

kitchenperfect[®]

USING YOUR SLOW COOKER

30 Fantastic Recipes included



ECO-FRIENDLY COOKING

Up to 89% cheaper to run than your conventional oven.
10p* per hour running costs

USING YOUR SLOW COOKER

COST SAVINGS

On average a slow cooker is just 10p per hour to run compared with 90p per hour for a conventional oven. This up to 89% CHEAPER to run than your conventional oven.

*Costs based on 30p per unit cost of electricity at July 2023 (Standing Charge not included)

PREPARATION

Vegetables

- Cut vegetables to similar size.
- Brown vegetables in pan before adding to slow cooker.
- Root vegetables are placed on the bottom (as they take longer to cook).
- Tinned vegetables should be placed at the top as they take less time to cook or add 30 minutes before end of cooking time.

Meat or poultry

- Use cheaper cuts of meat such as: beef brisket, pork loin/shoulder, lamb shoulder, chicken thighs or turkey mince.
- Remove visible fat prior to cooking as this will prevent fat gathering in your dish, where possible use leaner cuts of meat.
- Brown your meat using a frying pan to seal meat and bring out flavour.

Poultry

- Remove skin to brown meat.
- Use boneless chicken thighs.

Liquids

- Should just cover the ingredients.

Frozen meat

- Never cook frozen meat in the slow cooker.
- Always thaw thoroughly at the bottom of the fridge on a tray, keep covered for up to 48 hours.

There are lots of recipes, both sweet and savoury, that can be made using a slow cooker. We have provided a selection of our 30 best recipes for you to try.

It's a particularly good way of cooking cheaper cuts of meat as it helps to tenderise them. Slow cooking preserves nutrients that are sometimes lost when cooking via other methods and also uses less electricity than a conventional oven!

When cooking, always remember to follow good food hygiene practices!

It's a good idea to prepare your ingredients in advance if possible.

BATCH COOKING

Batch cooking is a great way to stock your freezer with healthy, portion-controlled meals.

It's a cheaper way of buying and storing food and a good alternative to buying pre-prepared ready meals which are often expensive, high in saturated fat, sugar and salt.

Batch cooking means you can be more organised, for example you can take meals out of the freezer each morning to defrost and heat accordingly.

Family life is busy and it's too easy to reach for convenient food options if meals are not planned and prepared, but batch cooking can be a fun and an engaging part of your routine - get the kids involved in helping chop vegetables!

If you want to batch cook, allow time to buy, prepare and cook your meals and make sure you have enough freezer space and containers for storage! Try buying fresh produce from local suppliers or markets to get low-cost fruit and vegetables.

Batch cooking can also help you stay in control if you are watching your weight or keeping to a healthy balanced diet.

FREEZING PORTIONS

It's best to avoid using single-use plastics and invest in some airtight containers which will withstand repeated freezing.

To ensure food stays safe, cool cooked dishes quickly before freezing. Freezing hot dishes will increase the temperature of the freezer and may cause other foods to start defrosting.

When defrosting, don't defrost at room temperature, always defrost in the fridge and check everything is fully defrosted. Partially defrosted food may not cook evenly when you re-heat it and bacteria could survive.

RECIPES

All recipes are based on using a 3.5ltr sized slow cooker.

For different sized slow cookers, you must alter the ingredient quantity accordingly.

SOUPS

TOMATO
 SPICED LENTIL & PARSNIP
 SCOTCH BROTH
 CARROT & CORIANDER
 ROASTED PEPPER & CHERRY TOMATO

MAINS

COQ AU VIN
 SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE
 VEGETABLE LASAGNE
 MACARONI CHEESE
 BEAN & VEGETABLE CHILLI
 PASTA BAKE
 RED LENTIL CURRY & RICE
 CHILLI CON CARNE & RICE
 BEEF STEW
 SAUSAGE & WHITE BEAN CASSEROLE

SAUSAGE CASSEROLE
 SPICED CHICKEN PASTA BAKE
 CHICKEN CASSEROLE
 BEEF GOULASH
 ROAST CHICKEN
 PORK SHOULDER
 SPANISH CHICKEN
 BEEF BOURGUIGNON
 RATATOUILLE
 CHICKEN CURRY
 MEATBALLS

DESSERTS

BIO YOGURT
 RICE PUDDING & FRUIT
 BREAD & BUTTER PUDDING
 CHRISTMAS PUDDING

TOMATO SOUP

Serves: 4-6

Cooking time: 3hrs

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, peel and grate or 1 tsp garlic paste
- 1 yellow pepper, washed and sliced or use frozen
- 1 stick of celery, wash and finely chopped (optional)
- 2 x 400g tin tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tsp sugar (optional; brings out flavour in tomatoes)
- 1 vegetable stock cube, dissolved in 50ml of freshly boiled water
- Pinch of black pepper
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs

Method:

1. Heat oil in frying pan, cook garlic (only if using fresh) and onions until soft (or just add to cooker as they will soften but will be less flavoursome).
2. Place onions and garlic into slow cooker with peppers, celery, tinned tomatoes, vegetable stock, sugar, herbs and black pepper.
3. Add lid and cook for 3 hours on high (do not remove lid at any time removing it reduces cooking time).
4. Transfer to bowl blend to a smooth consistency or mash with your potato masher.

Note

If too thick add a little milk to thin out after blending, then reheat for a few minutes.

To serve

Sprinkle with some extra herbs, grated cheese and enjoy with some crusty bread.

Top tip for ingredients

- Use frozen peppers instead of fresh.
- Tinned tomatoes can be replaced with tomato passata.
- Garlic paste is a good to have in your store cupboard especially when you have no fresh garlic. BE AWARE Garlic paste is high in salt.
- No mixed herbs use basil or oregano.
- Add a spice, chilli or paprika at the beginning of your cooking.
- Add a tin of green lentils (in water) drain and add at the start of your cooking with a ¼ pint or 125ml of vegetable stock.

