

# Food For The Hungry

**Crock on...Crock on.....**  
*Fun and tasty ways to Crockpot cook*

**Mount Vernon  
Knox County, Ohio**

**Cooking Demonstration  
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**Introduction, Worksheets and Recipes**

**With**

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**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Recipes provided by Senior Certified Executive Chef, Paul Higgins through OSU Extension Knox County *Get Fresh with Chef Paul* farm to table initiative. Chef Higgins is member of the American Culinary Federation, and former member of the National Research Chefs Association. In 2011 Mr. Higgins received a lifetime Fellowship in The Honorable Order of the Golden Toque.

Mr. Higgins is the producer and creator of *A Journey in Taste* and *Senior-dining.com*, and is an Affiliated Scholar at Kenyon College Rural Life Center, Local Food and Aging project, [rurallife.kenyon.edu](http://rurallife.kenyon.edu). For additional information please email to: [higginspl@kenyon.edu](mailto:higginspl@kenyon.edu)

Mr. Higgins works with local community organizations and educators throughout Knox County and Ohio to share his knowledge, experience and expertise to promote the use of *fresh, local foods*.

To further aid in making healthy food choices, Mr. Higgins has partnered with the **Knox County Hunger Task Force Educational Committee** to encourage the use of *fresh, local foods* and demonstrate quick and easy ways to make meal time an enjoyable and healthy experience.

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## Crock on...Crock on...

Getting your *Crock on* is an introduction to basic crock pot (slow cooker) cooking.

Since being inspired in 1958 and further developed sold starting in 1970 the crock pot has become a staple in households around the country.

The first cookbook was written in 1975 and became an instant best seller; today there are crock pot cook books that fit every style of cuisine.

To develop great taste and to get maximum health benefits use fresh local vegetables and herbs.

Crock pot recipes are a good way to follow the **My Plate** guidelines by eating 5-9 fruits and vegetable daily.

The following pages will introduce you to the crock pot and how it works. This includes some basic procedures that you should know to ensure that your crock pot meals come out perfectly every time.

Understanding the basics of safe food handling practices will also keep everyone healthy, ensuring a great dining experience.

Using your crock pot properly will result in safe and nutritious meals for you and the whole family.

The recipes are simple and designed to make crock pot cooking enjoyable. Once you understand the basics of how to use your crock pot you can explore and create your own signature meals.

Please visit the OSU Extension, Knox County webpage, at <http://go.osu.edu/BEGn> for the recipes from Crock Pot cooking with Chef Paul as well as other local food recipes.

## Crock Pot Cooking Cooking without Peeking

### Crock on...Crock on...

*Improve your Life*, our days are full getting the kids to school, the sitter, shopping, going to the doctor and all of a sudden it's dinner time! You still want to be the hero when it comes to meal preparation, and your solution might be your crock pot!

Crock Pots are available in a range of sizes, from 1 quart to 8 1/2 quarts. Use the size recommended in each recipe so that your meal will cook properly. Most crock pot recipes work best in a 5- to 6-quart crock pot.

A crock pot has many benefits, including convenience and saving time and money. Although it requires some planning ahead in the morning (or the night before), preparing a crock pot meal is well worth it. Raw ingredients must be kept refrigerated until they are put into the crock pot. Meat or poultry should be defrosted and vegetables need to be cut.

You want to be sure that the liquid in the crock pot almost covers the ingredients to ensure proper cooking.

Don't overload the pot – most crock pot recipes will tell you what size pot you should use. A general rule is to fill it about half full.

One benefit of crock pot cooking is that it can improve the nutritional value of food. By preparing the food yourself, you can cut back on the amount of salt by using low sodium or sodium free broths. Crockpots can also save money because they make less expensive cuts of meat very tender, due to the long cooking time.

Take good care of your crock pot. Some crock pots have removable stoneware liners that are dishwasher safe. If your crock pot requires hand washing, wash it right after cooking with hot water. Don't ever pour cold water into stoneware that is hot – this may cause the pot to crack.

There are many sources of recipes for your crock pot. Most pots come with a cook book and online sources are plentiful. As you become more familiar with crock pot cooking, you will be able to adapt family favorite meals to crock pot cooked meals!

