together chicken broth, apricot spread, tapioca, mustard, and allspice. Pour over chicken and vegetables in slow cooker.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours. Serve chicken and vegetables with some of the cooking juices. If desired, serve with hot cooked brown rice.

Per serving: 247 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 113 mg chol., 234 mg sodium, 13 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 29 g pro.

Use a wire whisk to incorporate the sour cream-cornstarch mixture into the cooking liquid and to make the sauce smooth.

SMOKY PAPRIKA CHICKEN THIGHS

1 tablespoon smoked paprika or paprika
1 teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon garlic powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
3 pounds chicken thighs, skinned
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chicken broth
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 8-ounce carton light dairy sour cream
2 tablespoons cornstarch

- 1 In a small bowl stir together paprika, salt, garlic powder, and pepper. Sprinkle evenly over chicken thighs; rub in with your fingers. Place chicken in a 4½- to 5½-quart slow cooker. In another small bowl whisk together chicken broth and tomato paste. Pour over chicken.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours. Transfer chicken to a serving platter, reserving cooking juices in slow cooker. Cover chicken with foil to keep warm.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. For sauce, in a small bowl stir together sour cream and cornstarch; whisk into cooking juices in slow cooker until smooth. Cover and cook about 15 minutes more or until slightly thickened. Spoon sauce over chicken.

Per serving: 164 cal., 6 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 90 mg chol., 439 mg sodium, 5 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 21 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 15 minutes on High

MARIN:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
4½- to 5½-quart

Deep-colored, rich hoisin sauce imparts a sweet-and-spicy flavor to the chicken. Look for hoisin sauce in the Asian food section of the supermarket.

PLUM-SAUDED CHICKEN IN TORTILLAS

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 4 hours, High 2 hours

MAKES:
6 servings

OVEN:
350°F

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

- 1 30-ounce can whole unpitted purple plums, drained
- 1 cup hot-style vegetable juice
- ¼ cup hoisin sauce
- 4½ teaspoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon five-spice powder*
- ⅛ to ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1¼ pounds skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into bite-size strips
- 6 7- to 8-inch flour tortillas, warmed**
- 2 cups packaged shredded broccoli (broccoli slaw mix) or packaged shredded cabbage with carrot (coleslaw mix)

1 Remove pits from drained plums. Place plums in a blender or food processor. Cover and blend or process until smooth. Transfer plums to a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Stir in vegetable juice, hoisin sauce, tapioca, ginger, salt, five-spice powder, and cayenne pepper. Stir chicken into plum mixture in slow cooker.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours. Remove chicken from slow cooker, reserving cooking juices.

3 Spoon about ⅓ cup of the chicken mixture onto each warm tortilla just below the center. Drizzle with some of the reserved juices. Top each with ⅓ cup of the shredded broccoli. Roll up tortillas.

Per serving: 331 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 55 mg chol., 575 mg sodium, 47 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 26 g pro.

***NOTE:** You can use Homemade Five-Spice Powder (see recipe on page 73) or purchased five-spice powder.

****NOTE:** To warm tortillas, preheat oven to 350°F. Wrap tortillas tightly in foil. Heat in the oven about 10 minutes or until heated through.

You can count on basic old favorites, such as this chicken soup, to please again and again. The thyme lends an aromatic, fresh-from-the-garden quality.

CHUNKY CHICKEN-VEGETABLE SOUP

- 1½ pounds skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into ½- to ¾-inch pieces
- 1 20-ounce package refrigerated diced potatoes with onions
- 1 16-ounce package loose-pack frozen broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots
- 2 14-ounce cans reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1¾ cups water
- 1 10¾-ounce can reduced-fat and reduced-sodium condensed cream of chicken soup
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed

- 1 In a 4½- to 6-quart slow cooker combine chicken, potatoes, frozen vegetables, broth, the water, cream of chicken soup, and thyme.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.

Per serving: 201 cal., 3 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 60 mg chol., 662 mg sodium, 22 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 19 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
4½- to 6-quart

Slices of mushrooms, slivers of bok choy, and chunks of turkey mingle in a soy- and ginger-scented broth, creating a savory soup with stir-fry flavors.

ASIAN TURKEY & RICE SOUP

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours;
plus 10 minutes on High

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

- 1 pound turkey breast tenderloin or skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms (such as shiitake or button)
- 2 14-ounce cans reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1½ cups water
- 2 medium carrots, cut into thin bite-size strips
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1½ cups sliced bok choy
- 1 cup instant brown rice

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine turkey, mushrooms, broth, the water, carrots, onion, soy sauce, ginger, and garlic.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in bok choy and uncooked brown rice. Cover and cook for 10 to 15 minutes more or until rice is tender.

Per serving: 166 cal., 2 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 45 mg chol., 572 mg sodium, 15 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 22 g pro.

A down-home favorite goes uptown. Here smoked salmon and dill add a gourmet touch to creamed turkey and mushrooms.

CREAMED TURKEY & SMOKED SALMON

2 pounds turkey breast tenderloins, cut into 1-inch pieces
8 ounces fresh mushrooms, quartered
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water
1 teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried dill, crushed
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fat-free half-and-half
2 tablespoons cornstarch
4 ounces smoked salmon (not lox-style), skinned and flaked
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced green onions

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine turkey and mushrooms. Stir in the water, salt, dill, and pepper.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3½ hours or on high-heat setting for 1½ hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. In a small bowl combine half-and-half and cornstarch. Stir into turkey mixture in slow cooker. Cover and cook for 15 minutes more. Stir in smoked salmon and green onions.

Per serving: 227 cal., 2 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 104 mg chol., 628 mg sodium, 7 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 42 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 3½ hours, High 1½ hours;
plus 15 minutes on High

MARLS:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Serve these saucy vegetables and turkey with a side of nutritionally rich baked sweet potatoes.

CREAMY TARRAGON TURKEY

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours;
plus 15 minutes on High

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 2 medium fennel bulbs, cored and cut into thin wedges (2 cups)
- 1 large onion, cut into thin wedges
- 3 turkey breast tenderloins (about 2½ pounds total)
- ½ cup reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon Dijon-style mustard
- ½ teaspoon dried tarragon, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ cup fat-free half-and-half
- 4 teaspoons cornstarch
- 2 ounces goat cheese (*chèvre*), crumbled (½ cup)
- ¼ cup snipped fresh parsley

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine fennel and onion. Add turkey. In a small bowl combine broth, mustard, tarragon, salt, and pepper. Pour over turkey in slow cooker.
 - 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.
 - 3 Transfer turkey to a serving platter, reserving fennel mixture in slow cooker. Cover turkey with foil to keep warm.
 - 4 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. In a small bowl combine half-and-half and cornstarch. Stir into fennel mixture in slow cooker. Cover and cook about 15 minutes more or until thickened.
 - 5 To serve, cut turkey into serving-size pieces. Spoon fennel mixture over turkey pieces. Sprinkle with goat cheese and parsley.
- Per serving:** 258 cal., 5 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 106 mg chol., 347 mg sodium, 8 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 43 g pro.

The punch of cranberries joins the kick of chili sauce for a knockout combination.

CRANBERRY-SAUDED TURKEY THIGHS

- 1 16-ounce can jellied cranberry sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup bottled chili sauce
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 pounds turkey thighs (2 or 3 thighs), skinned

- 1 In a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart slow cooker combine cranberry sauce, chili sauce, vinegar, and pumpkin pie spice. Place turkey thighs, meaty sides down, on sauce mixture.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 9 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 hours.
- 3 Transfer turkey to a serving dish. Skim fat from cooking juices. Serve cooking juices with turkey.

Per serving: 388 cal., 5 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 145 mg chol., 300 mg sodium, 46 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 37 g pro.

PREP:
10 minutes

COOK:
Low 9 hours, High 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours

MAKES:
4 to 6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart

Instead of ordering out, declare clam chowder a Friday night tradition at your house. Fragrant dill gives this mild version a dash of color. Serve the chowder in warm bowls.

CREAMY CLAM CHOWDER

PREP:
10 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 15 minutes on High

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

- 3 6½-ounce cans minced clams
- 3 cups chopped, peeled potatoes (3 medium)
- 1 10¾-ounce can condensed cream of onion soup
- ½ teaspoon dried dill
- 2 to 3 cups fat-free half-and-half

- 1 Drain clams, reserving liquid. Cover clams and refrigerate until needed. If necessary, add water to reserved clam liquid to measure 1¾ cups total liquid.
 - 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine clam liquid and potatoes. Stir in cream of onion soup and dill. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
 - 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in clams and enough of the half-and-half to make desired consistency. Cover and cook about 15 minutes more or until heated through.
- Per serving:** 280 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 68 mg chol., 547 mg sodium, 28 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 28 g pro.

*Red, white, and black beans make this meatless chili both colorful and tasty.
A drizzle of chocolate adds an exotic note.*

THREE-BEAN VEGETARIAN CHILI

- 1 15-ounce can no-salt-added red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can small white beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can low-sodium black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes and green chile peppers, undrained
- 1 cup beer or chicken broth
- 3 tablespoons chocolate-flavored syrup
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 2 teaspoons salt-free Cajun seasoning
- Fat-free or light dairy sour cream (optional)

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine kidney beans, white beans, black beans, undrained tomatoes and green chile peppers, beer or broth, chocolate-flavored syrup, chili powder, and Cajun seasoning.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours. If desired, top individual servings with sour cream.

Per serving: 309 cal., 1 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 625 mg sodium, 59 g carbo., 19 g fiber, 20 g pro.

 15 minutes

 Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

 MAKES:
4 servings

 SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

Goulash is typically a meaty dish well-seasoned with paprika and served with noodles. This caraway-accented variation skips the meat.

MUSHROOM GOULASH

prep:

25 minutes

cooR:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- | | |
|----|---|
| 16 | ounces fresh baby portobello mushrooms, sliced |
| 1 | tablespoon dried minced onion |
| 3 | cloves garlic, minced |
| 1 | 14½-ounce can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained |
| 1 | 14-ounce can vegetable broth |
| 1 | 6-ounce can no-salt added tomato paste |
| 2 | tablespoons paprika |
| 1 | teaspoon dried oregano, crushed |
| 1 | teaspoon caraway seeds |
| ¼ | teaspoon salt |
| ¼ | teaspoon black pepper |
| ½ | cup light dairy sour cream |
| 8 | ounces dried egg noodles |

1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine mushrooms, dried minced onion, and garlic. Stir in undrained tomatoes, broth, tomato paste, paprika, oregano, caraway seeds, salt, and pepper.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours.

3 Cook noodles according to package directions; drain well. To serve, stir sour cream into mushroom mixture in slow cooker. Spoon over hot cooked noodles.

Per serving: 251 cal., 5 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 443 mg sodium, 43 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 12 g pro.

Tofu is the main protein source in this meatless main dish. It's a good recipe for introducing your family to this healthful ingredient.

NOODLE CASSEROLE

- 2½ cups water
1 10½-ounce can reduced-fat and reduced-sodium condensed cream of mushroom soup
1 14½-ounce can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained
2 stalks celery, sliced
2 medium carrots, sliced
1 large onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1½ teaspoons dried Italian seasoning, crushed
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
8 ounces dried extra-wide noodles
1 16-ounce package extra-firm tofu (fresh bean curd), drained, if necessary, and cubed
½ cup shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese (2 ounces)

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker whisk together the water and cream of mushroom soup until combined. Add undrained tomatoes, celery, carrots, onion, garlic, Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper; stir to combine.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in uncooked noodles; cover and cook for 20 to 30 minutes more or until noodles are tender, stirring once halfway through cooking.
- 4 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Gently stir tofu cubes into mixture in slow cooker. Sprinkle with cheese. Cover and let stand until cheese is melted.

Per serving: 316 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 44 mg chol., 447 mg sodium, 42 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 17 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours;
plus 20 minutes on High

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

The blend of spices in garam masala can include cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, coriander, cumin, cardamom, black pepper, dried chile peppers, fennel, and mace.

SPICED SQUASH & LENTIL SOUP

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

5 or 6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

2½ cups coarsely chopped butternut squash

1 cup brown lentils, rinsed and drained

1 medium onion, chopped

1 medium carrot, chopped

1 stalk celery, chopped

1 teaspoon garam masala

2 cloves garlic, minced

4 cups chicken broth or vegetable broth

1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine squash, lentils, onion, carrot, and celery. Sprinkle with garam masala and garlic. Pour broth over all.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours.

Per serving: 199 cal., 2 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 639 mg sodium, 31 g carbo., 13 g fiber, 16 g pro.

5-INGREDIENT MAIN DISHES

7

Sassy and lively, just like the classic cocktail, this easy-fixing steak is sensational served with torn greens and steamed yellow summer squash.

BLOODY MARY STEAK

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

2½- to 3½-quart

2 pounds beef round steak, cut ¾ inch thick

Nonstick cooking spray

¾ cup hot-style tomato juice

2 cloves garlic, minced

¼ cup water

4 teaspoons cornstarch

2 tablespoons cold water

2 teaspoons prepared horseradish

1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 6 serving-size pieces. Lightly coat an unheated large skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat skillet over medium-high heat. Add meat; cook until brown, turning once. Place meat in a 2½- to 3½-quart slow cooker. Add tomato juice, garlic, and the ¼ cup water.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours.

3 Transfer meat to a serving platter, reserving cooking juices. If desired, slice meat. Cover meat and keep warm.

4 For gravy, pour cooking juices into a glass measuring cup; skim off fat. Measure juices; add water if necessary to measure 1½ cups total liquid. In a small saucepan combine cornstarch and the 2 tablespoons cold water; stir in cooking juices. Cook and stir over medium heat until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir for 2 minutes more. Stir in horseradish. Season to taste with *salt* and *black pepper*. Serve meat with gravy.

Per serving: 196 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 85 mg chol., 292 mg sodium, 3 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 35 g pro.