Food safety and storage tips

- Freezes well in individual portions.
- When ready to use defrost thoroughly and reheat to boiling point slowly on a medium heat.
- Keeps for 3 days, cool within 2 hours and store in fridge in a sealed container.

SPICED LENTIL & PARSNIP SOUP

Serves: 4-6

Cooking time: 6-7hrs

Ingredients:

1 tbsp vegetable oil
1 onion, peeled and chopped
1 clove garlic, peel and grate or 1 tsp garlic paste
3 medium parsnips, peeled and chopped
1000ml (1.75 pints) freshly boiled water mix with stock cubes (1.75 pints) (1 - 2 vegetable or chicken stock cubes)
50g red lentils (rinse in cold water to remove scum) Pinch of black pepper to taste
1 - 2 tsp mild curry powder 1 tsp dried chives or parsley

Method:

1. Heat oil in frying pan on a low heat; add garlic (only if using fresh) and onions, cook until soft. Stir in curry powder and pepper, now add into your slow cooker.
2. Then into slow cooker add parsnips and lentils then pour over hot stock.
3. Add lid and cook for 6 - 7 hours on low, until parsnips and lentils are tender.
4. Transfer to a bowl, blend to a smooth consistency or mash with your potato masher.

Note

If too thick add a little milk to thin out after blending, then reheat for a few minutes.

To serve

Sprinkle with some chives or parsley and enjoy with some crusty bread.

Top tip for ingredients

- Use frozen onions instead of fresh, defrost in a dish.
- Replace parsnips with sweet potato peel and chop.
- Garlic paste is a good to have in your store cupboard especially when you have no fresh garlic. BE AWARE Garlic paste is high in salt.
- Add a pinch spice like ginger, chili or paprika.
- Any apples in fruit dish, peel and grate into soup.

Food safety and storage tips

- Freezes well in individual portions.
- When ready to use defrost thoroughly and reheat to boiling point slowly on a medium heat.
- Keeps for 3 days, cool within 2 hours and store in fridge in a sealed container.

SCOTCH BROTH SOUP

Serves: 8

Cooking time: 6-8hrs

Ingredients:

- 1 large onion, peel and chop 1 leek, slice and wash
- 1 potato, peel and chop
- 1 small turnip or swede, peel and chop 4 medium carrots, peel and chop
- 1 - 2 sticks of celery, washed and chop (optional)
- 2 stock cubes lamb, vegetable or chicken 200g barley mix (rinse in sieve)
- 2.5 to 3 pints or 1.4 to 1.7ml of lamb, vegetable or chicken stock (mix stock cube with hot boiled water)
- ½ tsp black pepper to taste 1 tbsp dried parsley

Method:

1. Place vegetables along with rinsed barley mix into slow cooker.
 2. Cover with hot stock.
 3. Add lid and cook for 6 – 8 hours on low setting.
 4. Check consistency, add more stock if desired, then flavour with pepper and chopped parsley.
- To serve
Great as a main course with some bread.

Top tip for ingredients

- Use frozen mixed vegetables instead of fresh, add at beginning.
- Tinned pearl barley in water, drain and rinse.
- Tinned marrowfat peas or carrots in water, drain and rinse.
(If using the tinned foods add 30 minutes before the end of cooking time)
- Use frozen parsley, add 10 minutes before the end of cooking time.
- Add leftover chopped or shredded chicken, lamb or beef, add 1 hour before the end of cooking time.

Food safety and storage tips

- Freezes well in individual portions.
- When ready to use defrost thoroughly and reheat to boiling point slowly on a medium heat.
- Keeps for 3 days, cool within 2 hours and store in fridge in a sealed container.

CARROT & CORIANDER SOUP

Serves: 4

Cooking time: 3-4hrs

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon oil
- 2 onions (diced)
- 2 leeks (chopped)
- 6 large carrots (chopped)
- 500ml vegetable stock
- 140ml semi-skimmed milk
- 3 teaspoons dried coriander
- Black pepper

Method:

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium heat
2. Add the onion and fry gently until soft
3. Reduce the heat and fry gently until soft, add the leek and place a lid on the pan
4. Transfer the onions and leeks to the slow cooker
5. Add the carrots, coriander and vegetable stock to the slow cooker
6. Cook on medium for 3-4 hours or until all of the vegetables are soft
7. Add in the milk and blend until smooth
8. Season with black pepper
9. Serve with crusty bread

ROASTED RED PEPPER & CHERRY TOMATO SOUP

Serves: 4

Cooking time: 4-6hrs

Ingredient:

- 2 red peppers (halved and deseeded)
- 1 teaspoon oil
- 10-15 cherry tomatoes
- 1 red onion (diced)
- 2 cloves garlic (crushed)
- 2-3 sundried tomatoes/or paste
- 500ml vegetable stock
- Salt and black pepper
- Optional: natural yoghurt (to serve)

Method:

1. Place the peppers and cherry tomatoes in the oven and roast until soft (not charred)
2. In a pan, add the oil and fry the onions and garlic for a few minutes
3. Transfer the onions, garlic, peppers and tomatoes to the slow cooker
4. Add in the vegetable stock and sundried tomatoes
5. Season with salt and pepper
6. Cook on low for 4-6 hours or until the vegetables are soft
7. Blend to your preferred consistency
8. Serve with some natural yogurt and your choice of bread

COQ AU VIN

Serves: 4-6

Cooking time: 3-8hrs

Ingredients:

- 8 skin-on, bone-in chicken thighs
- 30g butter
- 140g smoked bacon lardons or diced smoked pancetta
- 400g pearl onions or small shallots peeled and left whole (see tip, below)
- 2 large or 4 small carrots, peeled and cut into chunks
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 3 tbspl plain flour
- 1 tbspl tomato purée
- 300ml chicken stock
- 600ml red wine
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 large thyme sprig
- 300g button chestnut mushrooms, kept whole, larger ones chopped
- handful of parsley leaves, chopped (optional)
- mash or buttered tagliatelle, to serve