## Crock Pot Food Safety

Always start with clean hands, utensils, work surfaces and a clean crock pot.

Crock Pots are available in a range of sizes, from 1 quart to 8 1/2 quarts. Use the size recommended in each recipe so that your meal will cook properly. Most crock pot recipes work best in a 5- to 6 quart crock pot.

Thaw frozen items beforehand. This is necessary for meats, as well as frozen vegetables. Thawing food before putting it into a crock pot reduces the amount of time the food is in the temperature “danger zone,” between 40 and 140 degrees F. This is the ideal time for bacteria on or in food to multiply, which is a food safety hazard. Food should move through the danger zone within two hours.

Liquid is necessary to create steam. When cooking meat or poultry, the liquid level should cover the ingredients to ensure effective heat transfer throughout the crock pot. Follow the manufacturer's recipes and directions for best results.

Since vegetables cook the slowest, place them at the bottom and sides of the slow cooker.

Dried beans, especially kidney beans, contain a natural toxin. These toxins are easily destroyed by boiling. Safe steps for preparing would include soaking the beans for 12 hours, rinsing, and boiling for at least 10 minutes before adding the beans to a slow cooker.

Before tasting, check meat and poultry with a food thermometer to make sure it has reached a safe internal temperature to destroy bacteria. Roasts: 145°F to 160°F; poultry: 165°F.

Food safety is especially important for people at high risk of a food borne illness: older adults, children, pregnant women, or anyone undergoing cancer treatment or dealing with a chronic illness.

The crock pot cooks foods slowly at a low temperature – generally between 170° and 280° F – over several hours. The combination of direct heat from the pot, lengthy cooking, and steam, destroy bacteria making the crock pot a safe process for cooking foods. **KEEP THE LID ON** the crock pot during cooking. The temperature can drop 10 to 15 degrees F when the lid is removed and the cooking process is slowed by as much as 30 minutes.

To assure safe cooking when using a crock pot you may want to test the heating capacity. Fill the bowl in the crock pot one-half to two-thirds full of water. Put on the lid and turn the heat to low, or 200 degrees F. After eight hours, check the temperature of the water with a meat thermometer. The water should be 185 degrees. If the temperature is below that, the slow cooker may be unsafe to use.

#### **Other safety tips:**

- If you're not home during the entire cooking process and the power goes out, throw away the food even if it looks done.
- Do not use the warm setting to cook food. It is only designed to keep cooked food hot.
- Do not reheat food or leftovers in a slow cooker; instead reheat on stove top or microwave and transfer to slow cooker to keep warm (140°F. or above)
- Do not leave cooked food to cool down in the crock pot. Eat immediately and place leftovers in shallow containers, then refrigerate.

It is also important to inspect your crock pot from time to time to ensure that it is not cracked or showing signs of excessive wear. It is especially important to inspect your crockpot if it is older, as prolonged use may damage the crockpot.

Check the plug and cord to be certain there are no exposed wires. A wall receptacle has two vertical slots and a round hole centered below them. The left slot is slightly larger than the right. The left slot is called "**neutral**," the right slot is called "**hot**" and the hole below them is called "**ground**." The prongs on a plug should fit into these slots easily. If not, do not try to force the plug into the socket, as this is very dangerous.



## What's First

### **Add at the Beginning:**

Some ingredients stand up to, and benefit from, longer cooking times more than others. These can be added at the beginning of cooking,

*Vegetables* - Onions, root vegetables like potatoes and carrots, winter squashes, tomatoes, celery, cauliflower, and broccoli

*Meats* - Lean cuts from the shoulder and rump of beef, lamb, goat, pork, whole chickens, chicken thighs, and chicken legs

*Spices* - Most spices can and should be added at the beginning of cooking, though some like rosemary can become bitter over the longer cooking times and best if added at the end.

### **Add at the End:**

Quicker-cooking ingredients wouldn't hold up over hours of cooking. Add the following ingredients in the last 30-45 minutes of cooking.

*Vegetables* - Softer vegetables like peas, corn, bell peppers, and spinach.