COUNT FIVE

In calculating the five ingredients for each recipe in this chapter, the following items were not counted:

- Water
- Nonstick cooking spray
- Items listed as optional
- Salt and black pepper

When the weather forecast is wicked, hole up at home with board games and thick socks, and put this dish in the slow cooker.

EASY BEEF STROGANOFF

- 2 pounds boneless beef round steak
- 2 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ -ounce cans condensed golden mushroom soup
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 1 8-ounce container dairy sour cream chive dip
- 3 cups hot cooked noodles

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes. In a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart slow cooker stir together meat, golden mushroom soup, and onion.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
- 3 Stir in sour cream chive dip. Serve over hot cooked noodles.

Per serving: 450 cal., 16 g total fat (7 g sat. fat), 131 mg chol., 1,155 mg sodium, 33 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 42 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart

Plan this Irish classic for St. Patrick's Day or any time you're in the mood for a bit of the green (though the beef itself sports a purple hue). Enjoy it with a mug of cold beer.

CORNED BEEF & CABBAGE

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 10 hours, High 5 hours

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
5- to 6-quart

- 1 3- to 4-pound corned beef brisket with spice packet
- $\frac{1}{2}$ of a small head cabbage, cut into 3 wedges
- 4 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 medium yellow potatoes, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, quartered
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water

- 1 Trim fat from meat. If necessary, cut meat to fit in a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Sprinkle spices from packet evenly over meat; rub in with your fingers. Place cabbage, carrots, potatoes, and onion in the slow cooker. Pour the water over vegetables. Top with meat.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours.
- 3 Transfer meat to a cutting board. Thinly slice meat across the grain. Serve vegetables using a slotted spoon.

Per serving: 458 cal., 27 g total fat (7 g sat. fat), 115 mg chol., 1,557 mg sodium, 16 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 35 g pro.

Here's a decadent party-pleaser that's easy on the hosts. Those who love Reubens will applaud you.

REUBENS FROM A CROCK

- 1 2- to 3-pound corned beef brisket with spice packet
- 1 16-ounce jar sauerkraut, drained
- ½ cup bottled Thousand Island salad dressing
- 16 slices rye swirl bread, toasted
- 8 ounces Swiss cheese, sliced
- Bottled Thousand Island salad dressing (optional)

1 Trim fat from meat. If necessary, cut meat to fit in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Place meat in slow cooker. Sprinkle spices from packet evenly over meat; rub in with your fingers. Spread sauerkraut over meat. Drizzle the ½ cup salad dressing over all.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 3 hours.

3 Transfer meat to a cutting board. Thinly slice meat across the grain. Return sliced meat to the slow cooker and stir to combine with the cooking juices. Using a slotted spoon, spoon meat mixture onto 8 slices of the toasted bread. Top with cheese. If desired, top with additional salad dressing. Top with remaining bread.

Per sandwich: 564 cal., 34 g total fat (10 g sat. fat), 89 mg chol., 2,101 mg sodium, 35 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 29 g pro.

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 4 hours, High 2 hours

MAKES:

8 sandwiches

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

Plum sauce, rice vinegar, and grated fresh ginger are your passports to this exotic dish. A side dish of steamed rice absorbs the extra sauce.

ASIAN BEEF SHORT RIBS

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

3 pounds boneless beef short ribs**1** 7.6-ounce jar plum sauce**⅔** cup ketchup**1** tablespoon rice vinegar**2** teaspoons grated fresh ginger

- 1 In a large nonstick skillet cook ribs over medium-high heat until browned, turning to brown evenly.
 - 2 Place ribs in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. In a medium bowl stir together plum sauce, ketchup, rice vinegar, and ginger. Pour over ribs.
 - 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
 - 4 Using a slotted spoon, transfer ribs to a serving platter. Skim fat from cooking juices; spoon some of the cooking juices over the ribs.
- Per serving:** 245 cal., 8 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 53 mg chol., 538 mg sodium, 25 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 18 g pro.

Here's a stick-to-your ribs meal with a nifty twist. Bottled plum or hoisin sauce and beef gravy make a delectable sauce for the meat and vegetables.

SIMPLE SHORT RIB STEW

Nonstick cooking spray

- 2 pounds boneless beef short ribs, trimmed and cut into 1½-inch pieces
- 1 pound tiny new potatoes, halved
- 5 carrots, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 12-ounce jar beef gravy
- ½ cup bottled plum sauce or hoisin sauce

1 Lightly coat an unheated 12-inch skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat over medium heat. In hot skillet cook ribs, half at a time, until brown. Drain off fat.

2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine potatoes and carrots. Arrange ribs on top of vegetables. In a medium bowl stir together beef gravy and plum sauce; pour over ribs and vegetables in slow cooker.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Before serving, skim fat from surface of stew.

Per serving: 621 cal., 26 g total fat (11 g sat. fat), 173 mg chol., 670 mg sodium, 30 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 62 g pro.

PREP:

35 minutes

COOK:

Low 7 hours, High 3½ hour

MAMES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

A native of Hungary, goulash features the zest of tomatoes, garlic, and oregano. Serve this quick version the traditional way with buttered noodles.

SHORTCUT GOULASH

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

STAND:

5 minutes

MAKES:

4 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

1 pound lean ground beef

½ of a 24-ounce package loose-pack frozen diced hash brown potatoes with onions and peppers (about 3½ cups)

1 15-ounce can tomato sauce

1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes with basil, garlic, and oregano, undrained

½ cup shredded cheddar cheese (2 ounces)

1 In a large skillet cook ground beef over medium heat until brown. Drain off fat.

2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat, frozen potatoes, tomato sauce, and undrained tomatoes.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.

4 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Sprinkle meat mixture with cheese. Let stand for 5 minutes or until cheese melts.

Per serving: 535 cal., 33 g total fat (14 g sat. fat), 109 mg chol., 1,371 mg sodium, 34 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 27 g pro.

Shaped so that it doesn't touch the edge of the slow cooker, this simple meat loaf lifts out easily so you can place it on a platter before serving.

ITALIAN MEAT LOAF

1 egg
1 8-ounce can pizza sauce
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup seasoned fine dry bread crumbs
2 pounds lean ground beef
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese,
mozzarella cheese, or Parmesan cheese
(1 ounce)

- 1 In a large bowl beat egg with a fork. Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the pizza sauce and the bread crumbs. Add ground beef; mix well. Cover and refrigerate remaining pizza sauce until meat loaf is ready to serve.
- 2 On waxed paper, shape meat mixture into a 6-inch round loaf. Crisscross three 18x2-inch foil strips. Place meat loaf in center of strips. Bringing up foil strips, lift and transfer meat and foil to a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Press meat away from side of slow cooker to avoid burning.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.
- 4 Using foil strips, carefully lift meat loaf from the slow cooker and transfer to a serving plate. Spoon remaining pizza sauce over meat; sprinkle with cheese. Let stand for 10 minutes before slicing.

Per serving: 327 cal., 17 g total fat (7 g sat. fat), 135 mg chol., 541 mg sodium, 11 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 31 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes
COOK:
Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours
STAND:
10 minutes
MAKES:
6 to 8 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

This is a kid favorite that adults like too. Sweet pickle slices taste great on top of the meat.

CHEESY SLOPPY JOES

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 4½ hours, High 2 hours.

MAKES:
16 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

2½ pounds lean ground beef
1 large onion, chopped
2 10¾-ounce cans condensed fiesta
nacho cheese soup
¾ cup ketchup
16 hamburger buns, split and toasted

- 1 In a 12-inch skillet cook ground beef and onion over medium heat until meat is brown and onion is tender; drain off fat.
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat mixture, fiesta nacho cheese soup, and ketchup.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4½ to 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours. Serve meat mixture in toasted buns.

Per serving: 389 cal., 22 g total fat (9 g sat. fat), 63 mg chol., 680 mg sodium, 29 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 17 g pro.

This dish is for those who crave homey foods. If you like, sprinkle with a bit of shredded cheddar.

BEEFY SHEPHERD'S PIE

- 2 pounds lean ground beef
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 16-ounce package frozen mixed vegetables
- 2 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ -ounce cans condensed tomato soup
- 8 servings refrigerated or frozen mashed potatoes

- 1 In a large skillet cook ground beef and onion until meat is brown and onion is tender; drain off fat.
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat mixture, frozen vegetables, and tomato soup.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
- 4 Meanwhile, prepare mashed potatoes according to package directions. Serve meat mixture with potatoes.

Per serving: 575 cal., 27 g total fat (13 g sat. fat), 106 mg chol., 836 mg sodium, 51 g carbo., 7 g fiber, 32 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

The hollows of the colorful sweet peppers provide a crisp, cool complement to their contents: warm ground meat, spicy cheese, and zesty salsa. Use a combo of green, red, and yellow peppers to impress guests with a pretty presentation.

MEXICAN STUFFED SWEET PEPPERS

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:
4 servings

SLOW COOKER:
4½- or 5-quart

- 4 medium green, red, and/or yellow sweet peppers
- 1 pound lean ground beef or ground pork
- 1 16-ounce jar black bean salsa or chunky salsa
- 1 cup instant white rice
- 6 ounces Monterey Jack cheese with jalapeño chile peppers or Monterey Jack cheese, shredded (1½ cups)
- 1 cup water

- 1 Remove tops of sweet peppers; scoop out membranes and seeds. Set peppers aside. For filling, in a large skillet cook meat until brown; drain off fat. Stir salsa, the uncooked rice, and 1 cup of the cheese into meat in skillet. Spoon filling into peppers, mounding tops as needed. Cover and refrigerate remaining cheese until peppers are ready to serve.
- 2 Pour the water into a 4½- or 5-quart slow cooker. Arrange stuffed peppers, filling sides up, in slow cooker.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.
- 4 Transfer stuffed peppers to a serving platter. Top with remaining ½ cup of the cheese.

Per serving: 513 cal., 24 g total fat (12 g sat. fat), 109 mg chol., 1,060 mg sodium, 38 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 37 g pro.

Chili sauce spikes the cranberry glaze for this tender roast. Prepare to dish out seconds.

CRANBERRY PORK ROAST

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 2½- to 3-pound boneless pork shoulder roast
- 1 16-ounce package loose-pack frozen stew vegetables
- 1 16-ounce can whole cranberry sauce
- ½ cup bottled chili sauce

1 Lightly coat an unheated large skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat over medium heat. In hot skillet brown meat on all sides; drain off fat.

2 Place meat in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Top with frozen vegetables. In a small bowl stir together cranberry sauce and chili sauce. Pour over meat and vegetables in slow cooker.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours. Transfer meat and vegetables to a serving platter. Cover with foil and keep warm.

4 Strain cooking juices and skim off fat. Transfer cooking juices to a medium saucepan; bring cooking juices to boiling. Reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, about 20 minutes or until cooking juices are thickened and volume is reduced by half. Serve with meat and vegetables.

Per serving: 494 cal., 16 g total fat (5 g sat. fat), 140 mg chol., 833 mg sodium, 44 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 41 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours;
plus 20 minutes on range top

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

This tender shredded pork smothered in a tasty, sweet-hot sauce has an attractive deep red color. Don't skip the dried apricots (they're key to the full flavor). For sandwiches, pile the meat onto crusty Kaiser rolls or wrap it in a tortilla.

APRICOT PULLED PORK

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

6 to 8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

Nonstick cooking spray

1 3- to 3½-pound boneless pork shoulder roast

1 10-ounce jar apricot spreadable fruit

1 cup bottled hot-style barbecue sauce

1 medium sweet onion

(such as Vidalia, Maui, or Walla Walla), chopped

½ cup snipped dried apricots

- 1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Trim fat from meat. If necessary, cut meat to fit in slow cooker. Place meat in prepared cooker. In a medium bowl combine spreadable fruit, barbecue sauce, onion, and dried apricots. Pour over meat in slow cooker.
 - 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
 - 3 Transfer meat to a cutting board. Using 2 forks, gently shred the meat. In a large bowl combine shredded meat and some of the cooking juices from the cooker. Pass remaining cooking juices.
- Per serving:** 535 cal., 19 g total fat (7 g sat. fat), 166 mg chol., 513 mg sodium, 42 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 49 g pro.

Cola and dry onion soup mix simmer together to form a full-flavored sauce that gives an appealing spin to old-fashioned pot roast and veggies.

COLA-PORK STEW

- 1 2- to 2½-pound boneless pork shoulder roast
- 1 16-ounce package peeled baby carrots
- 1 pound turnips, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 12-ounce can cola (do not use diet cola)
- 1 envelope (½ of a 2-ounce package)
dry onion soup mix

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch pieces. Place meat in a 4½- or 5-quart slow cooker. Top with carrots, turnips, cola, and dry onion soup mix.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 12 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours. Season to taste with *salt* and *black pepper*.

Per serving: 286 cal., 9 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 98 mg chol., 400 mg sodium, 18 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 31 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 10 hours, High 5 hours

MAMES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
4½- or 5-quart

Pick up corn muffins at the supermarket to serve with these tender, thyme-flavored chops.

FRUITED PORK CHOPS

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 4 hours, High 2 hours

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 6 boneless pork loin chops, cut 1 inch thick
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- 2 7-ounce packages mixed dried fruit
- 1 medium red or yellow sweet pepper, seeded and sliced
- 1 cup bottled barbecue sauce

- 1 Trim fat from chops. Place chops in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Sprinkle with thyme. Add dried fruit and sweet pepper to slow cooker. Pour barbecue sauce over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours.
- 3 Transfer chops to a serving platter. Skim fat from the cooking juices. Spoon some of the juices over chops; pass remaining cooking juices.

Per serving: 450 cal., 11 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 92 mg chol., 421 mg sodium, 49 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 40 g pro.

Tender meat and potatoes nestle in a brown mushroom gravy seasoned with apple juice and caraway seeds—classic flavor complements to pork that work just as well with beef. Try this stew in the fall with a fresh apple pie for dessert.