Method:

- Season the chicken. Melt half the butter in a deep frying pan or large flameproof casserole over a medium heat and cook the chicken, skin-side down, for 10 mins until deep golden. Flip to seal the fleshy side for a few minutes – you may need to do this in batches. Put in the slow cooker.
- Tip the bacon into the same pan and fry for 5-6 mins until crisp, then add to the slow cooker. Tip the onions or shallots and carrots into the pan and fry in the bacon fat for 5 mins until starting to colour. Add the garlic, cook for 1 min more, then sprinkle over the flour and cook for 1-2 mins until you have a sandy paste. Stir through the tomato purée and cook for 2 mins more. Bring to the boil, then turn down to a simmer for 2 mins.
- Tip the contents of the pan over the chicken. Pour the stock and wine into the pan, bring to the boil, then pour into the slow cooker. Nestle in the bay leaves and thyme, season, then set the slow cooker on high for 3-4 hrs, 5-6 hrs on medium or 7-8 hrs on low, stirring once or twice, until the chicken is tender.
- While the chicken cooks, heat the remaining butter in a clean pan and fry the mushrooms for 4-5 mins over a medium heat. Tip into the slow cooker about an hour before the end of cooking and stir. At this stage, the coq au vin can be cooled and kept chilled for up to three days or frozen for up to three months. Defrost and reheat in a pan over a medium heat until piping hot. Scatter over the parsley, if using, and serve with mash or buttered tagliatelle.

Recipe tip

Baby onions or shallots can be tricky to peel, but if you leave them soaking in boiled water for a few minutes, then drain and leave to cool, the skins just slip off.

SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE

Serves: 6

Cooking time: 6-8hrs

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon oil
- 300g lean minced beef
- 2 onions (diced)
- 2 carrots (chopped)
- 2 celery sticks (chopped)
- 2 garlic cloves (crushed)
- 3 tablespoons tomato puree
- 1 tablespoon dried mixed herbs
- 2 x tins of 400g chopped tomatoes
- Cooked spaghetti (to serve)
- Optional: 200g mushrooms (chopped)
- Optional: tin of green/brown lentils
- Optional: grated cheese

Method:

1. Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the mince with the crushed garlic until brown; remove any excess fat and add the mince to the slow cooker
2. Add the onions, carrots, celery, chopped tomatoes, tomato puree and herbs (plus mushrooms and lentils if using)
3. Mix well and season with black pepper
4. Cover with the lid and cook on low for 6-8 hours, then uncover, turn to high and cook for another hour until the sauce is thick
5. Serve with cooked spaghetti and sprinkle with grated cheese (optional)

VEGETABLE LASAGNE

Serves: 4-6

Cooking time: 3hrs

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 2 onions, sliced
- 2 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 large courgettes, diced (400g)
- 1 red and 1 yellow pepper, deseeded and roughly sliced
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 2 tsp vegetable bouillon
- 15g fresh basil, chopped plus a few leaves
- 1 large aubergine, sliced across length or width for maximum surface area
- 6 wholewheat lasagne sheets (105g)
- 125g vegetarian buffalo mozzarella, chopped

Method:

1. Heat 1 tbsp rapeseed oil in a large non-stick pan and fry 2 sliced onions and 2 chopped large garlic cloves for 5 mins, stirring frequently until softened.
2. Tip in 2 diced large courgettes, 1 red and 1 yellow pepper, both roughly sliced, and 400g chopped tomatoes with 2 tbsp tomato purée, 2 tsp vegetable bouillon and 15g chopped basil.
3. Stir well, cover and cook for 5 mins. Don't be tempted to add more liquid as plenty of moisture will come from the vegetables once they start cooking.
4. Slice 1 large aubergine. Lay half the slices of aubergine in the base of the slow cooker and top with 3 sheets of lasagne.
5. Add a third of the ratatouille mixture, then the remaining aubergine slices, 3 more lasagne sheets, then the remaining ratatouille mixture.
6. Cover and cook on High for 2½ - 3 hours until the pasta and vegetables are tender. Turn off the machine.
7. Scatter 125g vegetarian buffalo mozzarella over the vegetables then cover and leave for 10 mins to settle and melt the cheese.
8. Scatter with extra basil and serve with a handful of rocket.

MACARONI CHEESE

Serves: 4

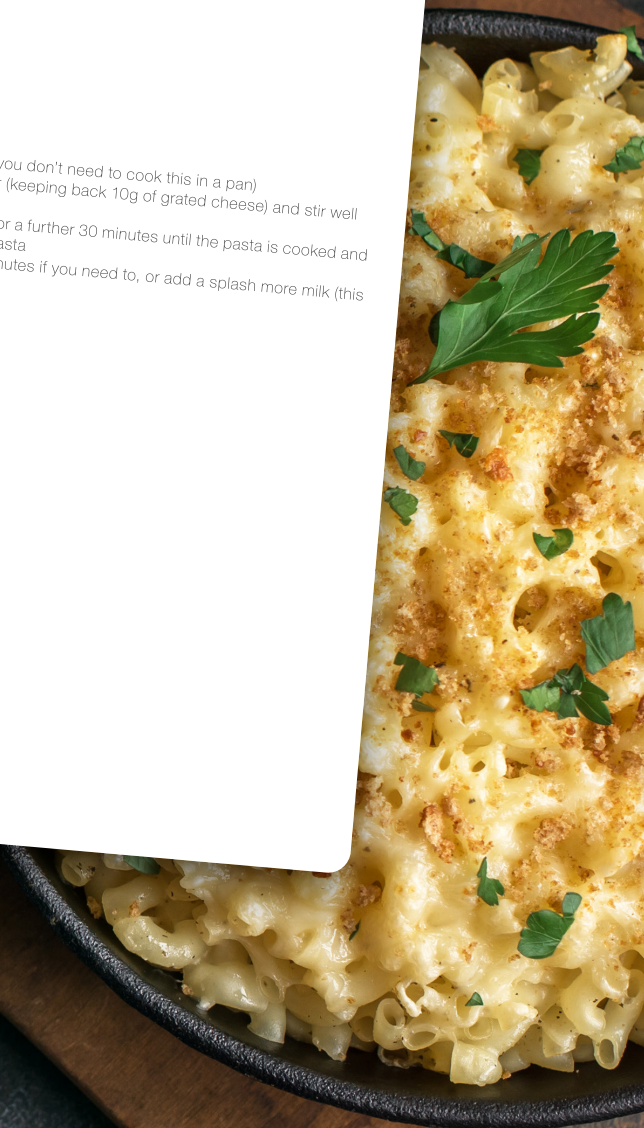
Cooking time: 1.5hrs

Ingredients:

