

Slow Cooker Meals - Amanda Thul, RD, LD

Last night I prepped my ingredients, this morning I dumped everything in my slow cooker, and supper is currently cooking away while I write! Slow cookers are so convenient and we use it in some fashion almost weekly at my house. Slow cookers work by cooking food at a low temperature (170°F -280°F) for several hours. Because of the long cooking process, it's a great method to cook tougher cuts of meat. The cartilage will break down leaving the meat tender and delicious.

The slow cooking process along with the heat from the crock and the steam destroys the unsafe bacteria present in the food making it a safe cooking method too. Although it is safe under most circumstances, there are a couple things to be mindful of when using a slow cooker.

-Make sure the raw meat you use is thoroughly defrosted before cooking in the slow cooker. Starting with meat from frozen will delay the cooking time and cause the food to not be cooked all the way. The meat may sit at an unsafe temperature for too long making an ideal environment for bacteria to grow rapidly and unable to be killed during the cooking process. This is a recipe for foodborne illness!

-Keep the lid securely on unless absolutely necessary. Each time the lid is lifted, the temperature will drop 10-15 degrees and the cooking time is slowed by 30 minutes

-Do not leave cooked food to cool in the crock. Place leftovers in shallow containers and refrigerate.

This recipe was adapted from The Recipe Critic and is a great addition to your slow cooker repertoire. Looking for more tips and recipes? Follow me on Instagram and TikTok @thebalancedeatingRD

Slow Cooker Mongolian Beef

1 ½ lbs flank steak, cut into thin strips
¼ cup cornstarch
2 Tablespoons olive oil
½ teaspoons minced garlic
¾ cups reduced sodium soy sauce
¾ cup water
½ cup brown sugar
1 cup carrots, grated

For serving: Rice and frozen stir fry vegetables

Steps:

1. Place steak strips in a ziplock bag and add cornstarch. Shake to coat
2. Add the remaining ingredients to the slow cooker. Stir and add the steak. Stir again until everything is well coated.
3. Cook on low setting for 4-5 hours until tender and cooked through. Serve over rice and add stir fry vegetables for a balanced meal