

CUT



THE COST OF



COOKING



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City



Introduction



Working
across
Middlesbrough
to promote
healthy and
sustainable
living

Slow cookers are very energy efficient, cooking in an environmentally friendly way and saving money at the same time. Most slow cookers use only as much energy as a domestic light bulb!

The process of slow cooking allows all the flavours of the food to blend together, intensifying taste and ensuring very little loss of moisture. It works by retaining heat in the pan, the insulated pot preventing heat loss so very little energy is used to maintain the heat and cook the food.

The cooking temperature is relatively low and constant so food can be cooked safely over long periods of time without burning. Cheaper cuts of meat can be used as the slow cooking process tenderizes even the toughest of joints.

We hope you enjoy using your slow cooker and that the following recipes give you ideas of what you can cook and help you to plan and prepare delicious meals to suit you and your family.

Tips for using a slow cooker

1. Save time & effort

One of the main attractions for many is the ease of a slow-cooker so when you're looking for recipes, avoid those that suggest a lot of pre-preparation. For many dishes, particularly soups and stews, you really can just throw all the ingredients in. It can be a good idea to brown meat to give it some colour, but again this is not essential.

2. Get ahead

If you're short on time in the morning, prepare everything you need for your slow-cooked meal the night before, put it into the slow-cooker dish, cover and store in the fridge overnight. Ideally the dish should be as close to room temperature as possible, so take it out of the fridge when you wake up and leave it for 20 minutes before turning the cooker on.

3. Save money

Slow cookers are great for cooking cheaper cuts like beef brisket, pork shoulder, lamb shoulder and chicken thighs. You can also use less meat as slow-cooking really extracts a meaty flavour that permeates the whole dish. Bulk up with vegetables instead.

4. Trim the fat

You don't need to add oil to a slow cooker; the contents won't catch as long as there's enough moisture in there. You don't need a lot of fat on your meat either. Normally when you fry meat, a lot of the fat drains away. This won't happen in a slow cooker so trim it off; otherwise you might find you have pools of oil in your stew. This will give you a healthier result and it'll still be tasty.

Tips for using a slow cooker

5. Go easy on the liquid

Because your slow cooker will have a tightly sealed lid, the liquid won't evaporate. If you're adapting a standard recipe, it's best to reduce the liquid by roughly a third. Liquid should just cover the meat and vegetables. Don't overfill your slow cooker or it may start leaking out the top and the food won't cook as well. Half to two thirds full is ideal and certainly no more than three quarters.

6. Thickening

Just as the liquid doesn't reduce it also doesn't thicken. You can roll meat in a small amount of seasoned flour before adding it to the slow cooker or use a little cornflour at the end. If you want to do the latter, take a teaspoon or two of cornflour, mix it to a paste with a little cold water. Stir into your simmering slow cooker contents, then replace the lid.

7. Leave it alone

Slow cookers are designed to do their own thing so you don't need to keep checking the contents. Every time you take the lid off it will release some of the heat, so if you keep doing this you'll have to increase the cooking time.

8. When to add food

Ideally you want to choose recipes where most, if not all, of the ingredients can be added at the beginning, leaving you free to do other things. Root vegetables can take longer than meat and other vegetables so put these near the heat source, at the bottom of the pot. However in most cases, pasta, rice and fresh herbs will need to be added towards the end.

9. How long should I cook it for?

If a dish usually takes:

- 15 - 30 mins, cook it for 1 - 2 hours on High or 4 - 6 hours on Low
- 30 mins - 1 hour, cook it for 2 - 3 hours on High, 5 - 7 hours on Low
- 1 - 2 hours, cook it for 3 - 4 hours on High, 6 - 8 hours on Low
- 2 - 4 hours, cook it for 4 - 6 hours on High and 8 - 12 hours on Low

Lentil Soup

Preparation time:

10 minutes

Cooking time: 6 hours

Servings: 4



INGREDIENTS

100g dried red lentils

1 litre chicken stock

400g canned chopped tomatoes

2 dried bay leaves

3 garlic cloves, crushed

1 tbsp mild curry powder

2 small carrots, peeled and coarsely chopped

1 stalk of celery, trimmed and thinly sliced

2 medium potatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped

140g Greek yogurt

6 tbsp fresh coriander, finely chopped (optional)

METHOD

Rinse the lentils under cold water until the water runs clear, then drain.