350g dry pasta
600ml semi skimmed milk
50g reduced fat spread
50g reduced fat or lighter soft cheese
70g mature cheddar (grated)
Black pepper
Green/mixed salad to serve

Method:

1. Pour boiling water over the pasta and drain (you don't need to cook this in a pan)
2. Put all of the ingredients into the slow cooker (keeping back 10g of grated cheese) and stir well
3. Cover and cook on low for 1 hour
4. Stir again then put the lid back on and cook for a further 30 minutes until the pasta is cooked and the sauce has reduced enough to coat the pasta
5. Leave the lid off and reduce for the last 10 minutes if you need to, or add a splash more milk (this will depend on the size of your slow cooker)
6. Sprinkle with 10g of grated cheese
7. Serve with a green or mixed salad



BEAN & VEGETABLE CHILLI

Serves: 6

Cooking time: 3-4hrs

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 courgette, washed and chopped
- 1 large carrot, peeled and chopped
- 2 peppers (1 green/1 red) washed, deseeded and sliced
- 4 mushrooms, washed and sliced
- 2 x 400g tin garlic paste
- 2 x 400g tin tomatoes, chop if needed
- 1 x 400g tin kidney beans, drain and rinse
- 1 x 400g tin mixed beans, drain and rinse
- 2 tsp tomato puree
- Pinch of black pepper to taste
- 2 tsp cumin powder
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs or oregano
- 1 - 2 tsp mild chilli powder
- 1 vegetable stock cube, dissolve in 150ml of freshly boiled water.

Method:

1. Heat oil in frying pan, add onions, peppers, carrot, courgette. Stir and cook for 8 minutes until softened, then stir and coat vegetables with spices, cook for 2 minutes on a medium heat.
2. Add mushrooms and cook for 1 minute.
3. Place vegetable mix into slow cooker with beans, tomatoes and tomato paste, stock and black pepper, then stir with a wooden spoon.
4. Cook for 3 - 4 hours on low setting, remember do not remove lid until cooking time is up.

To serve

- Brown or white rice (basmati or easy cook), wraps, pitta or baked potato.
- Enjoy with natural yoghurt and some grated cheese on top.

Cooking rice

Easy rule to follow for serving size - one mug of uncooked rice serves 4 people or 1 mug of cooked rice serves one.

Top tip for ingredients

- Tinned tomatoes can be replaced with tomato passata.
- Add other vegetables, aubergines, butternut squash, sweetcorn.

Food safety and storage tips

- As it can make a large batch, portion up and place in a freezable container or bag - name and date on label.
- When ready to use defrost thoroughly, then sprinkle some cheese over dish and place in the oven for 25 minutes at 190C or

Gas mark 5.

- Keeps for 3 days, cool within 90 minutes.
- Store in fridge or freezer in a sealed container, reheat in an ovenproof dish to 190C or Gas mark 5.

PASTA BAKE

Serves 6:

Cooking time: 6-7hrs

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 cloves of garlic, peeled and grated or 1 tsp garlic paste
- 400g lean mince
- 2 x 400g tin tomatoes, chop if needed
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- Pinch black pepper
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs
- 100g mature cheddar cheese (grated)
- 400g uncooked pasta (any shape)

Method:

1. Heat oil in frying pan, brown beef on a medium heat for 4 minutes, separate meat with a fork as you are cooking then add garlic (only if using fresh) and onions, cook for 5 minutes until onions are softened.
 2. To cook pasta bring a large pot of water to the boil carefully add pasta and cook for 8 -10 minutes or until al dente (cooked to just firm), now drain and set aside (or you can add this 30 minutes before end).
 3. Place meat, onions and garlic into slow cooker with tomatoes and tomato paste, cooked pasta, sugar, herbs and black pepper, then stir with a wooden spoon.
 4. Stir in 75g of the cheese and sprinkle the rest on top and then add lid to slow cooker.
 5. Cook for 6 - 7 hours on low setting, remember do not remove lid until cooking time is up.
- To serve
Sprinkle with the remaining grated cheese (grill to brown if you wish and enjoy with some vegetables or salad).

Top tip for ingredients

- Tinned tomatoes can be replaced with tomato passata.
- Garlic paste is a good to have in your store cupboard especially when you have no fresh garlic. BE AWARE Garlic paste is high in salt.
- Replace meat with a can of lentils or beans (in water), drain and add into dish with softened vegetables, cook for 3 hours on low setting.

Food safety and storage tips

- As it can make a large batch, portion up and place in a freezable container or bag, name and date on label.
- When ready to use defrost thoroughly, then sprinkle some cheese over dish and place in the oven for 25 minutes at 190C or

Gas mark 5.

- Keeps for 3 days, cool within 90 minutes store in fridge or freezer in a sealed container, reheat in an ovenproof dish to 190C or Gas mark 5.

RED LENTIL CURRY & RICE

Serves: 6-8

Cooking time: 6-7hrs

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 clove, peel and grate or 1 tsp garlic paste
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1200ml (2 pints) freshly boiled water mix with stock cubes (2 vegetable or chicken stock cubes)
- 350g red lentils (rinse in cold water to remove scum)
- Pinch of black pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp mild curry powder
- Optional, 1x 400g tin chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 bag of basmati or easy cook rice (cook separately) to cook follow instructions on packet

Easy rule to follow for serving size

One mug of uncooked rice serves 4 people or 1 mug of cooked rice serves one.