GERMAN-STYLE PORK STEW

- 2 to 2½ pounds boneless pork shoulder or beef chuck
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 16- to 20-ounce package refrigerated diced potatoes
- 2 12-ounce jars mushroom gravy
- 1½ cups apple juice or apple cider
- 2 teaspoons caraway seeds

- 1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ¾-inch cubes. Lightly coat an unheated 12-inch skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat over medium heat. Add meat; cook and stir until light brown. Drain off fat.
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker stir together meat, refrigerated potatoes, mushroom gravy, apple juice, and caraway seeds.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.

Per serving: 462 cal., 16 g total fat (5 g sat. fat), 101 mg chol., 1,150 mg sodium, 44 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 34 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

Cook:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

Makes:
4 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Classic burgoo, a thick stew of various meats, includes whatever the hunter catches that day. This version mixes pork and chicken with cayenne pepper for sass.

EASY BURGOO

PREP:*15 minutes***COOK:***Low 4 hours, High 2 hours***MAKES:***6 servings***SLOW COOKER:***3½- or 4-quart*

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1¼ pounds lean boneless pork
Nonstick cooking spray
2 10¾-ounce cans condensed chicken gumbo soup
1 16-ounce package frozen succotash, thawed*
2 cups loose-pack frozen diced hash brown potatoes with onion and peppers
2 cups water
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper | <p>1 Trim fat from meat. Cut meat into ¾-inch pieces. Lightly coat an unheated large skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat over medium heat. In hot skillet cook meat, half at a time, until brown. Drain off fat.</p> <p>2 In a 3½ or 4-quart slow cooker combine meat, chicken gumbo soup, thawed succotash, frozen potatoes, the water, and cayenne pepper.</p> <p>3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 3 hours.</p> <p>Per serving: 310 cal., 8 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 57 mg chol., 994 mg sodium, 32 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 28 g pro.</p> <p>*NOTE: You can substitute one 10-ounce package frozen lima beans, thawed, and 1 cup frozen whole kernel corn, thawed, for the succotash.</p> |
|---|---|

For a less spicy version, use regular vegetable juice rather than hot-style juice.

SPICY HAM & GARBANZO BEAN SOUP

- 1½ cups cubed cooked ham (about 8 ounces)
- 1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans (chickpeas), rinsed and drained
- 4 medium carrots, sliced
- 2 stalks celery, sliced
- 4 cups hot-style vegetable juice
- 1 cup water

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 4½-quart

1 In a 3½- to 4½-quart slow cooker combine ham, garbanzo beans, carrots, and celery. Pour vegetable juice and the water over all.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4½ hours.

Per serving: 187 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 22 mg chol., 1,272 mg sodium, 23 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 12 g pro.

This golden-yellow casserole is like macaroni and cheese without the macaroni. Kids will like its rosy ham, soft potatoes, and rich cheese flavor. Roasted red sweet peppers add flavor and color.

HAM & POTATOES AU GRATIN

PREP:*15 minutes***COOK:***Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours***MAKES:***6 servings***SLOW COOKER:***3½- or 4-quart*

Nonstick cooking spray

2 5½-ounce packages dry au gratin potato mix

2 cups diced cooked ham (10 ounces)

¼ cup bottled roasted red sweet peppers,
drained and chopped

3 cups water

1 10¾-ounce can condensed cheddar cheese soup

1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Place au gratin potato mixes with contents of seasoning packets, the ham, and roasted red sweet peppers in the prepared cooker. In a large bowl stir together the water and cheddar cheese soup. Pour over potato mixture in slow cooker.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.

Per serving: 255 cal., 7 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 29 mg chol., 2,087 mg sodium, 45 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 15 g pro.

Some say the secret of good cooking is good ingredients. Here you'll find four Greek classics: chicken, feta, olives, and the flavor of pine nuts.

GREEK CHICKEN WITH COUSCOUS

- 2 pounds skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 2 14½-ounce cans diced tomatoes with basil, oregano, and garlic, undrained
- 1½ cups water
- 2 6-ounce packages couscous with toasted pine nut mix
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese (4 ounces)
- ½ cup pitted kalamata olives, coarsely chopped

- 1 Place chicken in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Add undrained tomatoes and the water.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.
- 3 Stir in couscous. Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Fluff couscous-chicken mixture with a fork. Sprinkle individual servings with feta cheese and olives.

Per serving: 377 cal., 8 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 82 mg chol., 1,226 mg sodium, 41 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 36 g pro.

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

STAND:

5 minutes

MAKES:

8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

This rice with the flamboyant name—jambalaya—hails from New Orleans. The spicy Cajun flavor is sure to put a zip in your day.

CHICKEN JAMBALAYA

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours;
plus 45 minutes on High

Makes:
6 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

- 1 16-ounce package frozen (yellow, green, and red) peppers and onion stir-fry vegetables
- 8 ounces skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cut into ½-inch-wide strips
- 8 ounces smoked turkey sausage, halved lengthwise and cut into ½-inch-thick slices
- 2 cups water
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes with jalapeño chile peppers, undrained
- 1 8-ounce package jambalaya rice mix

- 1 Place frozen stir-fry vegetables in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Top with chicken strips and turkey sausage. Add water, undrained tomatoes, and, if present, the seasoning packet from rice mix.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.
- 3 Stir in uncooked rice mix. If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Cover and cook about 45 minutes more or until most of the liquid is absorbed and the rice is tender.

Per serving: 265 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 47 mg chol., 1,118 mg sodium, 37 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 19 g pro.

The secrets of this recipe come from unexpected sources: the hot dog stand for the mustard and the breakfast table for the preserves.

FINGER LICKIN' BARBECUE CHICKEN

2½ to 3 pounds chicken drumsticks, skinned if desired
1 cup bottled barbecue sauce
½ cup apricot or peach preserves
2 teaspoons yellow mustard

- 1** Place chicken in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. In a small bowl stir together barbecue sauce, preserves, and mustard. Pour over chicken.
- 2** Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours. Transfer chicken to a serving dish. Cover with foil and keep warm.
- 3** If desired, transfer cooking juices from slow cooker to a medium saucepan. Bring mixture to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, about 10 minutes or until desired consistency. Serve with chicken.

Per serving: 456 cal., 17 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 154 mg chol., 963 mg sodium, 37 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 38 g pro.

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

4 to 6 servings

SLOW COOKER

3½ or 4-quart

Rice and steamed Brussels sprouts make taste-tempting partners for this savory fruited chicken. For a change of pace, prepare your favorite recipe for rice pilaf to substitute for the plain rice.

CRANBERRY CHICKEN

PREP:**15 minutes****COOK:****Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours****MAKES:****6 servings****SLOW COOKER:****3½- or 4-quart**

2½ to 3 pounds chicken thighs and/or drumsticks, skinned

1 16-ounce can whole cranberry sauce

2 tablespoons dry onion soup mix

2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca

3 cups hot cooked rice

1 Place chicken in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. In a small bowl stir together cranberry sauce, dry onion soup mix, and tapioca. Pour over chicken.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours. Serve chicken and cooking juices over hot cooked rice.

Per serving: 357 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 89 mg chol., 268 mg sodium, 55 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 23 g pro.

Here's a mild sweet-sour chicken flavored with a mango chutney and chili sauce. Serve rice alongside to soak up the rosy sauce.

GINGERED CHUTNEY CHICKEN

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mango chutney
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bottled chili sauce
- 2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 1½ teaspoons grated fresh ginger or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- 12 chicken thighs, skinned (about 4 pounds)

- 1 Cut up any large pieces of fruit in the chutney. In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine mango chutney, chili sauce, tapioca, and ginger. Add chicken, turning to coat.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.

Per serving: 264 cal., 7 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 143 mg chol., 494 mg sodium, 16 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 34 g pro.

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

The meatballs hail from Italy, but the spicy sauce is definitely Mexican. Eat this culturally blended stew with a side of warm corn bread.

MEXICAN MEATBALL STEW

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

8 to 10 servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

2 14½-ounce cans Mexican-style stewed tomatoes, undrained

2 12-ounce packages frozen cooked turkey meatballs (24), thawed

1 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed and drained

1 14-ounce can chicken broth with roasted garlic

1 10-ounce package frozen corn, thawed

1 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine undrained tomatoes, thawed meatballs, beans, broth, and thawed corn.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.

Per serving: 268 cal., 10 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 66 mg chol., 1,328 mg sodium, 30 g carbo., 8 g fiber, 20 g pro.

Have a craving for kraut? With sausage and potatoes, this dish will soon have you fed and happy.

COUNTRY-STYLE SAUSAGE & SAUERKRAUT

- 10 to 12 tiny new potatoes, quartered (about 1 pound)
- 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
- 1 pound smoked turkey sausage, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 14- to 15-ounce can Bavarian-style sauerkraut (with caraway seeds)*
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water
- 1 tablespoon Dijon-style mustard

PREP:
15 minutes
COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours
MAKES:
4 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker place potatoes and onion wedges. Top with sausage and undrained sauerkraut.
- 2 In a small bowl whisk together the water and mustard; pour over sauerkraut.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.

Per serving: 317 cal., 10 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 76 mg chol., 3,472 mg sodium, 37 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 21 g pro.

***NOTE:** If Bavarian-style sauerkraut is not available, substitute one 14½-ounce can sauerkraut plus 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon caraway seeds.

Chunks of cod or whitefish get a flavorful kick in this creamy, zesty chowder. Serve with a basket of blue corn tortilla chips and cold Mexican beer.

MEXICAN-STYLE FISH CHOWDER

prep:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 3 hours, High 1½ hours;
plus 1 hour on High

SERVINGS:

6 to 8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

Nonstick cooking spray

- 2 10¾-ounce cans condensed cream of celery soup
- 1 16- to 20-ounce package frozen whole kernel corn
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 pound fresh or frozen cod or other white fish fillets
- 2 14½-ounce cans Mexican-style stewed tomatoes, undrained

1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the prepared cooker combine cream of celery soup, frozen corn, and milk.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours or on high-heat setting for 1½ to 2 hours.

3 Meanwhile, thaw fish, if frozen. Rinse fish; pat dry with paper towels. If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir corn mixture in slow cooker. Place fish on top of mixture in slow cooker. Cover and cook for 1 hour more. Stir in undrained tomatoes.

Per serving: 293 cal., 8 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 39 mg chol., 1,296 mg sodium, 36 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 21 g pro.

Seasoned tomatoes and marinara sauce flavor the cheese tortellini. Ground sausage-style meat substitute boosts the protein.

CHEESY TORTELLINI CASSEROLE

Nonstick cooking spray

- 2 15-ounce containers refrigerated marinara sauce
- 2 14½-ounce cans diced tomatoes with basil, oregano, and garlic, undrained
- 1 12-ounce package frozen cooked and crumbled ground sausage-style meat substitute (soy protein)
- 1 9-ounce package refrigerated cheese-filled tortellini
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese (4 ounces)

- 1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the prepared cooker stir together marinara sauce, undrained tomatoes, and ground meat substitute.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours.
- 3 If using high-heat setting, turn to low-heat setting. Stir in tortellini. Cover and cook for 15 to 20 minutes more or until tortellini are tender.
- 4 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Sprinkle mixture in slow cooker with mozzarella cheese. Cover and let stand about 10 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Per serving: 298 cal., 10 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 23 mg chol., 1,377 mg sodium, 34 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 21 g pro.

PREP:
5 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours;
plus 15 minutes on Low

STAND:
10 minutes

MAKES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Looking for something to eat when comfort food sounds too heavy and soup sounds too light? This soup, with its substantial pasta and creamy sauce, is an attractive in-between solution.

TORTELLINI ALFREDO SOUP

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours;
plus 1 hour on High

MAKES:
4 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

- 1 28-ounce jar or two 16-ounce jars Alfredo pasta sauce
- 2 14-ounce cans vegetable broth
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 2-ounce jar sliced pimientos, drained and chopped
- 1 6- to 8-ounce package dried cheese-filled tortellini

1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine pasta sauce, broth, onion, and pimientos.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.

3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in tortellini. Cover and cook for 1 hour more.

Per serving: 544 cal., 34 g total fat (16 g sat. fat), 114 mg chol., 2,247 mg sodium, 47 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 14 g pro.

Here's a meatless dish you can really sink your teeth into. The eggplant sauce is rich in tomato, onions, and olives. Whole wheat pasta adds variety and the goodness of whole grains.

EGGPLANT SAUCE WITH PASTA

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 medium eggplant, cut into 1-inch pieces (5½ cups)
 - 1 large onion, cut into thin wedges
 - 1 2¼-ounce can sliced pitted ripe olives, drained
 - 1 28-ounce jar roasted garlic pasta sauce
 - 12 ounces dried whole wheat penne or rotini pasta
- Shredded Parmesan cheese (optional)

- 1 Coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the prepared cooker combine eggplant, onion, and olives. Stir in pasta sauce.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
- 3 Cook pasta according to package directions; drain. Serve sauce over hot cooked pasta. If desired, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Per serving: 316 cal., 4 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 512 mg sodium, 60 g carbo., 8 g fiber, 10 g pro.

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 3 hours

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

Chowder applies to any thick, chunky soup—and this one certainly meets those standards. The vegetables and chicken with rice soup complement the Italian-seasoned tomatoes.

CHEESY CHICKEN-RICE CHOWDER

 **10 minutes**

 **Cook:**
Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

 **Makes:**
5 or 6 servings

 **SLOW COOKER:**
3½- or 4-quart

- 1 26-ounce can condensed chicken with rice soup
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups loose-pack frozen peas and carrots
- 1 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes with Italian herbs, undrained
- 4 ounces American cheese, shredded (1 cup)
- ½ cup half-and-half, light cream, or milk

1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine chicken with rice soup, the water, frozen peas and carrots, and undrained tomatoes.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours. Stir in cheese until melted. Stir in half-and-half.

Per serving: 250 cal., 12 g total fat (7 g sat. fat), 39 mg chol., 1,577 mg sodium, 23 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 13 g pro.

This recipe is a hodgepodge of flavor and texture: savory-sweet with zing from the jalapeño peppers and crunch from the almonds.

