

Slow-Cooker Bacon Jam

Adapted from <http://www.marthastewart.com/326881/slow-cooker-bacon-jam>

Yield: about 3 cups

Cook Time: 3 ½ to 4 hours

Crockpot Setting: High

Ingredients

- 1 ½ pounds sliced bacon, cut crosswise into 1-inch piece
- 2 medium yellow onions, diced small
- 4-5 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
- ½ cup cider vinegar
- ½ cup packed dark-brown sugar
- ½ cup pure maple syrup
- ¾ cup brewed coffee
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper

Directions

1. In a large skillet, cook bacon over medium-high, stirring occasionally, until fat is rendered and bacon is lightly browned, about 20 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towels to crockpot.
2. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon fat from skillet (reserve for another use); add onions and garlic, and cook until onions are translucent, about 6 minutes.
3. Add vinegar, brown sugar, maple syrup, and coffee and bring to a boil, stirring and scraping up browned bits from skillet with a wooden spoon, about 2 minutes. Add bacon and stir to combine.
4. Transfer mixture to a 6-quart slow cooker and cook on high, uncovered, until liquid is syrupy, 3 ½ to 4 hours.
5. Transfer to a food processor; pulse until coarsely chopped. Let cool, then refrigerate in airtight containers, up to 4 weeks.

Crock Pot Brownies

Adapted from <http://cleverhousewife.com/2012/03/crock-pot-brownies/>

Yield: 14

Cook Time: 3 ½ to 4 hours

Crockpot Setting: Low

Ingredients

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 ¼ cup flour
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt (you can omit or decrease amount if using salted butter)
- ½ cup butter, chopped
- 8 oz unsweetened chocolate squares, chopped
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup walnuts or pecans, coarsely chopped (optional)
- 1 cup chocolate chips of any variety parchment paper

Directions

1. Spray a 5 qt Slow Cooker with cooking spray. Line the bottom with parchment paper to fit, and lightly spray the paper. This will make for easier cleanup and removal.
2. In a small bowl, mix together flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt (omit the salt if using salted butter).
3. In a microwave safe bowl, microwave the chopped butter and unsweetened chocolate in 30 second intervals. Stir after each interval, and continue until the chocolate is melted. You can also do this on the stove or using a double boiler.
4. Add sugar and vanilla to the melted chocolate and stir to combine.
5. Add eggs to wet mixture and combine.
6. Add dry flour mixture to your wet mixture. Stir in nuts and chocolate chips, just until moistened. Do not overmix.
7. Carefully pour batter into your slow cooker and smooth the top with a spatula.
8. Cover and cook on low for 3½ hours. Then uncover and cook for 30 more minutes. Remove the crock/dish from the heating source and run a knife around the edge to loosen brownies from sides. Let cool in crockpot 30 minutes.
9. Flip brownies out onto a cutting board. Do this by placing a plate on the top of the dish, and then flipping upside down. Carefully peel off the parchment paper and cut into squares.

Slow-Cooker Pear and Apple Butter

Adapted from <http://www.marthastewart.com/326858/slow-cooker-pear-and-apple-butter?center=0&gallery=274310&slide=285815>

Yield: about 6 cups

Cook Time: 8 hours

Crockpot Setting: High

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 pounds Bartlett or D'Anjou pears (about 5)
- 2 1/2 pounds McIntosh or Gala apples (about 5)
- 3/4 cup packed dark-brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground ginger (optional)
- 1 cinnamon stick

Directions

1. Peel, quarter, and core pears and apples.
2. In a food processor, finely grate fruit (in batches if necessary), then transfer to a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker.
3. Stir in dark-brown sugar, salt, spices, and cinnamon stick. Cover and cook on high, 4 hours.
4. Remove cinnamon stick and reserve.
5. Transfer mixture to processor (in batches if necessary) and process until smooth. Return to slow cooker, along with cinnamon stick, and cook on high, uncovered, until mixture is thick and browned, 4 hours.
6. Discard cinnamon stick and let mixture cool.
7. Transfer to airtight containers and refrigerate, up to 3 weeks, or freeze, up to 3 months.

Curried Vegetable and Chickpea Stew

Adapted from <http://www.thekitchn.com/slowcooker-recipe-curry-vege-67520>

Yield: serves 8 – 10 (half recipe if you don't want leftovers)

Cook Time: 4 hours

Crockpot Setting: High

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 all-purpose potatoes, diced
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon curry powder, preferably yellow (Madras)
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1-inch piece ginger, peeled and grated (about 1 tablespoon)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper (add more at the end of cooking if you prefer spicy)
- 2 cups vegetable broth (or chicken broth)
- 2 (16-ounce) cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 medium head of cauliflower, cut into bite-sized florets
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes with their juices
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 10-ounces baby spinach
- 1 cup coconut milk

Directions

1. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Sauté the onion with one teaspoon of salt until translucent, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the potatoes and another teaspoon of salt, and sauté until just translucent around the edges.
3. Stir in the curry, brown sugar, ginger, garlic, and chili and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
4. Pour in 1/4 cup of broth and scrape the bottom of the pan to deglaze. Pour this onion-potato mixture into the bowl of your slow cooker.
5. To the slow-cooker, add the rest of the broth, chickpeas, bell pepper, cauliflower, tomatoes with their juices, the pepper, and the final teaspoon of salt. Stir to combine. The liquid should come half-way up the sides of the bowl; add more broth as necessary.
6. Cover and cook for 4 hours on HIGH.
7. Stir in the spinach and coconut milk. Cover with lid for 1 minute to allow the spinach to wilt.
8. Taste and adjust salt and other seasonings as needed.
9. Serve on its own or over couscous or rice.