Method:

1. Heat oil in frying pan on a low heat; add garlic (only if using fresh) and onions, cook until soft.
2. Stir in curry powder and pepper, now add into your slow cooker.
3. Then into slow cooker add lentils (plus any optional ingredients) then pour over hot stock.
4. Add lid and cook for 6 - 7 hours on low, until lentils are tender.

To serve

Rice (note above for cooking) with naan bread and/or salad.

Top tip for ingredients

- Use frozen onions instead of fresh, defrost in a dish.
- Garlic paste is a good to have in your store cupboard especially when you have no fresh garlic.
- Add a pinch spice like ginger, chilli or paprika.
- Add more chopped vegetables such as carrots to taste.
- Any apples in fruit dish, peel and grate.

Food safety and storage tips

- Freezes well in individual portions.
- When ready to use defrost thoroughly and reheat to boiling point slowly on a medium heat.
- Keeps for 3 days, cool within 2 hours and stored in fridge in a sealed container.

CHILLI CON CARNE & RICE

Serves: 6

Cooking time: 6-7hrs

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 green pepper, washed, deseeded and sliced
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and grated or 2 tsp garlic paste
- 400g lean mince
- 2 x 400g tin tomatoes, chop if needed
- 1 x 400g kidney beans in water, drain and rinse
- 2 tsp tomato puree
- Pinch of black pepper to taste
- 2 tsp cumin powder
- 1 - 2 mild chilli powder
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs
- 1 beef stock cube, dissolve in 100ml of freshly boiled water
- 1 bag of basmati or easy cook rice (cook separately), to cook follow instructions on packet

Easy rule to follow for serving size

One mug of uncooked rice serves 4 people or 1 mug of cooked rice serves one.

Method:

1. Heat oil in frying pan, brown beef on a medium heat for 4 minutes, separate meat with a fork as you are cooking then add garlic, (only if using fresh), onions, peppers, cook for 5 minutes until onions and pepper are softened, then stir in spice, cook 1 minute on a medium heat.
2. Place meat mix into slow cooker with kidney beans, tomatoes and tomato paste, stock and black pepper, then stir with a wooden spoon.
3. Cook for 6 - 7 hours on low setting, remember do not remove lid until cooking time is up.

To serve

Rice (note above for cooking) and a pitta bread/salad.

Top tip for ingredients

- Tinned tomatoes can be replaced with tomato passata.
- Have a spoonful of natural yoghurt and grated cheese on top.
- Great with a baked potato.

Food safety and storage tips

- As it can make a large batch, portion up and place in a freezable container or bag, name and date on label.
- When ready to use defrost thoroughly, reheat dish until the dish reaches boiling point, then reduce to a lower heat for 15 minutes.
- Keeps for 3 days, cool within 90 minutes store in fridge or freezer in a sealed container.

BEEF STEW

Serves: 8

Cooking time: 8-10hrs

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 700 - 800g diced stew
- 2 onions, peel and chop or 1 leek wash and slice 4 medium potatoes, peel and dice small
- 50g turnip, peel and dice
- 4 medium carrots, peel and chop
- 1 stick celery, wash and chop (optional)
- 1 - 2 beef stock cubes dissolved in 600 - 800ml freshly boiled water
- 1 tsp black pepper to taste
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs (optional)
- 1 bay leaf

Method:

1. Heat oil in frying pan and cook meat on a medium heat for 2 - 3 minutes until evenly browned, then season with pepper.
2. Add beef to slow cooker with all other ingredients.
3. Add hot stock, stir well and place lid on cooker. Cook for 8 - 10 hours on low setting or high for 4 hours or until meat is tender.

To Thicken

Remove lid and put on high, then add thickener of your choice.

- Cornflour - 2 tsp of cornflour mix with a little cold water to a paste and stir into stew until it thickens and leave for 10 minutes.
- or
- Gravy granules - use low salt and stir in 2 tablespoon for the thickness you desire (beware of salt content), stir continuously until dissolved and leave for 5 minutes.

To serve

A great dish on its own or enjoy with some cabbage or peas.

Top tip for ingredients

- Use a variety of other vegetables like leek, celeriac, and butternut squash.
- Use stew packs from shops, often have a good variety of vegetables.
- Tinned peas or carrots add at end, always in water, no added salt.

Food safety and storage tips

- Great for batch cooking and you can freeze into portions for one person to two or three, date and label in freezer.
- Defrost thoroughly and reheat to boiling point slowly on a medium heat.
- Keeps for 3 days, cool within 2 hours and stored in fridge in a sealed container.

SAUSAGE & WHITE BEAN CASSEROLE

Serves: 4

Cooking time: 6-8hrs

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 12 herby or plain pork sausages (2 x 400g pack)
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, peeled and grated or 3 tsp garlic paste
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 x 400g tin tomatoes, chop if needed
- 1 x 400g white beans (butterbeans or cannellini)
- 1 chicken stock cube
- 1 stick celery, washed and sliced
- 350ml freshly boiled water to mix with stock cube
- 3 tbsp tomato puree
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 2 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp mixed herbs
- Pinch sugar (optional)

Method:

1. Heat oil in frying pan and add sausages carefully to brown and seal skin, turn sausages gently as not to break the skin, cook for 1 - 2 minutes.
2. Place into slow cooker with all other ingredients.
3. Place lid on top and cook for 6 - 8 hours on low setting, remember do not remove lid until cooking time is up.
4. Stir at the end of cooking.

To serve

With broccoli or garlic bread.

Top tip for ingredients

- Tinned tomatoes can be replaced with tomato passata, add another tin of tomatoes if you want it richer.
- Garlic paste is a good to have in your store cupboard especially when you have no fresh garlic. BE AWARE Garlic paste is high in salt.
- Use sausages of your choice, if using a vegetarian option reduce cooking time to 4 hours on a low setting.

