

Comfort Food Classics





SLOW COOKER TRIPLE CHOCOLATE BROWNIES

Think beyond stews: Uncover the sweet side of your slow cooker with these crowd-pleasing brownies.

Yield: **makes 14**

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1**¹/₄ cups all-purpose flour (spooned and leveled)
- 1**/₄ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3**/₄ teaspoon baking powder
- 1**/₂ teaspoon coarse salt
- 1**/₂ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 8** ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 1** cup sugar
- 3** large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1** cup walnut halves, coarsely chopped
- 1** cup semisweet chocolate chips (6 ounces)

- 1.** Lightly coat a 5-quart slow-cooker insert with cooking spray. Line bottom with parchment paper and lightly coat with spray. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, baking powder, and salt.
- 2.** Place butter and chocolate in a medium microwave-safe bowl and microwave in 30-second increments, stirring after each, until chocolate is melted. Add sugar; stir to combine. Stir in eggs. Add flour mixture, walnuts, and chocolate chips and stir just until moistened (do not overmix). Transfer to slow cooker and smooth top.
- 3.** Cover and cook on low, 3 1/2 hours. Uncover and cook 30 minutes. Remove insert from slow cooker and run a knife around edge to loosen brownies. Let cool completely in insert on a wire rack, about 2 hours. Turn out onto a work surface and cut into 14 brownies.

MUSHROOM AND BLACK BEAN TORTILLA CASSEROLE

Sauteed mushrooms, cooked black beans, and store-bought salsa are layered with corn tortillas in a baking dish to create this Tex-Mex-inspired casserole, perfect for any weeknight meal. Top with Monterey Jack cheese and bake until melted and bubbling.

Active Time: **15 mins**

Total Time: **30 mins**

Servings: **4**

- 2** teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 3**/₄ pound cremini or button mushrooms, trimmed and quartered
- 1** garlic clove, minced
- 1**/₄ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Coarse salt and ground pepper
- 1** can (15.5 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 8** corn tortillas, warmed and halved
- 2** cups salsa
- 1**¹/₄ cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese (4 ounces)

- 1.** Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring often, until browned, 7 minutes. Add garlic and cayenne; season with salt and pepper. Add black beans and stir to combine. Cook until beans are warmed through, 2 minutes. Remove from heat.
- 2.** Arrange 5 tortilla halves in a 2-quart baking dish. Top with half the bean mixture and 1/2 cup salsa, then sprinkle with one-third the cheese. Repeat with another layer of tortilla halves, bean mixture, salsa, and cheese. Top with remaining tortilla halves, salsa, and cheese.
- 3.** Cover with foil and bake until center is hot and cheese melts, 10 minutes. Uncover and bake until cheese is bubbling, 5 minutes.



SLOW COOKER SAUSAGE LASAGNA

This meat sauce starts quickly on the stove, but hours in the slow cooker adds depth.

Active Time: **25 mins**

Total Time: **25 mins**

Servings: **8**

- 1** pound Italian pork sausage, casings removed
- 1** pound ground beef sirloin
- 1** medium onion, finely chopped
- 2** medium carrots, finely chopped
- 2** garlic cloves, minced
- Coarse salt and ground pepper
- 1** can (6 ounces) tomato paste
- 1** can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes in puree
- 9** lasagna noodles
- 2** cups shredded part-skim mozzarella (8 ounces)

1. In a 5-quart Dutch oven or heavy pot, cook sausage and beef over medium-high, breaking up meat with a spoon, until no longer pink, 4 to 6 minutes. Add onion, carrots, and garlic; season with salt and pepper. Cook until onion has softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in tomato paste, then tomatoes; bring to a boil, and remove from heat.

2. Spoon 2 cups meat mixture into bottom of a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Layer 3 noodles (breaking them as needed to fit), 2 cups meat mixture, and 1/2 cup cheese; repeat with two more layers (refrigerate 1/2 cup cheese for topping).

3. Cover slow cooker, and cook on low, 4 to 6 hours. Sprinkle lasagna with 1/2 cup cheese. Cover until cheese has melted, about 10 minutes.

Cook's Notes

To fit lasagna noodles into a round slow cooker, break off corners as needed. You don't have to precook the noodles. When the lasagna's done, they'll be ready, too.



MEXICAN STYLE LASAGNA

Active Time: **20 mins**

Total Time: **1 hour 20 mins**

Servings: **4**

- 1** cup fresh cilantro leaves
- 4** scallions coarsely, chopped
- Coarse salt and ground pepper
- 10** ounces fresh baby spinach
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 8** (6-inch) corn tortillas
- 1** can (15.5 ounces) pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1** cup prepared salsa (mild or medium)
- 8** ounces pepper Jack cheese, grated (about 2 cups)

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees (375 degrees if using disposable nonstick bakeware; increase baking time to 35 - 40 minutes). In a food processor, combine cilantro, scallions, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper with as much spinach as will fit; pulse, adding remaining spinach in batches, until coarsely chopped.

2. Coat an 8-inch square baking dish with cooking spray. Lay 4 tortillas in bottom of dish (they will overlap slightly). Layer with half of beans, salsa, spinach mixture, and cheese; repeat with remaining ingredients, ending with cheese and pressing in gently.