CURRIED COUSCOUS WITH VEGETABLES

- 1 large onion, cut into thin wedges
- 2 cups coarsely chopped yellow summer squash and/or zucchini
- 2 14½-ounce cans diced tomatoes with jalapeño chile peppers, undrained
- 2 cups water
- 2 5.7-ounce packages curry-flavored couscous mix
- 1 cup chopped slivered almonds, toasted
- ½ cup raisins (optional)

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine onion, summer squash and/or zucchini, undrained tomatoes, the water, and seasoning packets from couscous mixes.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 3 hours.
- 3 Stir in couscous. Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Fluff couscous mixture with a fork. Sprinkle individual servings with almonds and, if desired, raisins.

Per serving: 280 cal., 9 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 842 mg sodium, 43 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 10 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes
COOK:
Low 4 hours, High 2 hours
STAND:
5 minutes
MAKES:
8 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Curly rotini and chunky green or yellow beans crowd into this red brothy soup. Top each bowl with Parmesan cheese for a creamy-sharp tang. Hunks of chunky bread taste great dunked in the broth.

VEGETABLE MINESTRONE

 10 minutes

 COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours;
plus 15 minutes on High

 MAKES:
4 to 6 servings

 SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 5-quart

- 2 9-ounce packages frozen cut green and/or yellow wax beans
- 2 teaspoons spicy pizza seasoning
- 2 14-ounce cans vegetable broth (3½ cups)
- 3 cups vegetable juice
- 1½ cups dried rotini pasta
- Grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

- 1 Place frozen beans in a 3½- to 5-quart slow cooker. Sprinkle with pizza seasoning. Pour broth and vegetable juice over all.
 - 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.
 - 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in uncooked pasta. Cover and cook for 15 to 20 minutes more or until pasta is tender. If desired, sprinkle individual servings with Parmesan cheese.
- Per serving:** 201 cal., 2 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 1,414 mg sodium, 42 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 9 g pro.

Traditional Greek seasonings—onion, garlic, oregano, and mint—impart a zesty, fresh flavor that is pleasing with lentils. Toasted pita wedges, sliced green onion, chopped tomato, and sour cream are great serve-alongs.

GREEK-SEASONED LENTILS

- 2 cups dry brown lentils
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 3 14-ounce cans vegetable broth
- 4 medium carrots, shredded
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons Greek seasoning

PREP:
25 minutes
COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours
MAKES:
6 to 8 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 5-quart

- 1 Rinse lentils; drain well. Lightly coat a 3½- to 5-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the prepared slow cooker combine lentils, vegetable broth, carrots, onion, and Greek seasoning.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours. Serve lentils using a slotted spoon.

Per serving: 260 cal., 2 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 874 mg sodium, 45 g carbo., 21 g fiber, 20 g pro.

Spunky Cajun seasoning, velvety black beans, and colorful vegetables keep this lively, loaded gumbo interesting. There's plenty of saucy liquid to ladle over the rice.

CAJUN-SEASONED VEGETARIAN GUMBO

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MARIN:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- to 4½-quart

2 15-ounce cans black beans, rinsed and drained

1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained

1 16-ounce package frozen (yellow, green, and red) peppers and onion stir-fry vegetables

2 cups loose-pack frozen cut okra

2 to 3 teaspoons Cajun seasoning

Hot cooked white or brown rice (optional)

1 In a 3½- to 4½-quart slow cooker combine beans, undrained tomatoes, frozen stir-fry vegetables, frozen okra, and Cajun seasoning.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours. If desired, serve over hot cooked rice.

Per serving: 153 cal., 0 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 639 mg sodium, 31 g carbo., 10 g fiber, 12 g pro.

SIDE
DISHES

8

Pineapple affords these lively baked beans a hint of sweetness.

HAWAIIAN PINEAPPLE BAKED BEANS

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:

16 servings

SLOW COOKER:

5- to 6-quart

- 8 ounces ground beef
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 15- or 16-ounce cans pork and beans in tomato sauce
- 2 15-ounce cans chili beans with chili gravy
- 1 20-ounce can pineapple tidbits (juice pack), drained
- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 cup bottled hot-style barbecue sauce

- 1 In a large skillet cook ground beef and onion until meat is brown and onion is tender; drain off fat. In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine ground beef mixture, pork and beans, chili beans, drained pineapple, ketchup, and barbecue sauce.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4½ hours or until heated through.

Per serving: 189 cal., 3 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 13 mg chol., 762 mg sodium, 35 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 9 g pro.

FOR A 3½- OR 4-QUART SLOW COOKER:

Use 6 ounces ground beef, ½ cup onion, 1 can pork and beans in tomato sauce, 1 can chili beans with chili gravy, 1 cup drained pineapple tidbits, ½ cup ketchup, and ½ cup barbecue sauce. Makes 8 servings.

Per serving: 193 cal., 3 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 17 mg chol., 810 mg sodium, 34 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 10 g pro.

Need a dish to tote to a potluck, picnic, or family reunion? These molasses-flavored beans will be a crowd-pleaser.

BEANS WITH GINGER SAUCE

- 2 31-ounce cans pork and beans with tomato sauce
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely crushed gingersnaps (10 cookies)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ketchup
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup molasses
- 1 tablespoon dried minced onion

- 1 In a 3½- to 5-quart slow cooker stir together pork and beans, gingersnaps, ketchup, molasses, and dried minced onion.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.

Per serving: 198 cal., 2 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 10 mg chol., 796 mg sodium, 41 g carbo., 7 g fiber, 8 g pro.

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

MAKES:

12 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- to 5-quart

An intriguing variation of classic baked beans, this version gets a hint of saucy sweetness from apricot preserves. Show it off at your next picnic; it's great with grilled chicken or burgers.

APRICOT-BACON BEANS

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

12 to 16 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 2 28-ounce cans beans with brown sugar or baked beans or four 15- to 16-ounce cans Great Northern, lima, and/or pinto beans
- 8 slices peppered bacon, crisp-cooked, drained, and crumbled
- 1 10- to 12-ounce jar apricot preserves
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- ½ cup packed brown sugar

1 If using beans with brown sugar or baked beans, do not rinse or drain. If using Great Northern, lima, or pinto beans, rinse and drain beans.

2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine beans, bacon, apricot preserves, celery, and brown sugar.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.

Per serving: 343 cal., 9 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 19 mg chol., 631 mg sodium, 53 g carbo., 7 g fiber, 9 g pro.

Curry powder and apples give ordinary baked beans a deliciously unexpected flavor twist.

CURRIED BEANS & APPLES

- 2 31-ounce cans pork and beans in tomato sauce
- 2 medium cooking apples
(such as Granny Smith or Rome Beauty), peeled,
cored, and cut into bite-size pieces
- ½ cup bottled chili sauce
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar or mild-flavored molasses
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- ¼ cup sliced green onions
- Crumbled, crisp-cooked bacon (optional)

- 1 If you prefer a less saucy bean mixture, drain one of the cans of pork and beans. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine pork and beans, apples, chili sauce, brown sugar or molasses, and curry powder.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours. Before serving, stir in green onions and, if desired, sprinkle with crumbled bacon.

Per serving: 184 cal., 2 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 10 mg chol., 781 mg sodium, 39 g carbo., 8 g fiber, 8 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

MAKES:
12 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

The traditional mix of corn and lima beans joins onions in this full-bodied side dish.

CHEESY SUCCOTASH

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:
12 servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- or 4½-quart

- 2 16-ounce packages frozen whole kernel corn
- 1 16-ounce package frozen lima beans
- 1 cup loose-pack frozen small whole onions
- 1 10¾-ounce can condensed cream of celery soup
- 1 8-ounce tub cream cheese with chive and onion
- ¼ cup water

- 1 In a 4- or 4½-quart slow cooker combine frozen corn, frozen lima beans, and frozen onions. In a medium bowl stir together cream of celery soup, cream cheese, and the water. Stir soup mixture into vegetables in slow cooker.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Stir before serving.

Per serving: 211 cal., 8 g total fat (5 g sat. fat), 19 mg chol., 296 mg sodium, 29 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 6 g pro.

Tender potatoes and crisp green beans achieve elegance in a mustard-dill sauce that's just right for Sunday dinner's roast, chicken, or salmon. No one needs to know how simple it is to make.

SAUCY GREEN BEANS & POTATOES

2 pounds tiny new potatoes
1 pound fresh green beans, trimmed and halved crosswise
1 10½-ounce can condensed cream of celery soup
¾ cup water
¼ cup Dijon-style mustard
¾ teaspoon dried dill

- 1** In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine potatoes and green beans. In a medium bowl stir together cream of celery soup, the water, mustard, and dill. Pour over vegetables in slow cooker; stir gently to combine.
- 2** Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours. Stir gently before serving.

Per serving: 95 cal., 2 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 1 mg chol., 313 mg sodium, 17 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 3 g pro.



20 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

12 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

This cheesy bean combo is ideal for family gatherings or potluck dinners. To transport the beans, wrap the slow cooker in a thick towel. Once you arrive, remove the towel, plug in the slow cooker, and keep the beans warm on the low-heat setting. Be sure to serve them within two hours.

SMOKY GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 3½ hours, High 2 hours

MAKES:
12 servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

- 4 14½-ounce cans cut green beans, drained
- 1 cup bottled roasted red sweet peppers, drained and cut into strips
- 1 8-ounce can sliced water chestnuts, drained
- 1 10¾-ounce can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1 cup shredded smoked Gouda or cheddar cheese (4 ounces)
- ¼ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons coarse-grain mustard
- 1½ cups canned cheddar-flavored French-fried onions or plain French-fried onions

- 1 In a large bowl stir together green beans, sweet pepper strips, and water chestnuts; set aside. In a medium bowl stir together cream of mushroom soup, cheese, milk, and mustard; add to bean mixture and toss to coat. Spoon half of the bean mixture into a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker. Top with half of the onions. Repeat layers.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3½ to 4½ hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours.

Per serving: 139 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 9 mg chol., 622 mg sodium, 15 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 4 g pro.

Here's a luscious way to celebrate the beet harvest from your garden or farmer's market. The cran-apple drink is an unexpectedly good pairing with sweet beets and apple pie spice.

CRANBERRY-APPLE SPICED BEETS

3 pounds medium beets, peeled and quartered
½ teaspoon apple pie spice
1 tablespoon quick-cooking tapioca
1 cup cranberry-apple drink
2 tablespoons butter or margarine (optional)

1 Place beets in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Sprinkle with apple pie spice and tapioca; pour cranberry-apple drink over all. If desired, dot with butter.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours. To serve, remove beets from slow cooker; spoon some of the sauce over beets.

Per serving: 75 cal., 0 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 85 mg sodium, 17 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 2 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes
COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours
MAKES:
8 to 10 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Caraway and cabbage are a classic flavor combo. Pair them in your slow cooker for a side dish that complements roasted beef, pork, lamb, or chicken.

CARAWAY CABBAGE IN CREAM

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

- 1 cup chicken broth
 - 2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
 - 2 teaspoons caraway seeds, crushed
 - ½ teaspoon salt
 - ¼ teaspoon black pepper
 - 1 large head red cabbage (about 2 pounds), coarsely chopped (12 cups)
 - ½ cup half-and-half or light cream
 - 2 tablespoons prepared horseradish
- 1 In a small bowl combine broth, tapioca, caraway seeds, salt, and pepper. Pour broth mixture into a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker. Add cabbage. Toss to coat.
 - 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 hours. Add half-and-half and horseradish to cabbage mixture in slow cooker; stir until coated.
- Per serving:** 68 cal., 2 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 6 mg chol., 312 mg sodium, 12 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 2 g pro.

Carrots and onions are irresistible when sauced with a combo of apple jelly and dill.

SWEET BABY CARROTS

2 16-ounce packages peeled baby carrots
1 pound boiling onions (about 16), peeled, or one
16-ounce package frozen small whole onions
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried dill
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water
1 cup apple jelly

- 1 In a $4\frac{1}{2}$ - to $5\frac{1}{2}$ -quart slow cooker combine carrots and onions. Sprinkle with dill. Pour the water over all.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
- 3 Using a slotted spoon, remove carrots and onion from slow cooker. For sauce, gently stir apple jelly into mixture in slow cooker; let stand for 2 to 3 minutes or until jelly is melted. Stir mixture. Return carrots and onions to slow cooker. Stir gently to coat vegetables. Serve with a slotted spoon.

Per serving: 178 cal., 0 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 53 mg sodium, 43 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 2 g pro.

PREP:
10 minutes
COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours
STAND:
2 minutes
MAKES:
8 to 10 servings
SLOW COOKER:
 $4\frac{1}{2}$ - to $5\frac{1}{2}$ -quart

For an extra spicy kick, use Monterey Jack cheese with jalapeño peppers.

SPICY CREAMED CORN

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

STAND:
10 minutes

MAKES:
12 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

- 2 16-ounce packages frozen white whole kernel corn (shoe peg), thawed
- 1 14¾-ounce can cream-style corn
- 2 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese (8 ounces)
- 1 cup chopped tomato
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1 4½-ounce can diced green chile peppers, undrained
- 1½ teaspoons chili powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 16-ounce container dairy sour cream
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh cilantro

- ➊ In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine thawed whole kernel corn, cream-style corn, shredded cheese, tomato, onion, undrained chile peppers, chili powder, and salt.
 - ➋ Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.
 - ➌ Gently stir in sour cream and cilantro. Let stand for 10 minutes.
- Per serving:** 250 cal., 15 g total fat (9 g sat. fat), 33 mg chol., 350 mg sodium, 25 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 9 g pro.

Ratatouille (*ra-tuh-TOO-ee*) is a favorite dish from the French region of Provence. Eggplant, tomatoes, onions, herbs, and garlic are typically simmered together to create a delicious medley. It's great as a side dish or as an appetizer topper for bread or crackers.