Food safety and storage tips

- When ready to use defrost thoroughly.
- Place in the oven for 25 minutes at 190C or Gas mark 5, check sausages are piping hot.
- Keeps for 2 days, cool within 90 minutes store in fridge or freezer in a sealed container.
- Reheat in an ovenproof dish to 190C or Gas mark 5.

SAUUSAGE CASSEROLE

Serves: 4

Cooking time: 8 hours

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon oil
- 2 red or brown onions (diced)
- 1 celery stick (chopped)
- 4 carrots (chopped)
- 8 low fat sausages (halved)
- 1 sweet potato (peeled and cubed)
- 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon tomato puree
- 1 beef stock cube / pot
- Black pepper

Method:

1. Fry the onion, celery and carrot in the oil over a low heat until they soften and then transfer to the slow cooker
2. Using the same frying pan, brown the sausages, drain any excess fat and add to the slow cooker
3. Add the sweet potato and chopped tomatoes
4. Put the tomato puree in the frying pan and add 250ml boiling water, stir the mixture to pick up the flavours and pour into the slow cooker
5. Add in the stock cube and pepper
6. Cover with the lid and cook on low for 8 hours

SPICED CHICKEN PASTA BAKE

Serves: 6

Cooking time: 6-7hrs

Ingredients:

2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 onions, chopped
1 clove of garlic, peeled and grated or 1 tsp garlic paste
3 x chicken breasts, diced
2 x 400g tin tomatoes, chop if needed
1 x 400g tin beans and/or chickpeas, rinsed
2 tsp tomato puree
Pinch black pepper
2 tsp mild curry powder
400g uncooked pasta (any shape)

Method:

1. Heat oil in frying pan, brown chicken on a medium heat for 4 minutes - separate meat with a fork as you are cooking then add garlic (only if using fresh), and onions, cook for 3 minutes until onions are softened.
2. To cook pasta, bring a large pot of water to the boil carefully add pasta and cook for 8 - 10 minutes or until al dente (cooked to just firm), now drain and set aside (or you can add this 30 minutes before end).
3. Place chicken, onions and garlic into slow cooker with tomatoes and tomato paste, cooked pasta, curry powder and black pepper, then stir with a wooden spoon.
4. Place lid on top and cook for 6 - 7 hours on low setting, remember do not remove lid until cooking time is up.

To serve

Enjoy with some naan bread and salad.

Top tip for ingredients

- Tinned tomatoes can be replaced with tomato passata.
- Garlic paste is a good to have in your store cupboard especially when you have no fresh garlic.
- Replace meat with a can of lentils or beans (in water), drain and add into dish with softened vegetables, cook for 3 hours on low setting.

Food safety and storage tips

- As it can make a large batch, portion up and place in a freezable container or bag, name and date on label.
- When ready to use defrost thoroughly, place in the oven for 25 minutes at 190C or Gas mark 5, check chicken is piping hot.
- Keeps for 2 days, cool within 90 minutes store in fridge or freezer in a sealed container, reheat in an ovenproof dish to 190C or Gas mark 5.

CHICKEN CASSEROLE

Serves: 4

Cooking time: 4-7hrs

Ingredients:

- knob of butter
- ½ tbsp rapeseed or olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 ½ tbsp flour
- 650g boneless, skinless chicken thigh fillets
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 400g baby new potatoes, halved
- 2 sticks celery, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 250g mushrooms, quartered
- 15g dried porcini mushroom, soaked in 50ml boiling water
- 500ml stock made with 2 very low salt chicken stock cubes
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard, plus extra to serve
- 2 bay leaves

Method:

1. Heat a knob of butter and ½ tbsp rapeseed or olive oil in a large frying pan, cook 1 finely chopped large onion for 8-10 mins until softened and starting to caramelise.
2. Meanwhile, put 1 ½ tbsp flour and a little salt and pepper in a bowl and toss 650g boneless, skinless chicken thigh fillets in it.
3. Add 3 crushed garlic cloves and the chicken to the pan and cook for 4-5 mins more until the chicken is starting to brown.
4. Transfer to your slow cooker, along with 400g halved baby new potatoes, 2 diced celery sticks, 2 diced carrots, 250g quartered mushrooms, 15g dried and soaked porcini mushrooms with the 50ml soaking liquid, 500ml chicken stock, 2 tsp Dijon mustard and 2 bay leaves.
5. Give it a good stir. Cook on Low for 7 hours or High for 4 hours.
6. Remove the bay leaves and serve with a little Dijon mustard on the side.

BEEF GOULASH

Serves: 8

Cooking time: 6-7hrs

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2kg braising or stewing steak, cut into chunks
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 4 mixed peppers, cut into 4cm chunks
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tbsp flour
- 2 tsp caraway seeds
- 2 tsp hot smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp sweet smoked paprika, plus extra to serve
- 4 tbsp tomato purée
- 4 large tomatoes cut into small chunks
- 400-500ml beef stock
- 300ml soured cream
- small bunch of parsley, chopped

Method:

1. Heat the slow cooker to low and heat 2 tbsp oil in a deep frying pan over a medium heat. Season and sear the beef in batches until brown on all sides. Transfer to a plate.
2. Put the remaining oil in the pan and fry the onions for 10 mins until lightly golden. Add the peppers and garlic, and fry for another 5-10 mins, then stir in the flour and all of the spices. Cook for 2 mins more, then stir in the tomato purée, tomatoes and 400ml beef stock. Season well. Bring the mixture to a simmer, then tip into the slow cooker with the seared beef. Add the remaining stock, if needed, to cover the meat completely. Cover and cook for 6-7 hrs until the beef is tender and the sauce has thickened slightly.
3. Season to taste, then swirl the soured cream and most of the parsley through the stew. Scatter over the remaining parsley and some sweet smoked paprika, then serve with small roasted potatoes or brown rice, if you like.