*Meat* - Chicken breast\*, fish, and other seafood. \*Check chicken for doneness at the end of the cooking time and if still pink in the middle, cook a little longer until done.

*Pantry Items* - Rice, noodles, other grains, soaked beans. You can add these already cooked or uncooked items. Adding uncooked is helpful for soaking up excess liquid and it makes them more flavorful. Beans added at the end of cooking maintain some firmness; though they can be added at the beginning if that's easier.

*Dairy products* - Milk, yogurt, sour cream, and cream cheese.

### **Cut All Ingredients to the Same Size:**

This ensures that all the ingredients will cook at basically the same rate.

### **Take the Time to Brown Your Ingredients:**

It's tempting to just dump all the ingredients in the crock pot and though this is perfectly fine and gives you a dinner to come home to, taking a few extra minutes will bring your meal to the next level. Browning the vegetables and searing the meat before placing them in the crock pot will develop a richer, more intense flavor to your recipe.

### **Watch the wine:**

Because the cooker is sealed, the alcohol in wine doesn't evaporate out as it would in a regular pot or skillet. Just a splash goes a long way.

**Use less Liquid:**

There is very little evaporation in the crock pot. If using a regular soup recipe, you won't need to use all the liquid called for. Put all your ingredients in the crock pot and then pour the liquid over top to cover the vegetables by about 1/2 inch. If there is too much liquid towards the end of cooking, remove the lid for the last 30 minutes to let some of it evaporate.

**Place Longer-Cooking Ingredients on the Bottom:**

Meats and root vegetables will take longer to become tender than. Place those items around the bottom and sides of the crock pot.

**Cooking Time:**

Recipes with meat like chili and roasts are best when cooked for six hours minimum or up to ten hours. Vegetarian recipes are best cooked from two to four hour. Cooking vegetables too long will turn them mushy.

**Choose the right cut:**

Chuck roasts, short ribs, pork shoulders and lamb shanks (fatty and tougher meats) become very tender with the moist, low heat of a crock pot. Leaner cuts like pork tenderloin tend to dry out. Dark meat chicken thighs and drumsticks will remain juicier than white meat breasts.

**Keep the lid closed:**

Each peek you take during the cooking process will add an additional 15 to 20 minutes of cooking time. Curb the urge to stir; it's usually not necessary and tends to slow down the cooking.

**Care for your crock:**

The ceramic insert in a crock pot can crack if exposed to abrupt temperature shifts. Start with the insert at room temperature before putting it in a preheated base.



# Crock Pot Vegetable Soup

## Ingredients:

2 tablespoons vegetable oil (divided)  
1 large onion (diced)  
4 garlic cloves (pressed)  
2 large carrots diced  
2 small celery ribs (diced)  
1 medium turnip (diced)  
2 cups green beans (cut in 1-in. pieces)  
1/4 head cabbage (chopped)  
2 small russet potatoes (peeled and diced)  
2 (14 ounce) cans diced tomatoes (undrained)  
6 cups chicken or vegetable broth  
1/2 teaspoon thyme  
Salt and pepper

## DIRECTIONS:

In a large soup pot, heat one tablespoon of vegetable oil over medium high heat. Add the onion and cook till nearly translucent

Add the garlic and cook another couple of minutes.

Add the rest of the chopped vegetables, cooking for just a minute. Add additional oil if needed. You're not cooking the vegetables 100%, just releasing the wonderful flavors to enhance your soup.\*

Add the thyme and salt and pepper

Place the vegetables in the crock pot, add the tomatoes and broth.

Cook on low 7-9 hours or high 4-6 hours.

Just before serving, gently mash some of the potato chunks against the side of the crock pot to thicken the soup, stir

\*cooking the vegetables partially is not required. Placing the vegetables in the crock pot and adding the tomatoes and broth will work as well.

