

— AMERICA'S —
TEST KITCHEN

Pressure-Cooker Pot Roast

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

Most pressure-cooker pot roast recipes sell themselves on speed alone, often producing overcooked vegetables, fatty meat, and bland, watery gravy. In order to put the pressure cooker to work for us, we made a few key adjustments. First we split the roast into two smaller pieces to speed cooking and allow for better trimming of fat. We decreased the liquid in the pot to account for very little evaporation. And we also chose to purposefully overcook the vegetables and then puree them into the gravy for better flavor and consistency. Finally, we added some baking soda to encourage the flavorful Maillard reaction in the pressurized pot.



INGREDIENTS

- 1** (3 1/2- to 4-pound) boneless beef chuck-eye roast, pulled into 2 pieces at natural seam and trimmed of large pieces of fat
- Kosher salt and pepper
- 4** tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces
- 1** onion, sliced thick

INSTRUCTIONS

- If using an electric pressure cooker, turn off the cooker immediately after the pressurized cooking time and let the pressure release naturally for 10 minutes; do not let the cooker switch to the warm setting. To adjust for differences among pressure cookers, cook the roasts for the recommended time, check for doneness, and, if needed, repressurize and cook up to 10 minutes longer. A half teaspoon of red wine vinegar can be substituted for the wine.
- 1.** Using 3 pieces of kitchen twine per roast, tie each roast crosswise at equal intervals into loaf shape. Season roasts with salt and pepper and set aside.

SERVES 6 TO 8

- 1** celery rib, sliced thick
- 1** carrot, peeled and sliced thick
- ¼** teaspoon baking soda
- 1** cup beef broth
- 2** teaspoons soy sauce
- 2** bay leaves
- 1** tablespoon red wine
- 1** sprig fresh thyme

2. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in pressure cooker over medium heat; refrigerate remaining 2 tablespoons butter. Add onion, celery, carrot, and baking soda to pot and cook until onion breaks down and liquid turns golden brown, about 5 minutes. Stir in broth, soy sauce, and bay leaves, scraping up any browned bits. Nestle roasts side by side on top of vegetables in cooker.

3. Lock lid in place and bring pot to high pressure over high heat, 3 to 8 minutes. As soon as indicator signals that pot has reached high pressure, reduce heat to medium-low and cook for 55 minutes, adjusting heat as needed to maintain high pressure.

4. Remove pot from heat and let pressure release naturally for 10 minutes. Quick-release any remaining pressure, then remove lid, allowing steam to escape away from you. Transfer roasts to carving board, tent with aluminum foil, and let rest for 20 minutes.

5. Meanwhile, strain liquid through fine-mesh strainer into fat separator; discard bay leaves. Transfer vegetables in strainer to blender. Let liquid settle for 5 minutes, then pour defatted liquid into blender with vegetables. Blend until smooth, about 1 minute. Transfer sauce to medium saucepan. Add wine, thyme sprig, and 2 tablespoons chilled butter and bring to boil over high heat. Cook until sauce is thickened and measures 2 cups, 5 to 8 minutes.

6. Remove twine from roasts and slice against grain into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Transfer meat to serving platter and season with salt to taste. Remove thyme sprig from sauce and season sauce with salt and pepper to taste. Spoon half of sauce over meat. Serve, passing remaining sauce separately.

A Great Pot Roast for Every Cooker

Most recipes don't take into account that internal pressure and evaporation loss vary from one pressure cooker to the next. For a pot roast recipe that works in every cooker, here's what we do.



DITCH POTATOES; PUREE CARROT

Even when we used our best test kitchen tricks, getting the vegetables to cook consistently in different cookers was nearly impossible. So we add only carrot to the pot with the meat and then puree it with the final cooking liquid for a sauce with much improved body and flavor.



USE NATURAL RELEASE

Letting the pressure drop naturally is gentler than quick-releasing the pressure, which can cause the tender meat to fray. But pots don't naturally release pressure at the same rate, and the food continues to cook as the pressure drops. To ensure consistent results, we let the pressure naturally drop for 10 minutes and then quick-release any remaining pressure (at this point, it won't be enough pressure to do harm to the roasts).



FINISH SAUCE ON STOVETOP

The amount of steam vented during cooking varies from one pot to the next, and the amount of liquid that the food releases will

change from one attempt to the next. For a sauce with just the right consistency (and a deeper flavor), we reduce the pureed cooking liquid and carrot mixture in a saucepan on the stovetop under a watchful eye.

Problems Under Pressure

Modern pressure cookers are safer, quieter, and more intuitive than the models from 50 years ago. But that doesn't mean that all models perform the same. When we tested a dozen bestselling stovetop and electric pressure cookers last year, we made a key discovery: No two pots reached the same internal temperature. At high pressure the internal temperature should be 250 degrees (this is because at increased pressure more energy is required to make liquid boil, and more energy translates into a higher temperature).

Yet temperatures varied from as low as 230 degrees to as high as 253 degrees. This variance can make a huge difference not only on the cooking time but also on the final results of a recipe. In most cases, you'll need to do some trial and error before you get perfect results from your pot. (Note: In the test kitchen, we use our Best Buy, the Fagor Duo 8-Quart Stainless Steel Pressure Cooker.)