Slow-Cooked Hoisin Pork Wraps with Peanut Slaw

Adapted from <http://www.thekitchn.com/dinner-for-a-crowd-recipe-slow-79670>

Yield: serves about 12 people (half if you don't want leftovers)

Cook Time: 10 hours

Crockpot Setting: Low

Hoisin and Ginger Shredded Pork

6 pounds pork butt, trimmed of thick fat

Salt and pepper

6 cloves garlic, smashed

1 large piece fresh ginger, about five inches long

1 bottle hoisin sauce (12-15 ounces)*

1. Rub the trimmed pork shoulder all over with salt and fresh cracked black pepper. Put in the slow cooker (cut in pieces first, if necessary).
2. Add the smashed garlic cloves, tucking them around the pork.
3. Peel and grate the ginger and put it in.
4. Pour the hoisin sauce over everything.
5. Cover and cook on low for about 10 hours or overnight.
6. When finished and tender, use two large forks to shred the meat and mix it with the sauce.

*Note: Hoisin sauce is a rather sweet and lightly spicy barbecue sauce used in Chinese cooking. If you don't want to use a processed product from the store, try making your own. Basic hoisin involves common ingredients like soy sauce, honey, hot sauce. Try a google search for a recipe.

- **To Serve:**

- 1 batch Crunchy Peanut Slaw (see below)

- 2 dozen small tortillas or wraps

- Spicy chili-garlic sauce (if desired)

- Warm the tortillas in the microwave, covered with a damp towel. Serve the pork, tortillas, and slaw together, wrapping up the slaw and pork together.

Crunchy Peanut Slaw

Makes 1 big bowl of slaw, serves at least 8

Salad

1 medium head green cabbage, outer leaves removed

1 1/2 cups roasted, unsalted peanuts

1 bunch green onions

1 cup chopped cilantro (about two big handfuls unchopped)

Salt and pepper

Dressing

1/2 cup light oil, like canola

3 tablespoons rice vinegar

1 tablespoon sugar (or more, to taste)

1 tablespoon sesame oil

1 teaspoon soy sauce (or more, to taste)

1. Shred the cabbage very finely. The fineness of the shredded cabbage is really what makes this salad; you want it in threads, almost, and with the threads chopped into bite-size lengths.
2. Toss with the peanuts in a large bowl.
3. Chop the scallions, including the green and white parts. Toss the scallions and chopped cilantro with the cabbage.
4. Season very lightly with salt and pepper.
5. Whisk the dressing until emulsified, then taste and adjust to your own preferences of sweetness and saltiness.
6. Toss with the cabbage.
7. Garnish with a few more peanuts and serve.

How to Cook Beans in Your Crockpot

From <http://www.thekitchn.com/recipe-basics-how-to-cook-bean-74529>

Yield: serves about 12 people (half if you don't want leftovers)

Cook Time: 5-8 hours

Crockpot Setting: Low

Ingredients

- 1 16-oz bag of dried beans (or more, if desired)
- Water
- 2 teaspoons salt (per 16-oz bag)

Directions

1. If desired, soak beans overnight in plenty of cool water. Opinions vary, but we have found this decreases some of our digestion issues.
2. In the morning, drain and rinse the beans. Discard any beans that floated to the top of the water or look otherwise unsavory.
3. Pour the beans in to your slow cooker. If using more than one bag, be sure that you leave a few inches of clearance at the top of your slow cooker.
4. Add a teaspoon of salt and enough fresh water so the beans are covered by an inch or two.
5. Cover and turn on low.
6. At the 4 hour mark, add another teaspoon of salt, stir the beans, and eat a few to see how far the beans have cooked. Continue checking every half hour or so, and stop cooking when the beans have reached your desired doneness.
7. After cooking several batches, we have a good idea of when the beans will be done and no longer check doneness every half hour unless we're cooking a new kind of bean. In our slow cooker, we've found that 5 hours is ideal for al dente beans destined for soups (where they will continue cooking a bit), 6 hours is good for ready-to-eat beans, and 7 hours gives us very soft beans, and 8 hours yields beans perfect for mashing.

Good Tip: Stock in the Slow Cooker

From From <http://www.thekitchn.com/good-tip-stock-14176>

Homemade stock is kitchen magic, an alchemy that turns ragged stalks and bones into liquid gold. All it takes is a chicken carcass, vegetables, and water. And yet I let chicken bones and celery pile up in my freezer, reluctant to keep my stove on for an entire evening.