ROAST CHICKEN

Serves: 4

Cooking time: 5.5hrs

Ingredients:

- 1 large onion, peeled and cut into thick slices
- 2 carrots, halved lengthways and chopped
- 1 small or medium chicken
- 2 tbsp butter, softened
- 1 bay leaf

Method:

1. Preheat the slow cooker if necessary. Put the onion and carrot in the base of the stock pot to form a protective layer to sit the chicken on, and add 100ml boiling water. Gently ease the chicken skin away from the breast. Stir some salt and pepper into the butter and push the butter under the skin. Put the bay leaf in the cavity of the chicken and sit on top of the onion and carrot.
2. Cook on low for 5 hrs, then check that the chicken is cooked by wiggling the wing – it should feel very loose. Tip the chicken up so any liquid inside flows out, then cook on high for 30 mins. If the chicken isn't cooked through after the initial time, cook for another hour, then turn the heat up. If you want the skin to be browned, grill it for a couple of minutes (make sure your slow cooker insert is flameproof if you keep it in the pot, or transfer it to a roasting tin).
3. There will be some gravy in the base of the dish with the veg, tip everything through a sieve and press the veg gently to make sure you get every last drop. Serve the veg on the side, if you like.

PORK SHOULDER

Serves: 6-8

Cooking time: 6-8hrs

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1.5kg piece pork shoulder
- 250ml white wine
- 250ml chicken stock
- 4 bay leaves
- 2 sprigs of rosemary
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- 1 garlic bulb

Method:

1. Remove the fat from the pork shoulder (you can get your butcher to do this bit for you). Season the pork with salt and pepper then heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium to high heat. Brown the pork shoulder on all sides then transfer to a slow cooker. Add all the other ingredients, then cook on low for 6-8 hours until the meat pulls apart when pressed with two forks.
2. Remove the meat, place on a plate and shred it with two forks. Remove the herbs from the sauce and squeeze the garlic cloves out of their skins back into the pot. Put the meat back into its sauce for wonderfully tender and moist slow cooker pork. Serve as an alternative to your Sunday roast with roasted new potatoes, or with a big green salad, mustard and warmed baguettes.

SPANISH CHICKEN

Serves: 6-8

Cooking time: 6hrs

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 Spanish onion, halved and sliced
- 12 large bone-in chicken thighs, skin removed
- 225g pack chorizo picante, thickly sliced
- pack of 3 mixed colour peppers, cut into chunks
- 150g (drained weight) pitted Spanish pimento stuffed green olives
- 300ml dry white wine (serve the rest of the bottle with the meal)
- 300ml chicken stock
- 1 tbsp tomato purée

Method:

1. Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a large frying pan. Fry 1 sliced Spanish onion for about 5 mins until golden.
2. Tip into the slow cooker pot, then fry 12 large bone-in skinless chicken thighs and 225g thickly sliced chorizo picante in the same pan until starting to colour – you will need to do this in two batches.
3. Add to the slow cooker with 3 mixed colour peppers, cut into chunks and 150g pitted Spanish pimento stuffed green olives.
4. Tip 300ml dry white wine, 300ml chicken stock and 1 tbsp tomato purée into the pan.
5. Scrape up any bits stuck to the bottom, then tip into the slow cooker, cover and cook on Low for 6 hrs.

BEEF BOURGUIGNON

Serves: 6-8

Cooking time: 6-8hrs

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 ½kg stewing or braising steak, cut into small chunks
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 thyme sprigs or rosemary sprigs
- 3 tbsp plain flour
- 750ml bottle red wine
- 1 beef stock cube
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 100g unsmoked bacon lardons
- 6 small shallots or baby onions, halved or quartered
- 300g closed cup mushrooms, halved or quartered
- mashed potatoes or crusty bread, to serve

Method:

1. Turn the slow cooker to low and heat 2 tbsp of the oil in a large frying pan. Season the meat and fry for 3-4 mins in batches until browned all over, scooping out each batch with a slotted spoon and transferring the browned meat to a plate.
2. Tip the onion, carrot and celery into the pan and fry for 5-10 mins until soft. Add the herbs and flour and cook for another 2 mins. Pour a splash of the wine into a bowl, then add the stock cube, sugar and tomato purée and mix to form a paste. Scrape the paste into the onion mix and pour in the remaining wine. Bring the mixture to a bubble, then transfer to the slow cooker. Stir in the browned beef, topping up with a splash of water to cover the meat if needed. Simmer on low for 6-8 hrs until the meat is falling apart but still holding its shape.
3. About 35 mins before serving, heat the remaining oil in a pan. Fry the bacon, shallots and mushrooms for 5-8 mins until caramelised and the veg is starting to soften, then tip into the slow cooker. Simmer the stew gently on high for 30 mins. If you want a thicker gravy, use the reduce function or leave the stew uncovered. Serve with mashed potatoes or crusty bread, if you like.

RATATOUILLE

Serves: 6

Cooking time: 5-6hrs

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 large aubergines, cut into 1.5cm pieces
- 3 courgettes, halved and cut into 2cm pieces
- 3 mixed peppers, cut into 2cm pieces
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 6 large ripe tomatoes, roughly chopped
- small bunch of basil, roughly chopped, plus a few extra leaves to serve
- few thyme sprigs
- 400g can plum tomatoes
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp brown sugar
- sourdough, to serve (optional)

Method:

1. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry the onion for 8 mins until translucent. Add the garlic and fry for 1 min. Turn the heat to medium-high, add the aubergines and fry for 5 mins until golden. Stir in the courgettes and peppers and fry for 5 mins more until slightly soft. Add the tomato purée, fresh tomatoes, herbs, canned tomatoes, vinegar, sugar and 1 tsp salt and bring to the boil.
2. Transfer to the slow cooker and cook on low for 5-6 hours or until everything is soft and the sauce has thickened. Season, scatter over some extra basil, and serve with sourdough, if you like.