# Crock Pot Minestrone Soup

## Ingredients:

2 tsp olive oil  
1/2 cup chopped onion  
1 cup diced carrots  
1/2 cup diced celery  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1 (15 oz) can white or red kidney beans, drained  
32 oz reduced sodium chicken or vegetable broth  
2 peeled and diced or 1 (14 oz) can petite diced tomatoes with juice  
1 tbsp minced rosemary  
2 bay leaves  
2 tbsp chopped fresh or dried basil  
1/4 cup chopped fresh or dried Italian parsley  
1/2 tsp salt and fresh black pepper  
1 medium 8 oz zucchini, diced  
2 cups chopped fresh (or frozen defrosted) spinach or seasonal greens  
2 cups cooked elbow pasta

## Directions:

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat

Add the carrots, celery, onion, garlic and sauté until tender and fragrant, about 15 minutes.

Transfer to the crock pot along with the broth, tomatoes, beans, salt and pepper. Add the rosemary, basil and parsley

Cover and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours.

Forty minutes before the soup is done cooking, add zucchini and spinach. Cover and cook 30 more minutes. Remove bay leaves, rosemary sprig, and season to taste with salt and black pepper.

Serve 1-1/4 cups soup with 1/4 cup cooked pasta in each bowl and top with parmesan cheese (optional)

# Crock Pot Ham and Bean Soup

## Ingredients:

- 1 (8 ounce) package 15-bean soup mix
- 1 ham bone
- 3 cups cubed fully cooked ham
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups water
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 1 (15.5 ounce) can great Northern beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 bay leaf

## Directions:

Place 15-bean soup mix in a large bowl and cover with several inches of cool water; soak in refrigerator 8 hours to overnight. Drain and rinse.

Place 15-bean soup mix, ham bone, cooked ham, chicken broth, water, onion, carrots, great Northern beans, garlic, black pepper, salt, and bay leaf in a slow cooker; stir to combine. Cook on Low for 8 to 10 hours.

## Crock Pot Beef Stew

### Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 lbs stew meat
- 1 (1 1/4 ounce) packets Onion Soup Mix
- 1 1/2 teaspoons beef bouillon granules
- 3 -4 potatoes, cubed
- 4 -5 carrots, sliced
- 2 stalks celery, sliced
- 1 (28 ounce) cans whole tomatoes, with juice
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch, mixed with 1/4 cup water below

### Directions:

Put all ingredients except cornstarch in a slow cooker on low heat for 6-8-10 hours.

Add 2 tablespoons of cornstarch mixed with water. Turn heat to high and stir until thickened.

## Crock Pot Barbecue Pork

### Ingredients

- 1 (3- to 4-lb.) boneless pork shoulder roast, trimmed
- 1 (18-oz.) bottle barbecue sauce
- 1 (12-oz.) can cola soft drink

### Preparation

Place roast in a lightly greased 6-qt. crock pot, pour barbecue sauce and cola over roast. Cover and cook on low 8 to 10 hours or until meat shreds easily with a fork.

Transfer pork to a cutting board; shred with two forks, removing any large pieces of fat. Skim fat from sauce, and stir back in shredded pork

## Crock Pot Spaghetti with Meatballs

### Ingredients:

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 (16-ounce) package frozen fully cooked meatballs (thawed)
- 1 (26-ounce) jar spaghetti sauce
- 1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes, with juice
- 1-1/3 cups water
- 8 oz spaghetti pasta broken in half
- Tsp of basil, oregano or Italian blend herbs (optional)

### Preparation:

In 4-5 quart crock pot, place onions, cooked meatballs, diced tomatoes and spaghetti sauce. Stir gently.

Rinse the spaghetti sauce jar with the water and add it to the Crockpot. Cover and cook on low for 6-7 hours or on high for 3-1/2 hours, until onions are tender and meatballs are hot.

Add herbs (optional)

Add the spaghetti. Stir and make sure that all of the spaghetti separates and is mixed with sauce.

Cover and cook on high for 20-25 minutes, or until the spaghetti is tender to the bite, with a slight firmness in the center.

## McGee's Hobo Beans

### Ingredients:

- 1 lbs hamburger
- 1/2 lbs bacon or hot sausage
- 1 (28 oz) can baked beans with pork
- 1 (15 oz) can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15 oz) can lima beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15 oz) can butter beans
- 2 med onions, small diced
- 1 tbsp. white vinegar
- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon prepared mustard

### Directions:

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook hamburger, bacon or sausage with onion until hamburger is browned and crumbly 8-12 minutes, drain excess grease.

