

HEALTHY EATING

Pizza Week

Sunday, January 10,
2021 to Saturday,
January 16, 2021



Pizza can provide all the food groups, and it tastes so good! Enjoy more vegetables by using them as pizza toppings. Try adding a variety of toppings like green peppers, spinach, mushrooms, onions, tomatoes or even broccoli.

Healthy & Safe Meals Using a Slow Cooker

Americans' busy lifestyles often show up in their cooking and eating habits. More than 54 percent of food dollars are spent on food away from home, which is typically higher in calories and fat and lower in calcium, fiber, and iron. Planning meals ahead can improve health while saving time and money. When families eat together, meals are likely to be more nutritious. Family meals also provide a great time for children and parents to reconnect. One way to increase meals at home is to use a slow cooker. Check out the following information on slow cooker benefits, food safety, and recipe ideas.

Benefits, food safety, and recipe ideas:

Slow cooker benefits. They use less electricity than an oven and can be used year-round. Because of the long, low-temperature cooking, slow cookers help tenderize less-expensive cuts of meat. They usually allow for one-step preparation; putting all the ingredients in the slow cooker saves time and reduces cleanup. A variety of foods can be cooked in a slow cooker, including soups, stews, side dishes, main dishes, meats, poultry, and desserts.

Know your slow cooker. Most slow cookers have two or three settings. Food typically cooks in 6 to 10 hours on the low setting and four to six hours on the high setting. If possible, turn the slow cooker on the high setting for the first hour of cooking time and then use the setting that fits your needs. Read your slow cooker instruction manual and follow manufacturers' directions. Slow cookers are available in different sizes, so instructions will vary.

Slow cookers and food safety. Begin with a clean cooker, utensils and work area. Keep perishable foods refrigerated until preparation time. Store cut-up meat and vegetables separately in the fridge. Always thaw meat or poultry before putting it into a slow cooker. Vegetables cook slower than meat and poultry, so if using them, put vegetables in first. Then add meat and liquid suggested in the recipe, such as broth, water or sauce. Keep the lid in place, removing only to stir the food or check for doneness.

Safely handle leftovers. Do not store leftovers in a deep container, such as the slow cooker. Store leftovers in shallow covered containers and refrigerate within two hours after cooking is completed. Reheating leftovers in a



slow cooker is not recommended. Cooked food should be reheated on the stove, in a microwave, or in a conventional oven until it reaches 165 degrees Fahrenheit (F). Then the hot food can be placed in a preheated slow cooker to keep it hot for serving, at least 140 degrees F as measured with a food thermometer.

Recipe conversions. Most recipes can be converted. Because liquids do not boil away in a slow cooker, you can usually reduce liquids by one-third to one-half. This reduction in liquid does not apply to soups. Pasta may become mushy if added too early, so it could be added at the end of the cooking process or cooked separately and added just before serving. Milk, cheese and cream may be added one hour before serving.

[Slow Cooker Chicken Tortilla Soup](#)

Yield: 8 servings

Ingredients:

- 3 chicken breasts, boneless, skinless
- 2 (14.5 ounce) cans diced tomatoes with mild green chilies
- 2 (15 ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15 ounce) can tomato sauce, no salt added
- 1 (4 ounce) can green chilies
- 1 cup salsa
- 1 cup frozen corn (optional)
- Cheese, shredded (optional)
- Cooked rice or corn chips (optional)
- Fresh cilantro, gently rubbed under cold running water, chopped (optional)



Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water. Spray slow cooker bowl with non-stick cooking spray.
2. Place chicken breasts in bottom of slow cooker. Wash hands with soap and water after handling uncooked chicken.
3. Add tomatoes, black beans, tomato sauce, green chilies, salsa and corn, if desired. Gently mix.
4. Cook on low for 8-10 hours or on high for 4 to 6 hours and until internal temperature of the chicken reaches 165°F as measured with a food thermometer.
5. Thirty minutes before serving, remove chicken breast and shred. Return chicken to slow cooker and stir.
6. Optional, serve over rice or top with cheese, tortilla chips or cilantro, if desired.

Nutrition Information: Serving Size (1/8 of recipe): Calories 230; Total Fat 2g; Saturated Fat 0.5g; Sodium 845mg; Total Carbohydrates 32g; Fiber 10g

Source: food.unl.edu