RATATOUILLE

- 1½ cups chopped onions
- 1 6-ounce can tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon olive oil or cooking oil
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1½ teaspoons dried basil, crushed, or 1 tablespoon snipped fresh basil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 medium tomatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 2 medium zucchini, halved lengthwise and sliced
- 1 small eggplant, peeled and cubed (about 3 cups)
- 1 12-ounce loaf baguette-style French bread, cut into ½-inch-thick slices and toasted

PREP:
20 minutes
COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours
MAKES:
8 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine onions, tomato paste, olive oil, sugar, garlic, dried basil (if using), salt, thyme, and pepper. Add tomatoes, zucchini, and eggplant.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Stir in fresh basil (if using). Stir before serving. Serve hot, cold, or at room temperature with bread slices.

Per serving: 198 cal., 3 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 727 mg sodium, 37 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 7 g pro.

Greens for dinner may seem old-fashioned, but this version gets a bold flavor update from a zesty blend of molasses, balsamic vinegar, and hot pepper sauce.

SPICY SUNDAY DINNER GREENS

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours

MAKES:
8 to 10 servings

SLOW COOKER:
5- to 6-quart

- 2 pounds fresh collard greens, trimmed and coarsely torn
- 3½ cups water
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 slices bacon or turkey bacon, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup mild-flavored molasses
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon bottled hot pepper sauce
- 1 teaspoon celery salt
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

- 1 In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker combine collard greens, the water, onion, bacon, molasses, balsamic vinegar, garlic, hot pepper sauce, celery salt, salt, and black pepper (cooker will be full). Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours, stirring once after 4 hours of cooking.
- 2 Using a slotted spoon, transfer greens to a serving dish, reserving cooking juices. If desired, pass cooking juices to spoon over individual servings.

Per serving: 83 cal., 2 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 3 mg chol., 413 mg sodium, 15 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 3 g pro.

This decadent dish is a luscious celebration of flavor—mashed potatoes, cream cheese, sour cream, and garlic.

SUPER CREAMY MASHED POTATOES

Nonstick cooking spray

- 3 20-ounce packages refrigerated mashed potatoes or 8 cups leftover mashed potatoes
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, cut up
- 1 8-ounce container dairy sour cream onion or chive dip
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 3½ hours

MAKES:

12 to 14 servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- or 4½-quart

- 1 Coat a 4- or 4½-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Place two-thirds (2 packages) of the potatoes in slow cooker. Top with cream cheese and sour cream dip. Sprinkle with garlic powder. Top with remaining package of the mashed potatoes.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Stir before serving.

Per serving: 214 cal., 11 g total fat (6 g sat. fat), 21 mg chol., 409 mg sodium, 22 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 5 g pro.

Looking for please-all, post-game party fare? Try these creamy, extra-thick, slow-cooked new potatoes.

CREAMY POTATO WEDGES



10 minutes



Low 3½ hours, High 1¾ hours



8 servings



3½- or 4-quart

2 8-ounce containers dairy sour cream chive dip

1 cup finely shredded Asiago cheese (4 ounces)

1 3-ounce package cream cheese, cut up

½ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing

2 20-ounce packages refrigerated new potato wedges

1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine sour cream dip, Asiago cheese, cream cheese, and mayonnaise. Stir in potatoes.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3½ to 4½ hours or on high-heat setting for 1¾ to 2¼ hours. Stir gently before serving.

Per serving: 415 cal., 31 g total fat (14 g sat. fat), 55 mg chol., 835 mg sodium, 23 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 10 g pro.

These creamy potatoes are a delicious partner for roast beef, pork, or chicken.

LEMON PESTO NEW POTATOES

3 pounds tiny new potatoes, halved or quartered
1 16-ounce jar Alfredo pasta sauce
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup purchased basil pesto
1 tablespoon finely shredded lemon peel
 $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
Finely shredded Parmesan cheese

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 5 hours

MAKES:

10 to 12 servings

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 5-quart

- 1 Place potatoes in a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker. Stir in the Alfredo sauce, pesto, lemon peel, and pepper. Toss to coat.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours.
- 3 Using a slotted spoon, transfer potatoes from slow cooker to serving dish. Whisk mixture in slow cooker and pour over potatoes. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Per serving: 252 cal., 14 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 29 mg chol., 431 mg sodium, 26 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 7 g pro.

Creamy, thick, and rich, this is the kind of asparagus dish you expect to find at an elegant brunch. Serve it with hot scrambled eggs and sliced fresh fruit.

SWISS POTATOES & ASPARAGUS

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 5 hours plus 15 minutes

MAKES:

10 to 12 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 10¾-ounce can condensed cream of asparagus soup
- 8 ounces process Swiss cheese, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 8-ounce carton dairy sour cream
- 1 32-ounce package loose-pack frozen diced hash brown potatoes, thawed
- 1 10-ounce package frozen cut asparagus, thawed

1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the slow cooker stir together cream of asparagus soup, Swiss cheese, and sour cream. Stir in thawed potatoes.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours. Stir in thawed asparagus. Cover; cook for 15 to 25 minutes more or until heated through.

Per serving: 237 cal., 12 g total fat (7 g sat. fat), 32 mg chol., 311 mg sodium, 22 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 11 g pro.

Crisp greens provide a pleasing contrast to tangy sweet-sour potatoes laced with bacon.

HOT ITALIAN-STYLE POTATO SALAD

- 1 28-ounce package loose-pack frozen diced hash brown potatoes with onions and peppers
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup bottled balsamic vinaigrette salad dressing
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 4 slices bacon, crisp-cooked and crumbled
- 8 cups torn mixed salad greens
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced green onions
- Shaved Parmesan cheese

1 Place frozen potatoes in a 3½- to 5-quart slow cooker. Stir in the water, salad dressing, and crushed red pepper. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours. Gently stir in bacon.

2 Serve warm potato mixture over greens. Top individual servings with green onions and Parmesan cheese.

Per serving: 160 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 7 mg chol., 345 mg sodium, 19 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 5 g pro.

PREP:
10 minutes

COOK:
Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 5-quart

Take a break from the usual candied sweet potatoes—serve these golden slices instead.

ORANGE-SAGE SWEET POTATOES

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

MAKES:
10 to 12 servings

SLOW COOKER:
5- to 6-quart

- 4 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices (about 10 cups)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 3 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried leaf sage, crushed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, cut up
- 4 slices bacon, crisp-cooked and crumbled

1 Place sweet potato slices in a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. In a small bowl stir together thawed orange juice concentrate, brown sugar, salt, sage, and thyme. Pour over sweet potato slices; toss to coat. Dot with butter.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours. Before serving, stir to coat with orange juice mixture and sprinkle with crumbled bacon.

Per serving: 189 cal., 4 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 10 mg chol., 509 mg sodium, 36 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 4 g pro.

Dried cherries, apple, ginger, maple syrup, and spices dress up sweet potatoes in this seasonal delight.

MAPLE HARVEST SWEET POTATOES

- 2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into bite-size pieces (about 6 cups)
- 1 medium tart cooking apple, peeled and chopped (about 1 cup)
- ¼ cup dried cherries or dried cranberries
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ teaspoons finely shredded fresh ginger
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup pure maple syrup or maple-flavored syrup
- ¼ cup whipping cream

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine sweet potatoes, apple, dried cherries or cranberries, brown sugar, ginger, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and pepper. Pour the water and syrup over sweet potato mixture.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 7 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours. Turn off heat and gently stir in whipping cream. Use a slotted spoon to serve.

Per serving: 236 cal., 3 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 10 mg chol., 167 mg sodium, 51 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 2 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 7 hours, High 3½ hours

MAKES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Tender cubed squash with onion and thyme immersed in a cherry sauce renders a sweet and savory surprise. Try it with grilled or roasted meats, or as part of a holiday buffet.

WINTER SQUASH IN CHERRY SAUCE

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 8 hours, High 4 hours

MAKES:

6 to 8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

1 21-ounce can cherry pie filling**2** pounds butternut or other winter squash,
peeled, seeded, and cut into ¾-inch pieces
(about 4½ cups)**1** medium onion, cut into wedges**½** teaspoon dried thyme, crushed**½** cup chopped pecans, toasted**1** In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine pie filling, squash, onion, and thyme.**2** Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours. Cool slightly before serving. Sprinkle individual servings with pecans.**Per serving:** 223 cal., 7 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 23 mg sodium, 40 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 3 g pro.

Onions plus two other root veggies—turnips and parsnips—team up for a warming side dish.

TURNIPS & PARSNIPS

- 2 pounds turnips, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 medium parsnips, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 medium onions, cut into thin wedges
- 1 10½-ounce can condensed cream of celery soup
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon garlic salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine turnips, parsnips, and onions. Add cream of celery soup, the water, thyme, garlic salt, and pepper; stir to coat.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 7 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours.

Per serving: 98 cal., 2 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 2 mg chol., 370 mg sodium, 18 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 2 g pro.

PREP:
30 minutes

COOK:
Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:
8 to 10 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

A jar of brown gravy makes these cream-of-the-crop sherried vegetables super simple to assemble.

VEGETABLES IN SHERRY SAUCE

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 2 hours

MAKES:
10 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

- 4 cups fresh button, cremini, or baby portobello mushrooms (about 14 ounces)
 - 20 to 24 white and/or red pearl onions (about 10 ounces)
 - 1 large red sweet pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces (about 1½ cups)
 - 1 12-ounce jar brown gravy
 - ⅓ cup dry sherry
 - 2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard
 - 1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
 - ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1** Halve any large mushrooms. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine mushrooms, pearl onions, and sweet pepper pieces. In a medium bowl combine gravy, dry sherry, mustard, thyme, and black pepper. Pour over vegetables.
- 2** Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 2 to 3 hours.

Per serving: 53 cal., 1 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 213 mg sodium, 7 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 2 g pro.

If you like, turn this creamy vegetable-and-rice side dish into a main dish by stirring in a cup of chopped cooked chicken or cubed ham.

CALIFORNIA VEGETABLE CASSEROLE

- 1 16-ounce package loose-pack frozen California-blend vegetables (cauliflower, broccoli, and carrots)
- 1 10½-ounce can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1 cup instant white rice
- 1 cup milk
- ½ of a 15-ounce jar (about ¾ cup) cheese dip
- 1 small onion, chopped
- ¼ cup water
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, cut up

- 1 Place frozen vegetables in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. In a medium bowl combine cream of mushroom soup, uncooked rice, milk, cheese dip, onion, the water, and butter. Pour soup mixture over the vegetables in slow cooker.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours or until vegetables and rice are tender. Stir before serving.

Per serving: 209 cal., 12 g total fat (7 g sat. fat), 36 mg chol., 717 mg sodium, 21 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 6 g pro.

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 4 hours, High 2 hours

MAKES:

8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

If a friend or family member is having a "turkey and all the trimmings" dinner and wisely asks your help in bringing the trimmings, take this out-of-the-ordinary dish!

WILD RICE WITH PECANS & CHERRIES

PREP:*20 minutes***COOK:***Low 5 hours***STAND:***10 minutes***MAKES:***15 servings***SLOW COOKER:***3½ or 4-quart*

- 3 14-ounce cans chicken broth
- 2½ cups wild rice, rinsed and drained
- 2 medium carrots, coarsely shredded
- 1 4½-ounce jar (drained weight) sliced mushrooms, drained
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
- 2 teaspoons dried marjoram, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ⅔ cup dried tart cherries
- ⅔ cup sliced green onions
- ½ cup coarsely chopped pecans, toasted

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine broth, uncooked wild rice, carrots, drained mushrooms, melted butter, marjoram, salt, and pepper.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours. Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Stir in dried cherries and green onions. Cover and let stand for 10 minutes.
- 3 Just before serving, sprinkle with pecans. Serve with a slotted spoon.

Per serving: 169 cal., 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 4 mg chol., 423 mg sodium, 27 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 5 g pro.

Winter squash and oranges boost the nutrients in this pilaf. It's a nice match for fish or chicken.

WILD RICE PILAF WITH SQUASH

- 2 large oranges
- 3 cups peeled, seeded butternut or other winter squash cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 4.1- to 4.5-ounce packages long grain and wild rice mix with herbs (not quick-cooking)
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth

PREP:
20 minutes
COOK:
Low 4 hours, High 2 hours
MAKES:
8 to 10 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

- 1 Finely shred the peel from one of the oranges. Measure 1 teaspoon finely shredded orange peel; set aside. Squeeze juice from both oranges. Measure $\frac{2}{3}$ cup orange juice; set aside.
- 2 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine squash pieces, rice mix and contents of both rice seasoning packets, and brown sugar. Add orange peel and orange juice. Pour broth over all. Stir to combine.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 3 hours. Stir gently before serving.

Per serving: 170 cal., 1 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 931 mg sodium, 37 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 4 g pro.

This full-flavored dressing boasts a Southern flair. If you're serving a crowd at a big holiday feast, borrow another slow cooker so you also can offer Raisin-Herb Seasoned Dressing (see recipe, page 363).

SAUSAGE & CORN BREAD DRESSING

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 4 hours

MAKES:

12 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- to 4½-quart

Nonstick cooking spray

1 pound bulk pork sausage

1 large onion, chopped

1 16-ounce package corn bread stuffing mix

3 cups chicken broth

½ cup butter or margarine, melted

- 1 Lightly coat a 3½- to 4½-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.
- 2 In a large skillet cook sausage and onion until meat is brown and onion is tender. Drain off fat.
- 3 In the prepared cooker combine sausage mixture, dry stuffing mix, broth, and butter. Toss gently to mix well.
- 4 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.

Per serving: 466 cal., 30 g total fat (13 g sat. fat), 57 mg chol., 1,214 mg sodium, 37 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 11 g pro.

When it's holiday time and your oven is full, put a slow cooker on dressing duty. This savory herb-onion version gets a sweet note from raisins.

RAISIN-HERB SEASONED DRESSING

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 16-ounce package herb-seasoned stuffing mix
- 1 cup golden and/or dark raisins
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1½ cups water
- 1 10¾-ounce can condensed golden mushroom soup
- 1 8-ounce carton dairy sour cream

- 1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the prepared cooker combine dry stuffing mix, raisins, and onion. In a medium bowl combine the water, golden mushroom soup, and sour cream. Pour soup mixture over stuffing mixture in slow cooker; stir gently to combine.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.

