

Slow Cooker Tips and Techniques

Adapted from Foodnetwork.com

To make the best use of your slow cooker, follow the guidelines below:

- **Chop and assemble the ingredients the night before. Cover and refrigerate ingredients until it's time for cooking. If your cooker has a removable liner, assemble and refrigerate the food in the liner rather than a bowl.**
- **Keep the lid securely on the cooker during the cooking. Do not take off the lid and peek at your meal. Opening the slow cooker lets heat escape and slows cooking. Each peek you take during the cooking process will add an additional 15 to 20 minutes of cooking time.**
- **Do not put frozen food in your slow cooker. Remember the danger zone- food should not be kept between the temperatures of 40 – 140 degrees for more than two hours. Bacteria will grow on food that put in the slow cooker frozen. Meat and vegetables should be fully thawed before putting in slow cooker.**
- **Choose the right cut of meat for your slow cooker. Cheaper cuts such as chuck roasts, short ribs, pork shoulders and lamb shanks (fattier and tougher meats) become tender in a slow cooker. Leaner cuts like pork tenderloin tend to dry out. Dark meat chicken – thighs, drumsticks, etc. remain juicier than white meat.**
- **Use the right size cooker recommended. This helps ensure that the slow cooker isn't overflowing or under filled. A slow cooker should be filled between one half and two thirds full.**
- **For extra flavor - brown your meat and cook your vegetables such as onion and garlic before adding them to the slow cooker. Dredge the meat in flour before browning to help get a thicker sauce.**
- **Adding fresh herbs or some fresh lemon or lime juice at the end of simmering can add flavor.**