3. Cover dish with foil; place on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake until bubbling, 25 to 30 minutes; remove foil, and continue baking until golden, 15 to 20 minutes more. Cool 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

MACARONI AND THREE CHEESES

This luxurious macaroni and cheese keeps unbaked in the refrigerator for up to a day; in the oven, it turns piping hot and creamy inside, and golden brown on top in less than an hour. Substitute your favorite melting cheeses (mozzarella, Monterey Jack, and fontina are great options), or vary the proportions of the ones listed here.

Active Time: **25 mins**

Total Time: **45 mins**

Servings: **8**

- 6** tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for baking dish
- Coarse salt and ground pepper
- 1** pound medium pasta shells
- ¼** cup all-purpose flour
- 1** teaspoon dry mustard powder
- 4** cups whole milk
- 4** ounces sharp white cheddar cheese, coarsely grated (1 cup)
- 4** ounces Havarti cheese, coarsely grated (1 cup)
- 4** ounces Muenster cheese, coarsely grated (1 cup)
- 1** teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 6** slices white sandwich bread

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Butter a shallow 4-quart baking dish (oval or 9-by-13-inch rectangle); set aside.



2. Generously salt boiling water; add pasta. Cook, according to package instructions, until 2 minutes short of al dente. Drain pasta, and return to pot.

3. While pasta is cooking, melt butter in a large saucepan over medium. Transfer 2 tablespoons melted butter to a small bowl; set aside for topping. Add flour and mustard powder to remaining butter in saucepan. Cook, whisking, 1 minute (do not let flour darken). Whisk in milk. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until sauce is thickened, 2 to 3 minutes.

4. Remove sauce from heat. Gradually whisk in cheeses; add Worcestershire sauce, and season generously with salt and pepper. Add sauce to pasta, and toss to combine; transfer to prepared baking dish.

5. Place bread in food processor; pulse until very coarse crumbs form (you should have about 3 cups). Add reserved melted butter, and pulse just to moisten. Scatter crumbs over pasta in baking dish. (If making ahead, cover and refrigerate up to 1 day.)

6. Place dish on a rimmed baking sheet, and bake until topping is golden and sauce is bubbling, 15 to 20 minutes. (If refrigerated, bake for 30 to 35 minutes.) Cool 5 minutes before serving.



CREAMY CHICKEN AND RICE CASSEROLE

This nostalgic dish (it evokes casseroles made with canned soup) transforms rotisserie chicken. Speed things up by using bags of precooked rice (or leftover rice).

Active Time: **20 mins**

Total Time: **40 mins**

Servings: **6**

- 3** tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 4** cups sliced mixed mushrooms (10 ounces)
- 2** shallots, minced
- Salt and pepper
- 2** tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2¼** cups chicken broth
- 4** cups shredded chicken, from a small rotisserie chicken
- 2** cups cooked rice (white or brown)
- ½** cup frozen peas
- ½** cup fresh parsley, chopped
- ½** cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 1** cup fresh breadcrumbs

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium. Add mushrooms and shallots and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, until mushrooms are tender and browned, 10 minutes. Add remaining 2 tablespoons oil and the flour. Stir to combine and cook 1 minute.

2. Add chicken broth, whisking constantly, and bring to a boil. Add chicken and rice and return to a simmer. Stir in peas, parsley, and sour cream; season with salt and pepper. Transfer mixture to an 8-inch square baking dish. Top with breadcrumbs.

3. Bake until top is golden brown and mixture is warm throughout, 15 to 20 minutes.

BAKED RAVIOLI

Active Time: **25 mins**

Total Time: **50 mins**

Servings: **6**

- 2** tablespoons olive oil
- 1** medium onion, chopped
- 3** cloves garlic, minced
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1½** teaspoons dried thyme, or oregano
- 1** can (28 ounces) whole tomatoes
- 1** can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes
- 2** pounds store-bought frozen ravioli
- 1½** cups shredded mozzarella
- ½** cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, and season with salt and pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add thyme and tomatoes. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer, breaking up tomatoes with spoon, until sauce is thickened and reduced to about 5 1/2 cups, 20 to 25 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, cook ravioli in a large pot of boiling salted water just until they float to the top (pasta will continue to cook in oven). Drain pasta; return to pot.

3. Toss sauce with pasta. Pour pasta into a large gratin dish or 9-by-13-inch baking dish, and sprinkle with cheeses. Bake until golden, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool slightly before serving.



SLOW COOKER POT ROAST

Get a head start on dinner with this fresh take on a slow-simmered, all-in-one meal that makes clean-up a breeze.

Active Time: **15 mins**

Total Time: **6 hours 25 mins**

Servings: **8**

- 1** tablespoon cornstarch
- 8** medium carrots, cut into thirds
- 2** medium onions, each cut into 8 wedges
- Coarse salt and ground pepper
- 1** beef chuck roast (3 pounds), trimmed of excess fat
- 2** tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

1. In slow cooker, stir together cornstarch and 2 tablespoons cold water until smooth. Add carrots and onions; season with salt and pepper, and toss.

2. Sprinkle roast with 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper; place on top of vegetables, and drizzle with Worcestershire. Cover; cook on high, 6 hours (or on low, 10 hours).

3. Transfer roast to a cutting board; thinly slice against the grain. Place vegetables in a serving dish; pour pan juices through a fine-mesh sieve, if desired. Serve roast with vegetables and pan juices.