Per serving: 377 cal., 9 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 14 mg chol., 1,105 mg sodium, 65 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 9 g pro.

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

MAKES:

8 to 10 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

Slices of this spunky steamed bread are the perfect serve-along for spaghetti and meatballs or lasagna.

PARMESAN CHEESE BREAD

PREP:*15 minutes***COOK:***High 1 3/4 hours***COOL:***10 minutes***MAKES:***12 servings***SLOW COOKER:***4- to 6-quart*

- 1 3/4 cups packaged biscuit mix
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon dried basil, crushed
- 2 slightly beaten eggs
- 1/3 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons snipped oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, well drained

- 1 Well grease two 1-pint straight-sided, wide-mouth canning jars; flour the greased jars. Set aside.
- 2 In a medium bowl combine biscuit mix, Parmesan cheese, and basil. In a small bowl combine eggs and milk; add to flour mixture and stir just until moistened. Stir in tomatoes.
- 3 Divide mixture between prepared jars. Cover jars tightly with greased foil, greased side down. Place jars in a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker. Pour 1/2 cup warm water into slow cooker around jars.
- 4 Cover and cook on high-heat setting about 1 3/4 hours or until a wooden skewer inserted in center of each comes out clean. Remove jars from slow cooker. Cool for 10 minutes on a wire rack. Remove bread from jars. Cool completely before slicing.

Per serving: 96 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 37 mg chol., 260 mg sodium, 12 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.

Try this fluffy corn side dish instead of dressing with chicken or turkey.

CORNY SPOON BREAD

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 4 slightly beaten eggs
- 2 8½-ounce packages corn muffin mix
- 1 14¾-ounce can cream-style corn
- ¾ cup milk
- 1 medium red sweet pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 4-ounce can diced green chile peppers, undrained
- ½ cup shredded Mexican cheese blend (2 ounces)

- 1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.
- 2 In a large bowl stir together eggs, corn muffin mix, cream-style corn, milk, sweet pepper, and undrained chile peppers. Spoon egg mixture into prepared slow cooker.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting about 4 hours or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Sprinkle top of spoon bread with cheese. Cover and let stand for 30 to 45 minutes before serving.

Per serving: 360 cal., 12 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 114 mg chol., 713 mg sodium, 54 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 11 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 4 hours

COOL:
30 minutes

MAKES:
8 to 10 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Bread in the slow cooker? You bet. Serve this sweet bread with soft-style cream cheese.

APPLE BREAD

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

High 1 3/4 hours

COOL:

10 minutes

MAKES:

2 loaves (6 servings per loaf)

SLOW COOKER:

4- to 6-quart

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | cup all-purpose flour |
| 1½ | teaspoons baking powder |
| 1 | teaspoon apple pie spice |
| ¼ | teaspoon salt |
| ½ | cup packed brown sugar |
| 2 | tablespoons cooking oil or melted butter |
| 2 | slightly beaten eggs |
| ½ | cup applesauce |
| ½ | cup chopped walnuts, toasted |
- 1 Well-grease two 1-pint straight-side wide-mouth canning jars; flour the greased jars. Set aside.
 - 2 In a medium bowl combine the 1 cup flour, the baking powder, apple pie spice, and salt. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture; set aside.
 - 3 In a small bowl combine brown sugar, oil, eggs, and applesauce; mix well. Add applesauce mixture all at once to flour mixture. Stir just until moistened. Stir in walnuts.
 - 4 Divide mixture between the prepared canning jars. Cover jars tightly with greased foil, greased sides in. Place jars in a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker. Pour ½ cup warm water into slow cooker around jars.
 - 5 Cover and cook on high-heat setting for 1 ¾ to 2 hours or until a long wooden skewer inserted near the centers comes out clean. Remove jars from slow cooker; cool for 10 minutes on a wire rack. Carefully remove bread from jars. Serve warm.
- Per serving:** 146 cal., 7 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 35 mg chol., 113 mg sodium, 20 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

DESSERTS

9

Underneath the fluffy cake layer, you'll find a treasure trove of luscious berries.

TRIPLE BERRY PUDDING CAKE

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

High 2½ hours

STAND:

1 hour

MAKES:

8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

Nonstick cooking spray

1½ cups loose-pack frozen blueberries

1½ cups loose-pack frozen red raspberries

½ cup fresh cranberries

1 cup all-purpose flour

⅔ cup sugar

1½ teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ teaspoon salt

½ cup milk

2 tablespoons butter, melted

1 teaspoon vanilla

¾ cup boiling water

⅓ cup sugar

½ cup sliced almonds, toasted

1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the prepared slow cooker combine frozen blueberries, frozen raspberries, and cranberries; set aside.

2 For batter, in a medium bowl combine flour, the ⅔ cup sugar, the baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. Stir in milk, melted butter, and vanilla. Spoon batter over berries in slow cooker; carefully spread batter over berries.

3 In a small bowl combine boiling water and the ⅓ cup sugar; stir to dissolve sugar. Pour evenly over batter in slow cooker. Cover and cook on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours or until a toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 1 hour to cool slightly before serving. Sprinkle individual servings with almonds.

Per serving: 260 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 9 mg chol., 146 mg sodium, 45 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 4 g pro.

With caramel apple "pudding" on the bottom and a moist walnut cake layer on top, this dessert has an irresistibly homespun appeal.

DUTCH APPLE PUDDING CAKE

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 20- or 21-ounce can apple pie filling
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried cherries, dried cranberries, or raisins
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped walnuts, toasted
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups apple juice or apple cider
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine
- 1 recipe Sweetened Whipped Cream (optional)

- 1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray; set aside. In a small saucepan bring apple pie filling to boiling. Stir in dried cherries. Transfer apple mixture to prepared slow cooker.
- 2 For batter, in a medium bowl stir together flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, and salt. Add milk and melted butter; stir just until combined. Stir in nuts. Spread batter over apple mixture in slow cooker.
- 3 In the same small saucepan combine apple juice, brown sugar, and the 1 tablespoon butter. Bring to boiling. Boil gently, uncovered, for 2 minutes. Carefully pour apple juice mixture over batter in slow cooker.
- 4 Cover and cook on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours or until a toothpick inserted into center of cake comes out clean. Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 to 45 minutes to cool slightly before serving.
- 5 To serve, spoon warm cake and sauce into dessert dishes. If desired, top individual servings with Sweetened Whipped Cream.

SWEETENED WHIPPED CREAM: Chill a small bowl and the beaters of an electric mixer. In chilled bowl combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whipping cream and 2 teaspoons packed brown sugar. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until soft peaks form (tips curl).

Per serving: 435 cal., 13 g total fat (5 g sat. fat), 18 mg chol., 284 mg sodium, 77 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 5 g pro.

PREP:

25 minutes

Cook:

High 2 hours

Stand:

30 minutes

Makes:

6 to 8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

If you love warm, rich desserts, this pudding cake is sure to become one of your favorites. Enjoy it even more with a scoop of vanilla ice cream on top.

GINGERBREAD PUDDING CAKE

PREP:**15 minutes****COOK:****High 2 hours****STAND:****45 minutes****MAKES:****8 servings****SLOW COOKER:****3½ or 4-quart**

Nonstick cooking spray

1 14½-ounce package gingerbread mix

½ cup milk

½ cup raisins

2¼ cups water

¾ cup packed brown sugar

¾ cup butter or margarine

Vanilla ice cream (optional)

- 1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.
- 2 For batter, in a medium bowl stir gingerbread mix and milk together until moistened. Stir in raisins (batter will be thick). Spread batter evenly in the bottom of prepared slow cooker.
- 3 In a medium saucepan combine the water, brown sugar, and butter; bring to boiling. Carefully pour mixture over batter in slow cooker.
- 4 Cover and cook on high-heat setting for 2 hours (center may appear moist but will set up upon standing). Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 45 minutes to cool slightly before serving.
- 5 To serve, spoon warm cake into dessert dishes; spoon pudding over cake.

Per serving: 501 cal., 24 g total fat (13 g sat. fat), 50 mg chol., 548 mg sodium, 70 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 4 g pro.

Thanks to this recipe, you can have your cake and pudding too. Rich chocolate flavor runs through this blend of soft cake and pudding. For a decadent dessert, serve it with ice cream, whipped cream, or thawed frozen raspberries in juice.

BROWNIE PUDDING CAKE

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 19.8-ounce package brownie mix
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter or margarine, melted
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3 cups boiling water

- 1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.
- 2 For batter, in a medium bowl stir together brownie mix, melted butter, eggs, and the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water until batter is nearly smooth. Spread brownie batter evenly in the bottom of prepared slow cooker.
- 3 In another bowl combine sugar and cocoa powder. Gradually stir the boiling water into the sugar-cocoa mixture. Pour evenly over batter in slow cooker.
- 4 Cover and cook on high-heat setting for 2 hours (center may appear moist but will set up upon standing). Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 to 45 minutes to cool slightly before serving.
- 5 To serve, spoon warm cake into dessert dishes; spoon pudding over cake.

Per serving: 534 cal., 25 g total fat (10 g sat. fat), 86 mg chol., 355 mg sodium, 76 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 6 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
High 2 hours

STAND:
30 minutes

MAKES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

This comforting fall dessert gets its incredible flavor from a liberal sprinkling of pumpkin pie spice.

NUTTY PUMPKIN-PIE PUDDING

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

High 2½ hours

STAND:

30 minutes

MAKES:

8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 15-ounce can pumpkin
- 1 5-ounce can (⅔ cup) evaporated milk
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 1-layer-size yellow cake mix
- 1 cup pecans or walnuts, toasted and chopped
- ¼ cup butter, melted

Frozen whipped dessert topping, thawed (optional)

- 1 Coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the prepared cooker combine pumpkin, evaporated milk, sugar, and 1 tablespoon of the pumpkin pie spice. Spread batter evenly in the bottom of prepared slow cooker.
- 2 In a medium bowl combine cake mix, nuts, and remaining 1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice. Sprinkle mixture evenly on top of pumpkin mixture in slow cooker. Drizzle melted butter over cake mix mixture.
- 3 Cover and cook on high-heat setting for 2½ hours. Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 to 45 minutes to cool slightly before serving.
- 4 To serve, spoon warm pudding into bowls. If desired, top individual servings with whipped dessert topping.

Per serving: 349 cal., 20 g total fat (5 g sat. fat), 21 mg chol., 278 mg sodium, 42 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 4 g pro.

Before beginning this recipe, check to make sure that the dish or casserole you plan to use fits into your slow cooker.

CRUSTLESS LEMONY CHEESECAKE

Nonstick cooking spray

12 ounces cream cheese, softened

½ cup sugar

2 teaspoons finely shredded lemon peel (set aside)

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon vanilla

½ cup dairy sour cream

3 beaten eggs

1 cup warm water

Fresh or frozen raspberries (optional)

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

High 1¾ hours

COLD:

4 to 24 hours

MAKES:

8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- to 5-quart

1 Lightly coat a 1-quart soufflé dish or casserole with nonstick cooking spray. Tear off an 18×12-inch piece of heavy foil; cut in half lengthwise. Fold each piece lengthwise into thirds. Crisscross the foil strips and place the dish in the center of the crisscross; set aside.

2 For filling, in a large mixing bowl beat cream cheese, sugar, lemon juice, flour, and vanilla with an electric mixer on medium speed until combined. Beat in sour cream until smooth. Beat in eggs with mixer on low speed just until combined. Stir in lemon peel. Pour filling mixture into prepared dish. Cover dish tightly with foil. Pour warm water into a 3½- to 5-quart slow cooker. Bringing up the foil strips, lift the ends of the strips to transfer the dish and foil to the slow cooker. Leave foil strips under dish.

3 Cover and cook on high-heat setting for 1¾ to 2 hours or until center is set. Carefully lift with foil strips to remove the dish; discard foil strips. Cool completely on a wire rack. Cover and chill for 4 to 24 hours before serving. If desired, serve with raspberries.

Per serving: 253 cal., 19 g total fat (11 g sat. fat), 131 mg chol., 159 mg sodium, 15 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 6 g pro.

Although traditional spoon bread is savory, this sweet variation has the same delightful texture as the classic.

PINEAPPLE SPOON BREAD

PREP:*15 minutes***COOK:***Low 3 hours***STAND:***1 hour***MAKES:***10 to 12 servings***SLOW COOKER:***3½ or 4-quart*

Nonstick cooking spray

½ cup butter, softened

1½ cups granulated sugar

1 teaspoon baking soda

2 eggs

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 20-ounce can crushed pineapple, undrained

¾ cup chopped walnuts or pecans, toasted

¾ cup packed brown sugar

1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

2 In a large mixing bowl beat butter with an electric mixer on medium speed for 30 seconds.

3 Beat in the granulated sugar and baking soda until well mixed. Beat in eggs. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Using a wooden spoon, stir in any remaining flour (batter will be stiff). Stir in undrained pineapple and the walnuts. Spoon into prepared slow cooker. Sprinkle with brown sugar.

4 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3 to 3½ hours or until edges are set (cakelike) and temperature of center registers 175°F when tested with an instant-read thermometer. Center of cake will appear wet.

5 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 1 hour to cool slightly before serving.

Per serving: 442 cal., 16 g total fat (7 g sat. fat), 67 mg chol., 213 mg sodium, 71 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 5 g pro.

Spoon into this irresistible dessert and you'll find nuggets of apricots and almonds nestled in the cardamom-seasoned pudding.