Put the lentils, stock, tomatoes, bay leaves, garlic, curry powder, carrot, celery and potato in the slow cooker.

Cover and cook on low for 6 hours. Season with salt and pepper.

Divide into bowls, serve with Greek yogurt and sprinkle with freshly ground black pepper and coriander.

TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

For a vegetarian option, use vegetable stock instead of chicken.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City

Winter Vegetable Medley

Preparation time:

20 minutes

Cooking time: 3 hours

Servings: 4



INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp vegetable oil

2 tsp dried parsley

2 onions, sliced

1 tsp fresh coriander

3 carrots, chopped

300ml hot vegetable stock

3 parsnips, diced

2 celery sticks, chopped

Salt and pepper

METHOD

Heat the oil in a heavy based frying pan. Add the onions and cook for about 5 minutes over a medium heat until browned and softened. Add the carrots, parsnips and celery and cook for another 5 minutes. Stir in the herbs, season with the salt and pepper, pour the stock into the pan and bring to the boil.

Transfer the hot vegetable mixture into the slow cooker, cover and cook on a high heat for 3 hours until tender.

Taste the vegetables and adjust the flavour with the herbs, salt and pepper.

Serve in warmed bowls with mashed or jacket potato or warmed crusty bread.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City

Five a Day Tagine

Preparation time:

15 minutes

Cooking time: 6-8 hours**Servings:** 4**INGREDIENTS**

4 carrots cut into chunks

4 small parsnips or 3 large cut into chunks

3 red onions cut into wedges

2 red peppers, deseeded and cut into chunks

2 tbsp vegetable oil

1 tsp each ground cumin, paprika, cinnamon and mild chilli powder

1 x 400g can chopped tomatoes

2 small handfuls soft dried apricots, chopped

2 tsp honey

METHOD

Mix the vegetables, oil, spices, tomatoes, apricots, honey and place in the cooker:

Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours until the vegetables are tender:

Serve with couscous or jacket potato.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City

Creamy Veggie Korma

Preparation time:

10 minutes

Cooking time: 4 hours**Servings:** 4

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp vegetable oil

1 onion, finely chopped

3 cardamom pods, bashed

1 tbsp medium curry powder

1 garlic clove crushed

2cm size piece of ginger, finely chopped

800g mixed vegetables such as carrot, cauliflower, potato and courgette, chopped

300-500ml hot vegetable stock

200g frozen peas

200ml yoghurt

2 tbsp ground almonds (optional)

METHOD

In the oil, cook the onions and curry powder in frying pan for 5-6 mins.

Add chilli, garlic and ginger and cook for 1 minute then transfer to the slow cooker.

Add vegetables and stock.

Cover and cook on low for 4 hours until vegetables are tender.

Stir in peas, yoghurt and ground almonds with seasoning, stand for 5 mins, then serve.

Serve with toasted flaked almonds, chopped coriander, basmati rice or naan bread.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City

Mixed Beans and Vegetables

Preparation time:

10 minutes

Cooking time: 6 hours

Servings: 4



INGREDIENTS

1 chopped onion

2 crushed garlic cloves

2 carrots

1 chopped leek

1 chopped yellow pepper

2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes

1 x 400g can kidney beans

1 x 400g can butter beans

1 x 400g can haricot beans

1 tsp mixed herbs

Salt and pepper

Grated cheese

You can use any vegetables or canned beans of your choice.

METHOD

Chop the onion, carrot and leek.