Stir cooked mixture with, baked pork and beans, kidney beans, lima beans and butter beans onions, in crock pot add ketchup, brown sugar vinegar, and mustard.

Cover and cook on Low until hot and thickened, at least 3 hours.

## Crock Pot Apples

### Ingredients:

6 lg tart apples, cored, sliced and peeled (peels on if preferred)  
1 cup raisins  
1 cup granulated sugar  
1/4 cup light brown sugar, packed  
1 tablespoon cinnamon  
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg  
3 tablespoons cornstarch  
4 tablespoons butter, sliced

### Directions:

Put all ingredients except butter into crock pot; stir, and add butter on top.  
Cook on high for 1-1/2 to 2 hours OR cook on low 3-1/2 to 4 hours, stir once half way through.

## Crock Pot Roasted Beets

### Ingredients:

Beets  
Olive oil  
Foil wrap

### Preparation:

Trim the beets, leaving about 1 inch of the tops on and bottoms intact.  
Place each beet on a square of foil and drizzle with about 1/2 teaspoon of olive oil.  
Fold the corners of the foil around the beets and twist to seal.  
Put the wrapped beets in crock pot, cover, and cook on HIGH for 3 to 4 hours, or until the beets are tender.  
When they're cool enough to handle, trim ends and slip the skins off, using a paper towel.  
Use beets in salads or as a side dish.

## Prompts for Talking Points

### WHAT TO DO FIRST:

Read the use-and-care booklet that comes with your crock pot to familiarize yourself with features and safety practices.

### LESS IS MORE:

For optimal results, don't overfill your crock pot. Half to three-quarters full yields the best results.

### COST EFFECTIVE:

A crock pot is designed to be used unattended. Cooking temps range from 170 to 280 degrees and consume about the same amount of energy on the low-heat setting as a 75-watt light bulb.

### ADJUST:

Recipes prepared in a crock pot require less liquid because the ingredients give off more liquid during simmering. Using a favorite recipe, reduce the amount of liquid by 1/2 to 1 cup. Add liquid near end of cooking if needed.

### NO PEEKING:

A glass lid allows you to check on food without lifting the lid. Removing the lid and stirring reduces the temperature inside and inhibits cooking.

### ADD FLAVORS:

For meats, first brown in a skillet on the stovetop to develop flavor and color.

### CROCK POT ADVANTAGES:

It's "all-day cooking without looking".

They are economical to operate and a great way to tenderize less expensive and tougher cuts of meat

### PRE-HEATING:

Preheating the crock before adding ingredients or cooking on the highest setting for the first hour will ensure a rapid heat start. Either will shorten the time foods are in the temperature danger zone. This is highly recommended when cooking meat or poultry in a crock pot



**Keep a Lid  
on It!**

**No  
*Peeking***



# HomeGrown

A guide to local food products in Knox County

Product	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV
ASPARAGUS		•	•					
GREEN ONIONS				•	•	•		
RADISHES			•	•	•			
RHUBARB		•	•					
FALL SPINACH						•	•	•
SPINACH		•	•					
BROCCOLI				•	•			
CABBAGE					•	•		
GREEN BEANS				•	•			
PEAS			•					
STRAWBERRIES			•	•				
BEETS			•					
BLUEBERRIES			•	•				
CARROTS					•	•	•	
CAULIFLOWER						•	•	•
CUCUMBERS				•	•	•		
SWEET PEPPERS				•	•	•		
POTATOES					•	•	•	•
RASPBERRIES				•		•		
SUMMER SQUASH				•	•	•		
SWEET CORN					•	•		
TOMATOES					•	•		
APPLES					•	•	•	•
MUSKMELON					•	•		
ONIONS						•	•	
LETTUCE		•	•	•				
WINTER SQUASH						•	•	
PUMPKINS							•	
WATERMELON					•	•	•	
HERBS			•	•	•			

• Peak Season •



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