WHITE CHOCOLATE-APRICOT BREAD PUDDING

- 1½ cups half-and-half or light cream
- ½ of a 6-ounce package white chocolate baking squares (with cocoa butter), coarsely chopped
- ⅓ cup snipped dried apricots
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon ground cardamom
- 4½ slices white bread, cut into ½-inch cubes, dried*
(3 cups dry)
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped almonds
- 1 cup warm water
- Whipped cream (optional)
- Grated white chocolate baking squares (optional)

PREP:
30 minutes
COOK:
Low 4 hours, High 2 hours
MAKES:
6 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½- to 5-quart

- 1 In a small saucepan heat half-and-half over medium heat until very warm but not boiling. Remove from heat; add chopped white chocolate and apricots. Stir until white chocolate is melted.
- 2 In a bowl beat eggs with a fork; whisk in sugar and cardamom. Whisk in half-and-half mixture. Gently stir in bread cubes and almonds. Pour mixture into a 4- to 5-cup soufflé dish (dish may be full). Cover dish tightly with foil.
- 3 Pour warm water into a 3½- to 5-quart slow cooker. Tear off an 18×12-inch piece of heavy foil. Tear in half lengthwise. Fold each foil piece lengthwise into thirds. Crisscross the foil strips and place the soufflé dish in the center of the crisscross. Bringing up the foil strips, lift the ends of the strips to transfer the dish and foil to the slow cooker. Leave foil strips under dish.
- 4 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 hours.
- 5 Using the foil strips, carefully lift soufflé dish out of slow cooker. Serve pudding warm. If desired, serve with whipped cream and sprinkle with grated white chocolate.

Per serving: 345 cal., 17 g total fat (8 g sat. fat), 98 mg chol., 191 mg sodium, 42 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 8 g pro.

***NOTE:** To make dry bread cubes, preheat oven to 300°F. Spread fresh bread cubes in a single layer in a 15×10×1-inch baking pan. Bake, uncovered, for 10 to 15 minutes or until dry, stirring twice; cool.

Have mugs of coffee and glasses of milk ready to accompany this treat. If the kids in your life have yet to taste bread pudding, introduce them to this one. They'll love its creamy, rich chocolate flavor.

SEMISWEET-CHOCOLATE BREAD PUDDING

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 2½ hours

STAND:
30 minutes

MAKES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

Nonstick cooking spray

3 cups milk

¾ cup semisweet chocolate pieces

¾ cup presweetened cocoa powder

3 slightly beaten eggs

5 cups Hawaiian sweet bread or cinnamon swirl bread
(no raisins) cut into ½-inch cubes, dried*
(about 6½ ounces bread)

Whipped cream (optional)

1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

2 In a medium saucepan heat milk just until simmering; remove from heat. Add chocolate pieces and presweetened cocoa powder (do not stir); let stand for 5 minutes. Whisk until chocolate is melted and smooth. Cool slightly (about 10 minutes). Transfer chocolate mixture to a large bowl; whisk in eggs. Gently stir in dried bread cubes. Pour chocolate-bread mixture into prepared cooker.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting about 2½ hours or until puffed and a knife inserted near center comes out clean. Remove liner from cooker, if possible, or turn off cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 to 45 minutes to cool slightly before serving (pudding will fall during cooling). If desired, serve with whipped cream.

Per serving: 360 cal., 12 g total fat (6 g sat. fat), 95 mg chol., 214 mg sodium, 62 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 9 g pro.

***NOTE:** To make dry bread cubes, preheat oven to 300°F. Spread fresh bread cubes in a single layer in a 15×10×1-inch baking pan. Bake, uncovered, for 10 to 15 minutes or until dry, stirring twice; cool.

Chunky apple pie filling and cinnamon-raisin bread are the main attractions in this luscious dessert. If you don't have cinnamon-raisin bread, use white bread, 1/3 cup raisins, and 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon in its place.

APPLE PIE BREAD PUDDING

Nonstick cooking spray

- 3 eggs
- 2 cups milk, half-and-half, or light cream
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 21-ounce can chunky apple pie filling (with more fruit)
- 9 slices cinnamon-raisin bread, cut into 1/2-inch cubes, dried* (4 1/2 cups dry)
- Whipped cream or vanilla ice cream (optional)

PREP:
10 minutes

COOK:
Low 3 hours

STAND:
30 minutes

MAKES:
10 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3 1/2- or 4-quart

1 Lightly coat a 3 1/2- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

2 In a large bowl beat eggs with a wire whisk. Whisk in milk and sugar. Gently stir in pie filling and dried bread cubes. Pour egg mixture into prepared slow cooker.

3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting about 3 hours or until a knife inserted near center comes out clean (mixture will be puffed). Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 to 45 minutes to cool slightly before serving (pudding will fall as it cools). If desired, serve with whipped cream or ice cream.

Per serving: 328 cal., 3 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 67 mg chol., 77 mg sodium, 68 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 10 g pro.

***NOTE:** To make dry bread cubes, preheat oven to 300°F. Spread fresh bread cubes in a single layer in a 15×10×1-inch baking pan. Bake, uncovered, for 10 to 15 minutes or until dry, stirring twice; cool.

Slow cookers are much loved in the winter months because they're great for simmering soups, stews, and hearty meat dishes. But they make great sense in summer too. You can have a sweet fruit cobbler without heating up your kitchen!

CHERRY-RHUBARB COBBLER

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

High 2 hours

STAND:

30 minutes

MAKES:

8 to 10 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

Nonstick cooking spray

1 cup all-purpose flour

⅔ cup packed brown sugar

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon baking soda

¼ teaspoon salt

2 eggs

3 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted

2 tablespoons milk

5 cups fresh or frozen sliced rhubarb

1 30-ounce can cherry pie filling

⅓ cup packed brown sugar

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 tablespoon granulated sugar

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Vanilla ice cream (optional)

1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

2 For batter, in a medium bowl combine flour, the ⅔ cup brown sugar, the ½ teaspoon cinnamon, the baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a small bowl beat eggs with a fork; stir in melted butter and milk. Add egg mixture to flour mixture; stir just until combined. Set aside.

3 In a large saucepan combine rhubarb, cherry pie filling, the ⅓ cup brown sugar, and ¼ teaspoon cinnamon. Cook and stir until fruit mixture comes to boiling. Transfer hot fruit mixture to prepared slow cooker. Immediately spoon batter over top of fruit mixture. In a small bowl combine the granulated sugar and ¼ teaspoon cinnamon; sprinkle on top of batter.

4 Cover and cook on high-heat setting about 2 hours or until a toothpick inserted into center of cake comes out clean. Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 to 45 minutes to cool slightly before serving. If desired, serve with ice cream.

Per serving: 374 cal., 6 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 66 mg chol., 235 mg sodium, 76 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 4 g pro.

Mellow cooked fruit and fluffy iced cinnamon rolls are the perfect partners in this easy cobbler.

PINEAPPLE-PEACH COBBLER

Nonstick cooking spray

- 2 21-ounce cans pineapple pie filling
- 1 6- or 7-ounce package dried peaches, snipped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice
- 1 17½-ounce package (5) refrigerated large cinnamon rolls
- Vanilla ice cream (optional)

1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In prepared slow cooker stir together the pie filling, dried peaches, and orange juice.

2 Cover and cook on high-heat setting about 1½ hours or until fruit mixture is hot and bubbly; stir fruit mixture. Place cinnamon rolls on a cutting board, cinnamon sides up (set icing packet aside). Cut each roll in half crosswise. Place roll halves on top of fruit mixture in slow cooker, cinnamon sides up.

3 Cover and cook on high-heat setting about 1 hour more or until rolls are fluffy all the way through. Remove liner from cooker, if possible, or turn off cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 to 45 minutes to cool slightly before serving. Spread icing over rolls. If desired, serve with ice cream.

Per serving: 373 cal., 6 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 395 mg sodium, 77 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
High 1½ hours plus 1 hour

STAND:
30 minutes

SERVES:
10 servings

SLOW COOKER
3½- or 4-quart

Tart cooking apples offer a pleasing contrast to the sweet blueberries in this homey cobbler that's topped with an irresistible whole wheat-almond mixture.

APPLE-BLUEBERRY COBBLER

PREP:

25 minutes

COOK:

Low 3 hours, High 1½ hours;
plus 1 hour on High

STAND:

1 hour

MAKES:

8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Nonstick cooking spray

- 4 cups thinly sliced peeled cooking apples
(such as Granny Smith)
- 1 21-ounce can blueberry pie filling
- ½ cup water
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon quick-cooking tapioca
- 2 teaspoons finely shredded lemon peel
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- ¾ cup sugar
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup ground toasted almonds
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 slightly beaten eggs
- 3 tablespoons cooking oil
- 2 tablespoons milk

1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the prepared slow cooker stir together apples, pie filling, the water, the ⅓ cup sugar, the tapioca, lemon peel, and almond extract. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours or on high-heat setting for 1½ to 2 hours (mixture should be bubbly).

2 In a medium bowl stir together the ¾ cup sugar, the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, almonds, baking powder, and salt. In a small bowl stir together eggs, oil, and milk. Add egg mixture to flour mixture; stir just until moistened. Spoon batter evenly over fruit mixture in slow cooker.

3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Cover; cook about 1 hour more or until a toothpick inserted in topping comes out clean.

4 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 1 hour to cool slightly before serving.

Per serving: 356 cal., 9 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 53 mg chol., 171 mg sodium, 67 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 4 g pro.

Because it uses frozen and dried fruits, this cobbler is easy to prepare any time of the year.

RASPBERRY-PEACH COBBLER

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 16-ounce package unsweetened frozen peach slices
- 1 12-ounce package frozen raspberries
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cranberry juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried cranberries or snipped dried cherries
- 2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon finely shredded orange peel
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 slightly beaten eggs
- 3 tablespoons cooking oil
- 2 tablespoons milk
- Vanilla ice cream (optional)

- 1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the prepared slow cooker stir together frozen peaches, frozen raspberries, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar, the cranberry juice, dried cranberries, and tapioca. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours or on high-heat setting for 1½ to 2 hours (mixture should be bubbly).
- 2 For batter, in a medium bowl stir together flour, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar, the baking powder, orange peel, and salt. In a small bowl stir together eggs, oil, and milk. Add egg mixture to flour mixture; stir just until moistened. Stir fruit mixture in slow cooker. Spoon batter in mounds over fruit mixture.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Cover; cook about 1 hour more or until a toothpick inserted in topping comes out clean.
- 4 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 1 hour to cool slightly before serving. If desired, serve with ice cream.

Per serving: 336 cal., 7 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 53 mg chol., 123 mg sodium, 67 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 4 g pro.

PREP:
10 minutes

COOK:
Low 3 hours, High 1½ hours;
plus 1 hour on High

STAND:
1 hour

MAKES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

The coconut, dried fruit bits, and crunchy granola take this crisp to bold flavor heights.

TROPICAL APRICOT CRISP

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 2½ hours

STAND:

30 minutes

MAKES:

6 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

Nonstick cooking spray

2 21-ounce cans apricot pie filling

1 7-ounce package tropical blend mixed dried fruit bits

1 cup granola

½ cup coconut, toasted

Vanilla ice cream

1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In prepared slow cooker combine pie filling and dried fruit bits.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 2½ hours.

3 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. In a small bowl combine granola and coconut. Sprinkle over fruit mixture in slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 minutes to cool slightly before serving. Serve with ice cream.

Per serving: 587 cal., 13 g total fat (8 g sat. fat), 45 mg chol., 144 mg sodium, 109 g carbo., 7 g fiber, 6 g pro.

For an extra-special touch, serve this ginger-spiced dessert with butter pecan or praline ice cream.

CHERRY-BERRY CRISP

Nonstick cooking spray
6 cups frozen blueberries
1 21-ounce can cherry pie filling
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
1 tablespoon quick-cooking tapioca
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup quick-cooking rolled oats
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter

- 1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the prepared slow cooker combine blueberries, cherry pie filling, granulated sugar, the water, tapioca, and ginger.
- 2 In a medium bowl stir together oats, flour, and brown sugar. Using a pastry blender, cut in butter until crumbly. Sprinkle oats mixture over berry mixture in slow cooker.
- 3 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours or on high-heat setting for 1½ to 2 hours or until bubbly around edges. Cool slightly. Serve warm.

Per serving: 338 cal., 7 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 15 mg chol., 61 mg sodium, 68 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 3 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes
COOK:
Low 3½ hours, High 1½ hours
MAKES:
8 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

This cinnamony blend of cherries, pineapple, peaches, and apricots boasts a buttery oatmeal topper.

MIXED FRUIT CRISP

PREP:**15 minutes****COOK:****Low 3 hours, High 1½ hours****STAND:****30 minutes****MAKES:****8 servings****SLOW COOKER:****3½- or 4-quart**

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 21-ounce can cherry pie filling
- 1 20-ounce can pineapple chunks, drained
- 1 15- to 16-ounce can sliced peaches, drained
- 1 15-ounce can unpeeled apricot halves in light syrup, undrained
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3 envelopes instant oatmeal (with maple and brown sugar)
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted

1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In prepared slow cooker combine pie filling, drained pineapple chunks, drained peaches, undrained apricots, and cinnamon. In a small bowl stir together oatmeal and butter, being sure to break up any sugar clumps in the oatmeal. Sprinkle over fruit mixture in slow cooker.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3 hours or on high-heat setting for 1½ hours or until bubbly at edges.

3 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 minutes to cool slightly before serving. Serve warm.

Per serving: 308 cal., 5 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 11 mg chol., 195 mg sodium, 64 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 3 g pro.

The granola-and-coconut topper adds a nice crunch to this warm, comforting tropical pleaser.

GRANOLA-TOPPED MANGO-PEAR CRUNCH

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 24-ounce jar refrigerated mango slices
- 5 medium pears, peeled, cored, and sliced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- 2 cups granola
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded or flaked coconut, toasted

- 1 Lightly coat a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray; set aside. Drain mango slices, reserving $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the liquid. Coarsely chop mango slices. In prepared slow cooker combine mango, reserved mango liquid, sliced pears, and sugar.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours or on high-heat setting for $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours.
- 3 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 minutes before serving. To serve, divide warm fruit mixture among 8 dessert bowls. Top with granola and coconut.