Crush the garlic cloves and dice or slice the pepper.

Strain the beans.

Place all the ingredients and herbs of your choice into the pre-heated slow cooker and cook on high for 2 hours.

Turn down the cooker to low and cook for a further 4 hours or until all the vegetables are cooked.

Sprinkle with grated cheese and serve immediately with fresh crusty bread.

HINT

Any combination of canned beans of your choice can be used.

Turkey and Rice Casserole

Preparation time:

10 minutes

Cooking time: 3 hours

Servings: 4



INGREDIENTS

1 tsp vegetable oil

500g turkey breast, diced

1 onion

2 medium carrots, diced

2 celery sticks, sliced

250g mushrooms, sliced

175g long grain rice, but
basmati rice is better

450ml hot chicken stock

Salt and pepper

METHOD

Heat the oil in a large frying pan, add the turkey and fry over a high heat for 3 to 4 minutes and cook until lightly browned.

Combine the onion, carrots, celery, mushrooms and the rice in the slow cooker. Place the browned turkey on top of the vegetables and rice, season with the salt and pepper and cover with the hot chicken stock.

Cover and cook on a high heat for 3 hours.

Stir occasionally and add the salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Sausage and Baked Bean Casserole

Preparation time:

20 minutes

Cooking time: 6-8 hours

Servings: 4



INGREDIENTS

1 pack of 8 pork sausages

1 x 400g can baked beans

2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes

1 medium white onion

2 leeks

1 chicken stock cube

4 medium carrots, chopped

2 tsp paprika

300ml of boiling water

METHOD

Preheat your slow cooker.

Brown sausages under the grill or in a frying pan and drain off excess fat.

While the sausages are browning, dissolve the stock cube in the boiling water, and peel and chop the carrots, leeks and onion. Add the carrots, sausages and onion to the slow cooker, together with the cans of tomatoes, paprika and the stock. Top with the can of baked beans and then the leeks.

Cook on low for 6-8 hours.



MIDDLESBROUGH
Environment City

Potato and Sausage Casserole

Preparation time:

25 minutes

Cooking time: 3-4 hours

Servings: 6-8



INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp vegetable oil

8 large pork sausages

4 rashers bacon, diced

1 large onion

2 cloves of garlic

4 large baking potatoes,
peeled and sliced

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp dried sage

Half pint vegetable stock

Salt and ground black
pepper

METHOD

Grill or fry the sausages until golden brown and drain off excess fat. Remove from the pan and put to one side.

Fry the diced bacon for about 2 minutes, add the onion and continue to fry until golden brown. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute then turn off the heat.

Place half of the sliced potato in the bottom of the dish, cover with the bacon and onion mixture then season with the salt and black pepper. Sprinkle with a little sage.

Arrange the remaining potato slices on top of the mixture.

Pour the hot stock over the potatoes and arrange the sausages on top of the potatoes.

Cover and cook on a high heat for 3 – 4 hours until the potatoes are nice and soft.

Serve hot with braised green cabbage to make this a truly authentic Irish dish.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City

Mince and Macaroni

Preparation time:

15 minutes

Cooking time:

1 hour

Servings: 8



INGREDIENTS

900g lean minced beef

2 large onions, chopped

3 cloves garlic, chopped

700ml water

2 x 500g cartons passata

2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes

3 tbsp soy sauce

2 tbsp dried Italian herbs

3 bay leaves

Salt and black pepper to taste

200g uncooked macaroni

METHOD

Dry fry the minced beef over medium-high heat until browned and discard any excess fat.

Add in the onions and garlic, cook and stir the meat mixture until the onions are softened.

Preheat a slow cooker on high heat setting.

Place the mince and onion mixture into the preheated slow cooker:

Stir in water, passata, tomatoes, soy sauce, Italian herbs, bay leaves, seasoning and macaroni until thoroughly combined.