Then I had a brilliant idea - use the slow cooker! With homemade stock bright in my mind, a Google search quickly disabused me of any notions of originality. Lots of people make stock in their slow cooker, and for good reason. A slow cooker is the perfect magic cauldron, maintaining a low simmer all day to draw out all the juicy chicken goodness with almost zero supervision from you. This may not be your clearest, most perfect stock, skimmed and fussed over, but it will do very well for your autumn soups. Plus it makes your apartment smell wonderful! I finally cleaned out my freezer again tonight and I am going to sleep with the smells of chicken broth and herbs percolating through the air.

To make stock in your slow cooker: Put in one chicken carcass, preferably one with a little meat still on it. Add a couple of carrots, chopped into large pieces but not peeled, some cut-up stalks of celery, one quartered onion, and a bay leaf. You can also add some thyme, basil and peppercorns, if you like. Add water until the crock is 3/4 full, and cover.

Set on low for 10 hours, or high for 5 hours. At the end taste and add salt, if you want to. Let cool in the crock for about half an hour, until it's cool enough to handle, then strain out and discard the vegetables and bones. Refrigerate until cold, skim off the fat, then put in individual baggies and freeze.

Spinach Lasagna

Adapted from <http://www.vegetariantimes.com/recipe/spinach-lasagna/>

Yield: serves about 8 people

Cook Time: 4 or 6 hours

Crockpot Setting: Low (6 hours) or High (4 hours)

"Many people don't know that the crock inside a slow cooker is ovenproof and you can transfer a dish like lasagna into the oven (up to 400°F) for 10 minutes to brown the top," says Golino. Just be sure the pot is hot, to avoid drastic temperature changes that can cause it to crack.

Ingredients

- 1 medium onion, quartered
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves
- 1 Tbs. dried oregano
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled, plus 1 clove minced (1 tsp.), divided
- 1 8-oz. pkg. tempeh, cut into chunks
- 1 28-oz. can chopped fire-roasted tomatoes
- 2 Tbs. olive oil, plus more for oiling slow cooker
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground black pepper
- 2 10-oz. pkgs. frozen spinach, thawed and drained
- 8 oven-ready lasagna noodles
- 1 16-oz. jar roasted red peppers, rinsed and drained
- 1 16-oz. container low-fat ricotta cheese, divided
- 1 cup grated Swiss cheese, divided

1. Place onion, basil, oregano, and 2 whole garlic cloves in food processor; pulse 6 times, or until onion and garlic are chopped.
2. Add tempeh, and pulse until tempeh is ground. Add tomatoes, oil, salt, and pepper; pulse until chunky sauce forms.
3. Combine spinach and minced garlic in bowl, and season with salt and pepper.
4. Coat bottom and sides of 4-quart slow cooker with oil.
5. Spread 1 cup tomato sauce over bottom, and cover with layer of lasagna noodles, breaking them in pieces to fit around edges.
6. Spread ¾ cup spinach mixture over top.
7. Place 1 layer roasted red peppers over spinach, and top with ¾ cup ricotta.
8. Spread 1 cup tomato sauce over ricotta. Sprinkle with 1/3 cup Swiss cheese.
9. Repeat, layering noodles, spinach, peppers, ricotta, Swiss cheese, and tomato sauce.
10. Top with 1 more layer noodles and remaining spinach, tomato sauce, ricotta, and Swiss cheese.
11. Cook 4 hours on high or 6 hours on low.
12. You may consider browning in oven for 10 to 15 minutes at 400oF at the end of the cook time.
13. Let stand uncovered 10 minutes before serving.

Moroccan Chicken Stew with Carrots

Adapted from <http://www.marthastewart.com/315825/slow-cooker-spiced-chicken-stew-with-car?center=0&gallery=274310&slide=263118>

Yield: serves about 4 people

Cook Time: 4 or 8 hours

Crockpot Setting: Low (8 hours) or High (4 hours)

Ingredients

2 pounds carrots, peeled and cut into 1 1/2-inch lengths
2 pounds winter squash (such as butternut or acorn) peeled and cubed
8 skinless chicken thighs (about 2 1/2 pounds total)**
1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
1 medium onion, thinly sliced, preferably vertically
1 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon coarse salt
1/2 teaspoon ground pepper
1/2 cup dried apricots
8 to 10 whole olives, preferably green
1 cup chicken or vegetable stock
1/4 cup raisins
1/2 cup cilantro leaves
1/4 cup sliced almonds, toasted if desired
Couscous, for serving (optional)

Directions

1. Place carrots, squash, garlic and onion in slow cooker.
2. In a bowl, toss together chicken with spices; add to slow cooker.
3. Add olives and apricots.
4. Add broth.
5. Cover and cook on high, 4 hours (or on low, 8 hours), adding raisins 15 minutes before cooking is done.
6. Using a slotted spoon, transfer chicken and vegetables to a dish (remove cinnamon stick); top with cilantro and almonds.
7. Season cooking liquid with salt and pepper; spoon over chicken.
8. Serve with couscous, if desired.

**Note: You can also use 2/12 pounds of bone-in chicken breasts, bone-in thighs, or boneless skinless breasts.