Per serving: 255 cal., 6 g total fat (3 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 21 mg sodium, 50 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 3 g pro.

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 3 hours, High $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours

STAND:

30 minutes

MAKES:

8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

5- to 6-quart

If you have the time, make your own granola using the recipe below to sprinkle on top of this spiced apple-and-date medley. Enjoy the leftover granola with milk for breakfast or out of hand as a snack.

ALMOND GRANOLA-TOPPED APPLESauce

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

OVEN:
300°F

MAKES:
10 servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 6-quart

- 3½ to 4 pounds cooking apples (such as Granny Smith), peeled, cored, and cut into chunks
- ¼ cup orange juice
- ¼ cup apple juice or apple cider
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- 1½ teaspoons apple pie spice
- 1 8-ounce package chopped dates or 1 cup dried cherries or raisins
- ⅔ cup Almond Granola or purchased granola cereal

1 Place apples in a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker. Add orange juice, apple juice, brown sugar, and apple pie spice. Toss to coat apples. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours (apples should be very tender).

2 Using a potato masher or an immersion blender mash or blend apple mixture to desired consistency. Stir in dates. Serve warm topped with Almond Granola.

ALMOND GRANOLA: Preheat oven to 300°F. In a large bowl combine 2 cups regular rolled oats, 1½ cups sliced almonds, ¼ cup toasted wheat germ, and 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon. In a small bowl stir together ½ cup honey and 2 tablespoons butter, melted; stir honey mixture into oat mixture. Spread evenly in a greased 15×10×1-inch baking pan. Bake, uncovered, for 30 to 35 minutes or until lightly browned, stirring once. Spread on a large piece of foil to cool. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week or place in a freezer container and freeze for up to 3 months. Makes 5 cups.

Per serving: 223 cal., 2 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 1 mg chol., 9 mg sodium, 54 g carbo., 6 g fiber, 2 g pro.

A mix of chocolate milk and cream gives a velvety richness to this home-style dessert.

CHOCOLATE RICE PUDDING

Nonstick cooking spray
½ cup sugar
½ teaspoon salt
4½ cups chocolate milk
2 cups half-and-half or light cream
1¾ cups converted rice (do not substitute long grain rice)
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup whipping cream, whipped
Miniature semisweet chocolate pieces

- 1 Lightly coat a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In prepared slow cooker stir together sugar and salt. Whisk in chocolate milk and half-and-half. Stir in uncooked rice.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 hours (do not stir during cooking).
- 3 Stir in vanilla. Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Cover and let stand for 30 minutes to cool slightly. Fold in whipped cream.
- 4 Serve warm or cover and chill up to 2 days before serving. Top individual servings with chocolate pieces.

Per serving: 315 cal., 14 g total fat (9 g sat. fat), 49 mg chol., 177 mg sodium, 41 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 7 g pro.

PREP:
10 minutes
COOK:
Low 5 hours
STAND:
30 minutes
MAKES:
12 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

Cardamom adds a tantalizingly exotic note to this creamy pudding flecked with colorful dried fruit.

TROPICAL RICE PUDDING

PREP:*15 minutes***COOK:***Low 6 hours***STAND:***30 minutes***MAKES:***10 to 12 servings***SLOW COOKER:***3½ or 4-quart*

- 4 cups half-and-half or light cream
- 2½ cups whole milk
- ⅔ cup sugar
- 1⅓ cups converted rice (do not substitute long grain rice)
- ½ teaspoon ground cardamom
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 7-ounce package tropical mixed dried fruit bits
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Milk (optional)
- 1 3-ounce jar macadamia nuts, chopped (optional)

1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker stir together half-and-half, the 2½ cups milk, the sugar, uncooked rice, cardamom, and salt. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 hours (do not stir).

2 Stir in fruit bits and vanilla. Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Cover and let stand for 30 minutes to cool slightly before serving. If necessary, stir in additional milk to reach desired consistency. Top individual servings with nuts.

Per serving: 396 cal., 14 g total fat (9 g sat. fat), 42 mg chol., 147 mg sodium, 61 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 7 g pro.

Enjoy this cinnamony vanilla pudding either warm or cool.

TAPIOCA PUDDING

8 cups whole milk
1 cup sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup small pearl tapioca (not quick-cooking)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 eggs
1 tablespoon vanilla

- 1 In a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker combine milk, sugar, pearl tapioca, and cinnamon. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 hours.
- 2 In a medium bowl slightly beat eggs. Stir tapioca mixture in slow cooker. Remove about 1 cup of the tapioca mixture and gradually whisk into eggs. Stir egg mixture into tapioca mixture in slow cooker.
- 3 If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Cover and cook for 30 minutes more.
- 4 Transfer to a serving bowl. Stir in vanilla. Cover and let stand for 45 minutes to cool slightly before serving.

Per serving: 210 cal., 7 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 87 mg chol., 89 mg sodium, 29 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 7 g pro.

MAKE-AHEAD DIRECTIONS: Prepare as directed. Cover and store in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

PREP:
15 minutes

COOK:
Low 5 hours, High 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours;
plus 30 minutes on High

STAND:
45 minutes

SERVES:
12 servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 5-quart

It takes only three ingredients to make this incredibly rich yet simple chocolate treat.

S'MORE FONDUE

PREP:**10 minutes****COOK:****Low 1½ hours****MAKES:****16 servings****SLOW COOKER:****3½-quart**

- 15 ounces milk chocolate, chopped
- 1 10-ounce package large marshmallows
- ½ cup half-and-half or light cream
- Graham cracker snack sticks; graham cracker squares, halved; and/or large marshmallows

1 In a 3½-quart slow cooker stir together chocolate, the 10-ounce package marshmallows, and half-and-half.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 1½ to 2 hours, stirring once during cooking. Whisk until smooth before serving.

3 Serve immediately or keep warm, covered, on low-heat setting for up to 2 hours. Serve with graham cracker snack sticks, graham cracker squares, and/or additional marshmallows for dipping.

Per ¼ cup fondue: 404 cal., 19 g total fat (11 g sat. fat), 12 mg chol., 54 mg sodium, 63 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 4 g pro.

This scrumptious peanutty apple-caramel sauce is also wonderful over slices of pound cake.

PEANUT BUTTER-CARAMEL APPLES

Nonstick cooking spray

1 12-ounce jar caramel ice cream topping

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup peanut butter

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds cooking apples (such as Granny Smith), peeled, cored, and sliced into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick wedges

Vanilla ice cream (optional)

Purchased nut topping (optional)

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 3 hours

MAKES:

8 to 10 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart

- 1 Lightly coat a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - or 4-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In the prepared slow cooker combine caramel topping, peanut butter, and the water, whisking until smooth. Add apples; toss to coat. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours.
- 2 If desired, serve warm apple mixture over ice cream and top individual servings with nut topping.

Per serving: 297 cal., 8 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 189 mg sodium, 53 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 4 g pro.

Prepared in the slow cooker, this classic, old-fashioned dessert is still a real family-pleaser.

STUFFED APPLES

PREP:

20 minutes

COOK:

Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours

MAKES:

4 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- 4 medium, tart baking apples (such as Granny Smith)
- ½ cup snipped dried figs, golden raisins, or raisins
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon apple pie spice or ground cinnamon
- ¼ cup apple juice or apple cider
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine, cut into 4 pieces

- 1 Core apples; peel a strip from the top of each apple. Place apples, top sides up, in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. In a small bowl combine figs, brown sugar, and apple pie spice. Divide mixture among apples, spooning into centers of apples and patting in with a knife or thin metal spatula. Pour apple juice around apples in slow cooker. Top each apple with a piece of the butter.
 - 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ hours.
 - 3 Use a large spoon to transfer apples to shallow bowls or dessert dishes. Spoon juices from slow cooker over apples. Serve warm.
- Per serving:** 200 cal., 3 g total fat (2 g sat. fat), 8 mg chol., 31 mg sodium, 45 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 1 g pro.

Warm pears drizzled with caramel and sprinkled with cashews—that's a dessert lover's delight!

CARAMEL-SPICED PEARS

- 8 pears (7 to 8 ounces each) peeled if desired, cored, and halved
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup apple juice or apple cider
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 12-ounce jar caramel ice cream topping
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped lightly salted cashews or honey-roasted cashews

- 1 Place pears in a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker. Sprinkle evenly with cinnamon and cloves. Pour apple juice and lemon juice over pears.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 3½ to 4 hours or on high-heat setting for 1½ to 2 hours.
- 3 Using a slotted spoon, transfer pears to individual serving dishes. Drizzle with caramel topping; sprinkle with cashews.

Per serving: 286 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 130 mg sodium, 63 g carbo., 7 g fiber, 2 g pro.

PREP:
20 minutes

COOK:
Low 3½ hours, High 1½ hours

MAKES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
4- to 6-quart

Orange juice and marmalade blend into a pretty syrup for cooking the pear halves. Whipped cream adds a bit of richness, and, if you like, a sprig of fresh mint makes an attractive, fragrant garnish.

CREAM-TOPPED PEARS IN ORANGE SAUCE

PREP:

15 minutes

COOK:

Low 4 hours, High 2 hours

STAND:

30 minutes

MAKES:

8 servings

SLOW COOKER:

3½- or 4-quart

- ¾ cup orange juice
- 6 tablespoons orange marmalade
- 2 teaspoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 8 small to medium ripe yet firm pears, peeled, cored, and quartered
- 1 cup whipping cream

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine orange juice, 4 tablespoons of the marmalade, and the tapioca. Add pears. Toss gently to coat.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours.
- 3 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 minutes to cool slightly before serving.
- 4 In a chilled medium mixing bowl combine whipping cream and the remaining 2 tablespoons marmalade; beat until soft peaks form (tips curl).
- 5 To serve, spoon pears and sauce into dessert dishes. Top with whipped cream mixture.

Per serving: 221 cal., 12 g total fat (7 g sat. fat), 41 mg chol., 20 mg sodium, 31 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 1 g pro.

Serve these fruits as a dessert soup or over ice cream to make a sundae.

SPICED PEACH COMPOTE

2 29-ounce cans peach slices
½ cup dried tart cherries
½ cup dried apricots
½ cup dried figs, stems removed
½ cup orange juice
3 2-inch-long cinnamon sticks

- 1 Drain one of the cans of peach slices; discard liquid. In a 3½-quart slow cooker stir together drained peaches, peaches with juice, dried cherries, dried apricots, dried figs, orange juice, and cinnamon sticks.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours. Discard cinnamon sticks.

Per serving: 246 cal., 0 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 20 mg sodium, 60 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 3 g pro.

PREP:
10 minutes
COOK:
Low 5 hours, High 2½ hours
MAKES:
8 servings
SLOW COOKER:
3½-quart

When the weather is cold and dreary, make this triple-fruit dessert to remind you of spring.

MIXED BERRY COMPOTE

PREP:

10 minutes

COOK:

Low 6 hours, High 3 hours

MAKES:

4 cups compote

SLOW COOKER:

3½ or 4-quart

4 cups frozen unsweetened raspberries

2 cups frozen blueberries

2 cups frozen dark sweet cherries

½ cup sugar

¼ cup frozen orange juice concentrate

2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca

Angel food cake slices or vanilla ice cream

1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine raspberries, blueberries, cherries, sugar, orange juice concentrate, and tapioca.

2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours. Cool slightly. Serve warm over cake or ice cream.

Per ½ cup compote: 388 cal., 16 g total fat (9 g sat. fat), 115 mg chol., 160 mg sodium, 58 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 5 g pro.

Your family will love crispy French toast sticks smothered with a peachy blueberry sauce.

PEACH & BLUEBERRY DESSERT

- 6 cups sliced, peeled fresh peaches or unsweetened frozen peach slices
- 1 3-ounce package ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup) dried blueberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white grape-peach juice or white grape juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon quick-cooking tapioca
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 18.8-ounce package (24) frozen French toast sticks
- Frozen whipped dessert topping, thawed (optional)

- 1 In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker combine peaches, dried blueberries, juice, sugar, and tapioca.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2½ hours.
- 3 Remove liner from slow cooker, if possible, or turn off slow cooker. Stir in vanilla. Let stand, uncovered, for 1 hour to cool slightly before serving.
- 4 Prepare frozen French toast sticks according to package directions; separate into sticks. (Discard maple syrup cups or save for another use.)
- 5 To serve, place 3 toast sticks in each of 8 dessert dishes. Spoon warm peach-blueberry mixture over the sticks. If desired, serve with whipped topping.

Per serving: 307 cal., 4 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 3 mg chol., 236 mg sodium, 66 g carbo., 3 g fiber, 3 g pro.

PREP:
25 minutes

COOK:
Low 4 hours, High 2 hours

STAND:
1 hour

MAKES:
8 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½- or 4-quart

This dessert is a real treat when rhubarb and strawberries are in season, yet it's just as wonderful made with frozen fruit.

STRAWBERRY-RHUBARB SAUCE

 **COOK:**

*Low 5½ hours, High 2½ hours;
plus 15 minutes on High*

MAKES:
10 servings

SLOW COOKER:
3½ or 4-quart

- 6 cups fresh rhubarb cut into 1-inch pieces (about 2 pounds) or two 16-ounce packages frozen unsweetened sliced rhubarb
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup white grape juice or apple juice
- ½ teaspoon finely shredded orange peel
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- 3 inches stick cinnamon
- 2 cups fresh strawberries, halved
- Vanilla ice cream or frozen yogurt

- 1 Place rhubarb in a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker. Stir in sugar, grape juice, orange peel, ginger, and stick cinnamon.
- 2 Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 5½ to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours.
- 3 Remove stick cinnamon. If using low-heat setting, turn to high-heat setting. Stir in strawberries. Cover and cook for 15 minutes more.* Serve the warm sauce over ice cream or frozen yogurt.

Per serving: 236 cal., 8 g total fat (4 g sat. fat), 29 mg chol., 58 mg sodium, 41 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 3 g pro.

***NOTE:** If desired, transfer sauce to a freezer container and freeze for up to 3 months.