Cook on high for 1 hour.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City

Liver and Bacon

Preparation time:

15 minutes

Cooking time: 6-8 hours

Servings: 4



INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp vegetable oil

2 tbsp plain flour

4 rashers streaky bacon
diced

2 onions, peeled and finely
sliced

500 ml beef stock

500g lambs liver

1 tsp dried thyme

Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Heat oil in a large frying pan, add the bacon and fry briefly before adding the onions.

Cook for 5 minutes until golden brown and softened. Then spoon into the slow cooker dish.

Mix flour, salt and pepper: Lightly coat the liver in flour mixture.

Add a little more oil to the same pan and return back to the heat.

Carefully, place the liver in the pan and cook for about 1 minute on each side until browned and sealed. Add the liver to the slow cooker dish.

Pour in the stock along with the herbs.

Cover with the lid and cook on a low heat for 6 to 8 hours until the liver is tender and the sauce has thickened.

Serve with vegetables and a jacket potato or mash.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City

Easy Beef Stew

Preparation time:

15 minutes

Cooking time: 8 hours

Servings: 6



INGREDIENTS

800g diced beef

300g carrots, chopped

200g garden peas

1/2 swede, diced

3 medium potatoes, diced

1 large red onion, chopped

850ml beef stock (2 cubes)

ground black pepper

3/4 tsp dried thyme

70g plain flour

350ml cold water

METHOD

Add the chopped vegetables to the slow cooker along with the beef and mix well.

Make stock up and pour over ingredients. Add salt, pepper and thyme and stir.

Make up the flour paste: slowly add cold water to the flour, mixing it to creamy paste. Then add it to slow cooker and stir well. It will appear watery, but thickens up as time goes on.

Set the slow cooker to low and leave for 8 hours, stirring occasionally if possible.

Serve with fresh crusty bread and green vegetables.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City

Chilli Con Carne

Preparation time:

15 minutes

Cooking time:

6-8 hours

Servings: 4-6



INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp olive oil

2 large onions, halved and sliced

3 large garlic cloves, chopped

2 tsp mild chilli powder

2 tsp ground cumin

2 tsp ground oregano

1 kg lean minced beef

1 x 400g can chopped tomatoes

2 beef stock cubes

2 large red peppers, deseeded and cut into chunks

2 x 400g cans red kidney beans, drained

METHOD

Fry onions in the pan until soft. Then add garlic, spices and oregano and cook for 1 minute.

Gradually add mince until brown.

Add to slow cooker with tomatoes, peppers and beans.

Crumble in the stock cubes and season to taste.

Cook on low for 6-8 hours.

Serve with salad, basmati rice or tortilla chips and a bowl of soured cream.

Easy Pork Cassoulet

Preparation time:

5 minutes

Cooking time: 6-8 hours

Servings: 4-6



INGREDIENTS

500g diced pork shoulder

1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes

1 onion peeled and diced

1 x 410g can baked beans

2 rashers streaky bacon diced

1 tsp sugar

2 tbsp tomato puree

2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped

1 tsp mixed herbs

Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Place everything into the slow cooker dish and mix well.

Cover with the lid and cook on a low heat for 6 to 8 hours until the pork is tender.

Spoon the mixture into bowls and serve with mashed potato, a jacket potato or crusty bread and a nice green side salad.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City

Chicken Cacciatore in the Slow Cooker

Preparation time:

10 minutes

Cooking time: 8 hours

Servings: 6



INGREDIENTS

500g diced chicken

1 (660g) jar tomato pasta sauce

2 green peppers, seeded and cubed

250g fresh mushrooms, sliced

1 onion, finely diced

1 to 2 cloves garlic, minced

METHOD

Use your favourite brand of pasta sauce or tinned chopped tomatoes. Add chicken, green peppers, onion, garlic and mushrooms; the slow cooker does the rest.

Place all ingredients in the slow cooker. Cover, and cook on low for 8 hours.

