

Fast Food with Slow Cookers

Fast Food with slow cookers – is that really possible? Absolutely! Each day we face the challenge of providing a nutritious home-cooked meal for our family, while juggling a busy work and school schedule. Too often we opt for eating out or picking up dinner from a fast-food restaurant. While that is fine to do occasionally, it is not the most economical or healthy choice. Slow cookers provide a great alternative to those options. There are several slow cooker cookbooks that can be found at most bookstores and on-line.

We must make sure we follow some basic food safety rules and tips while using our slow cookers.

- * Make sure you always start with a clean cooker, utensils, and work areas.
- * Keep your perishable meats, vegetables, and other ingredients refrigerated until you are ready to put them into your cooker, this cuts down on the time bacteria can multiply.
- * Always defrost your poultry or chicken prior to putting it into your slow cooker.
- * Cut food into small chunks to make sure the meat is cooked thoroughly. Brown meat before placing it in the cooker. This adds extra flavor from the juices.
- * In the event of a power outage, throw the food away. Even if it looks done it may not be safe.
- * Test for doneness using a food thermometer. Poultry: 170 degrees F. for breast; 180 degrees F. for a thigh, Ground Meat: 160 degrees F., Roasts: 145 degrees F. (medium rare), 160 degrees F. (medium), 170 degrees F. (well), Casseroles, stuffing, and soups: 165 degrees F.
- * Make sure leftovers are stored in shallow covered containers within two hours after the cooking is finished. Leftovers should be reheated in the oven, on the stove top or microwave oven. Slow cookers are not recommended for reheating food.
- * Spray the inside of the slow cooker with cooking spray for easy clean-up.
- * Processed cheese tends to work better than Cheddar cheese.
- * Cook and drain ground meat before adding to the slow cooker.
- * Add crushed or ground seasonings toward the end of the cooking to get the maximum result of flavor.

3 Can Chicken

5 boneless skinless chicken breast halves
1 – 10 ½ ounce can cream of chicken soup
1 – 10 ½ ounce can cream of celery soup
1 – 10 ½ ounce can cream of mushroom soup
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon dried thyme
½ teaspoon of black pepper

Place the chicken in the bottom of the cooker. Mix the remaining ingredients together and pour on top of the chicken. Cook on low for 6 - 7 hours or until internal temperature of the chicken reaches 170 degrees F. Serve over cooked rice.

If you are new to slow cooking or want to get reacquainted with the one you already have, contact our office at 903-473-5000, ext. 157 for more information.