



Using a slow cooker is straightforward and convenient, especially for preparing meals that benefit from long, slow cooking. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to use one:

1. Preparation

- **Choose a Recipe:** Start with a recipe suited for slow cooking, like soups, stews, chili, or braised meats.
- **Gather Ingredients:** Chop vegetables, season meat, and measure any liquids, spices, or other ingredients.

2. Layering Ingredients

- **Vegetables First:** Place root vegetables (like carrots, potatoes, and onions) at the bottom of the slow cooker since they take longer to cook.
- **Meat on Top:** Add meat on top of the vegetables. If the recipe calls for it, you can brown the meat first to enhance flavour – SEE our 'HOW TO BROWN MEAT' GUIDE
- **Liquids Last:** Pour in any liquids (like broth, wine, or sauces). The slow cooker needs sufficient liquid to generate steam and cook the food evenly-do not put too much liquid in half full is plenty!

3. Setting the Slow Cooker

- **Choose the Temperature:** Most slow cookers have two main settings—**Low** and **High**.
 - **Low:** Cooks food gently over a longer period, usually 6-8 hours.
 - **High:** Cooks food faster, usually in 3-4 hours.
- **Timer:** Some slow cookers have a built-in timer, which will automatically switch the cooker to a “Warm” setting after the cooking time is up.

4. Cooking Time

- **Cover and Cook:** Put the lid on the slow cooker and resist the urge to lift it frequently, as this releases heat and can increase cooking time.
- **Check Occasionally:** Toward the end of the cooking time, check the food for readiness.

5. Finishing Up

- **Add Fresh Ingredients:** If your recipe includes fresh herbs, greens, or dairy, add these near the end of the cooking process to maintain their flavour and texture.
- **Taste and Adjust Seasoning:** Before serving, taste the dish and adjust seasoning if necessary.



6. Serving and Storing

- **Serve:** Once cooked, serve the food directly from the slow cooker.
- **Storing Leftovers:** Allow the food to cool slightly before transferring leftovers to airtight containers. Refrigerate or freeze in portions as needed.

Tips:

- **Avoid Overfilling:** The slow cooker should be filled about halfway to two-thirds full for optimal cooking.
- **Use the Right Size:** Choose a slow cooker that matches the amount of food you're cooking. Too large a cooker for a small recipe can cause the food to cook unevenly. We recommend batch cooking for best use of the slow cooker.
- **Pre-heat (Optional):** For some recipes, preheating the slow cooker can help speed up the cooking process.

By following these steps, you can create a wide variety of delicious, slow-cooked meals with minimal effort.