Serve with roast potatoes, mash, rice or pasta.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City

Turkey Hash

Preparation time:

5 minutes

Cooking time: 7 hours

Servings: 6



INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp vegetable oil

500g turkey mince

1 large red onion diced

500g carrot or swede, diced

2 celery sticks sliced

500g potatoes, sliced

3 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

2 bay leaves

300ml chicken stock

Salt and pepper

METHOD

Heat the oil in a large frying pan, then add the turkey and fry over a medium heat stirring all the time until the meat has broken up and is lightly browned.

Place all the other ingredients into the slow cooker along with the turkey and the juices from the pan. Add the Worcestershire sauce, bay leaves and the salt and pepper.

Cover and cook on low for 7 hours until everything is tender.

Serve in warmed bowls with crusty bread.

Hawaiian Pork Casserole

Preparation time:

20 minutes

Cooking time:

4 hours

Servings:

6-8



INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp vegetable oil

1 onion peeled and chopped

1 garlic clove, crushed

1/2 red and 1/2 yellow pepper, deseeded and sliced

100g mushrooms, sliced

750g pork fillet cubed

25g plain flour

400ml vegetable stock

432g can pineapple chunks

Salt and ground black pepper

METHOD

Trim the pork into 2 cm pieces

Thinly slice the onions, crush the garlic, de-seed and slice the peppers.

Switch the slow cooker on to low heat.

Heat one tablespoon of oil in a frying pan on medium heat. Add the sliced onion and crushed garlic and cook for 2 - 3 minutes until soft.

Add the peppers and mushrooms and cook for a further 1 - 2 minutes.

Transfer the ingredients to the slow cooker:

Coat the pork in the flour. The easiest way to do this is to put the flour and pork into a plastic bag and shake.

Heat another one tablespoon of oil in the frying pan and add the pork. Fry the pork and cook until browned. Add the pineapple and juice to the pan and stir well. Pour in the stock, season, mix well and bring to the boil.

Transfer to the slow cooker. Cover with the lid and leave to cook for about 3 - 4 hours stirring occasionally.

Serve with rice or potatoes and fresh vegetables.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Environment City

Slow Cooker Lamb & Barley Casserole

Preparation time:

15 minutes

Cooking time: 8 hours

Servings: 4



INGREDIENTS

500g of stewing / braising lamb

4 medium carrots

2 red peppers

2 sticks of celery

2 medium onions

2 tbsp pearl barley

2 cloves of garlic

A tsp of mixed herbs

450ml very hot lamb or vegetable stock

Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Peel and slice the carrots.

Finely chop the celery, onions and garlic.

Remove the stalk from the red peppers, cut in half and remove the pips and pith. Slice and chop into small pieces.

Cut the lamb into 2 to 3cm cubes removing any excess fat. Turn the slow cooker to high and add the hot stock. Add the prepared carrots, celery, onions and garlic. Then add the red peppers followed by the pearl barley, herbs, salt and pepper.

Finally, add the chopped lamb and gently press the ingredients into the stock without stirring.

Cook on high for two hours. After two hours turn the slow cooker to low and cook for a further five to six hours.

Slow Cooker Rice Pudding

Preparation time:

2 minutes

Cooking time: 4 hours

Servings: 6-8



INGREDIENTS

200g pudding rice

60g sugar

50g butter

1.5 litres milk

1 tsp nutmeg

1 tsp cinnamon

METHOD

Place all the ingredients into a pre-heated slow cooker.

Cook for 8 hours on low, or 4 hours on high. Give it a little stir after an hour or so, to mix the sugar and butter.

Keep an eye on it, and add a little more milk if needed.

Serve with a sprinkling of nutmeg, cinnamon or chocolate powder.



1 North Road Middlesbrough TS2 1DE

Tel: (01642) 243183 **Email:** info@menvcity.org.uk **Web:** www.menvcity.org.uk

promoting healthy and sustainable lifestyles