

## **Breads & Cakes**

- After breads and cakes have finished cooking, allow them to cool for 5 minutes before removing them from the cake pan.
- Do not add water to the slow cooker unless it specifically says to in the recipe.
- Do not over-beat breads and cakes. Follow all recommended mixing times.
- For ideal results, use a 3-5 quart slow cooker and fill stoneware with your recipe's ingredients at  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  full. Do not over-beat breads and cakes. Follow all recommended mixing times. Do not add water to the slow cooker unless it specifically states to in the recipe. After breads and cakes have finished cooking, allow them to sit for 5 minutes before removing from the pan.

## **Dairy**

- Add dairy during the last 15-30 minutes of slow cooking. Do not simmer or boil, stir in until heated through.
- Condensed soups may be substituted for milk and can cook for extended times.
- Milk, cream, and sour cream break down during extended cooking, which usually brings the temperature of the food up to the simmer point.

## **Fish**

- Fish is delicate and should be stirred in gently during the last 15-30 minutes of cooking time, unless the recipe indicates otherwise. Cook on high until just cooked through and serve immediately.
- Shellfish - for ideal results, cook on high heat setting and add shellfish during the last 15-30 minutes of cook time. When cooking a large quantity, extend cook time. Note: Shellfish can overcook easily.

## **Frozen Foods**

- Frozen or partially frozen foods require a longer cook time in a slow cooker than the recipe indicates for a stovetop or oven. Using an instant read thermometer is recommended to ensure meat is cooked through and tender.
- Frozen meats can be cooked in a slow cooker, however, it is best to use the following guidelines: Add at least 1 cup of warm liquid to the stoneware before placing meat in the stoneware. Do not preheat the slow cooker. Cook recipes containing frozen meats for an additional 4 to 6 hours on low, or an additional 2 hours on high.

## **Herbs & Spices**

- For ground and/or dried herbs and spices, add half the amount of dried herbs and spices at the beginning of the cooking cycle, then taste and adjust seasonings toward the end of the cooking cycle.
- Use chili powders and garlic powder sparingly as these can sometimes intensify over longer cook times.

- Always taste your dish at the end of cook cycle and correct seasonings, including salt and pepper.
- Tomatoes, vinegar, wine or citrus juice aids in the tenderization process. For long cook times, taste and add additional citrus during the last 15-30 minutes, if desired.
- Fresh herbs are best when added to the finished dish, not during the cooking cycle. If added at the beginning of the cooking cycle, many fresh herbs' flavor will dissipate over long cook times. For dishes with shorter cook times, hearty, fresh herbs, such as rosemary and thyme will hold up well.

## **Liquids**

- Liquid (Stock, Water, and Wine) - In most instances, is not necessary to use more than ½ - 1 cup of liquid since juices in meats and vegetables are retained more in slow cooking than in conventional cooking.
- Excess liquid can be reduced and concentrated for great flavor. You can reduce excess liquid by slow cooking on the stovetop, removing meat and vegetables from stoneware or stirring in cornstarch, tapioca or tapioca powder and setting the slow cooker to high approximately 15 minutes until juices are thickened.

## **Meats**

- There are appropriate meat weights for specific size slow cookers (Example: 6 quart = 6 pounds meat). Cut meat to cook at same rate as vegetables. For frozen meats, add liquid, use pre-cubed meat and add additional time to ensure meat is defrosted, fully cooked and tender.
- You can cook frozen meat in a Crock-Pot® Slow Cooker, but suggested cook time may need to be increased. To ensure meat is cooked through, use a meat thermometer. Meat should be well above 165°F to be tender.
- Specialty dishes, such as stuffed chops, stuffed steak rolls, stuffed cabbage leaves, stuffed peppers, or baked apples can be arranged in a single layer so they cook easily and can be served attractively.
- Roasts can be cooked without water when set on low. However, we recommend a small amount because the gravy is especially tasty. The more fat or “marbling” the meat has, the less liquid you need. Liquid is needed to properly soften and cook vegetables.
- Trim fats and wipe meats well to remove residue. If meats contain fats, brown in a separate skillet or broiler and drain well before adding to cooker. Season with salt and pepper. Place meat in stoneware on top of vegetables.
- Some people prefer the convenience of not pre-browning meat before adding to the slow cooker. Pre-browning meat does create another layer of prep work. If you prefer to pre-brown meat, brown or sear meats in a skillet, prior to adding to slow cooker. This will create greater depth of flavor to any dish as well as melt out fat that can be poured off before slow cooking.

## **Pasta, Rice & Beans**

- Fully cooked, rinsed canned beans may be used as a substitute for dried beans, but should be added at the end of the cooking cycle to maintain integrity of the bean. Note: Beans must be softened completely before combining with sugar and/or acidic foods. Sugar and acid have a hardening effect on beans and will prevent softening.
- Dried beans should be boiled before adding to a recipe, especially red kidney beans. Cover the beans with 3 times their volume of unsalted water and bring to a boil. Boil 10 minutes, reduce heat, cover and allow to simmer 1 1/2 hours or until beans are tender. Soaking in water, if desired, should be completed before boiling. Discard water after soaking or boiling.
- Pasta should be fully cooked and added during the last 30 minutes of cook time. If you are converting a recipe that calls for uncooked pasta, cook pasta on the stovetop before adding to the slow cooker.
- Use risotto or long-grain for best results. If rice doesn't cook completely after suggested time, try adding an extra 1 - 1 2/3 cup of liquid per cup of rice.

## **Vegetables**

- Pitted olives should be added at the end of the cooking cycle.
- Place root vegetables near the sides or the bottom of the stoneware because they often cook slower than meat. Cut vegetables accordingly to cook at the same rate as the meat. For example, smaller cuts of vegetables for lean meat versus larger vegetables for marbled meat.