CHICKEN CURRY

Serves: 2

Cooking time: 6hrs

Ingredients:

- 1 large onion, roughly chopped
- 3 tbsp mild curry paste
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 2 tsp vegetable bouillon powder
- 1 tbsp finely chopped ginger
- 1 yellow pepper, deseeded and chopped
- 2 skinless chicken legs, fat removed
- 30g pack fresh coriander, leaves chopped
- cooked brown rice, to serve

Method:

1. Put 1 roughly chopped large onion, 3 tbsp mild curry paste, a 400g can chopped tomatoes, 2 tsp vegetable bouillon powder, 1 tbsp finely chopped ginger and 1 chopped yellow pepper into the slow cooker pot with a third of a can of water and stir well.
2. Add 2 skinless chicken legs, fat removed, and push them under all the other ingredients so that they are completely submerged. Cover with the lid and chill in the fridge overnight.
3. The next day, cook on Low for 6 hrs until the chicken and vegetables are really tender.
4. Stir in the chopped leaves of 30g coriander just before serving over brown rice.

MEATBALLS

Serves: 4-6

Cooking time: 5hrs

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, finely diced
- 2 celery sticks, finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 500g carton tomato passata
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley
- For the meatballs
- 400g lean mince turkey
- 4 tbsp porridge oats
- pinch paprika
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- spray of oil

Method:

1. Heat the slow cooker if necessary. Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan and add the onion, carrots, celery and garlic and fry gently for a minute. Pour in the passata, add the parsley and stir, then transfer the lot to the slow cooker.
2. To make the meatballs, tip the mince into a large bowl. Add the oats, paprika, garlic and plenty of black pepper, and mix everything together with your hands. Divide the mixture into 20 lumps about the size of a walnut and roll each piece into a meatball. Spray or run a non-stick pan with a little oil and gently cook the meatballs until they start to brown. Add them to the tomato base and cook on Low for 5 hours. Serve over rice or pasta if you like, or with a green salad

BIO YOGURT

Serves: 2 litres

Cooking time: 12-15hrs

Ingredients:

2l whole milk

100ml live yogurt, either shop bought or from a previous homemade batch

Method:

1. Tip the milk into the slow cooker. Cover and heat on High until the temperature of the milk reaches 82C, this will take a couple of hours. Turn off the slow cooker and allow the temperature to drop to 43C for a further 2-3 hours. Take a mugful of the warm milk and mix it with the yogurt then pour the mixture back into the slow cooker and stir really well. Cover, wrap the slow cooker in a big towel and then leave undisturbed for 9-12 hours until the mixture has set.
2. Eat on top of cereal or porridge, topped with fresh fruit, in marinades or drink in smoothies. If you want it thicker, for dips for example, line a large sieve with muslin and place it over a bowl, tip in the yogurt and allow some of the whey to strain off until you get the consistency of yogurt that you like. The longer you leave it, the thicker it will become. Store in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.

RICE PUDDING & FRUIT

Serves: 4

Cooking time: 3-4hrs

Ingredients:

100g pudding rice 10g sunflower spread 1 tbsp sugar
750ml (1½ pints) semi skimmed milk or full cream milk 1 tsp ground cinnamon (optional)
50g (large handful) raisins, sultanas or chopped dried apricots or have with fruit in own juice (pears or peaches)

Method:

1. Grease inside of slow cooker well with sunflower spread.
2. Now put rice, milk, sugar and spice if you are using, stir gently.
3. Add lid and cook for 3 - 4 hours on low setting, cook until tender and creamy in appearance.

To serve

- Use tinned or dried fruit, see above in ingredients list.
- For tinned, drain and chop into small pieces.
- For dried, use a tablespoonful (high in sugar when dried)

Top tip for ingredients

- Use frozen fruit, defrost first.
- Add a pinch of nutmeg as alternative to cinnamon.
- Use up leftover fruit or any fruit you may have.

Food safety and storage tips

- When ready to use defrost thoroughly and reheat to boiling point slowly on a medium heat.
- Keeps for 3 days, cool within 2 hours and stored in fridge in a sealed container.

BREAD & BUTTER PUDDING

Serves: 4-6

Cooking time: 3-4hrs

Ingredients:

- 75g sultanas
- 50g melted sunflower spread 50g brown or white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence (optional)
- ½ level tsp of ground nutmeg & ½ to ¾ level tsp of ground cinnamon or 1 level tsp of mixed spice
- 4 eggs
- 500ml (1 pint) semi skimmed milk or full cream milk

Method:

1. Place in a large bowl the eggs, milk, spices, sugar, vanilla and whisk together.
2. Then add bread and sultanas and coat with mix.
3. Grease the slow cooker pot with sunflower spread or oil and add in pudding mix carefully.
4. Place lid on and cook for 3hrs 15 min on low setting.

To serve

Enjoy with low fat custard or Greek yoghurt.

Top tip for ingredients

- Add in a chopped dessert apple.
- Use any bread, stale bread works well and reduces any waste.
- Increase cinnamon to 1 tsp for a fuller flavour.

Food safety and storage tips

- Keeps for 3 days, cool within 2 hours and stored in fridge in a sealed container.
- Warm up in microwave for 3 minutes high power if a single portion or in a preheated oven temperature 190 C or Gas 5 – 10 minutes or until heated through.

CHRISTMAS PUDDING

Serves: 10

Cooking time: 10hrs

Ingredients:

100g sultanas & 100g raisins & 100g currants
30g mixed candied peel, chopped
1 small cooking apple, peeled and chopped into small pieces
2 oranges, zested and 1 juiced
2 lemons, zested
75ml brandy, whiskey or rum
100ml stout
2 eggs
100g shredded suet
50g self-raising flour
100g breadcrumbs
1 tsp mixed spice
1 tsp ground cinnamon
200g dark brown soft sugar
50g blanched almonds, chopped
butter, for the basin
triple sec, for lighting the pudding
brandy butter or custard, to serve

You'll also need

large slow cooker

1-litre pudding basin

Method:

1. Tip the sultanas, raisins, currants and candied peel into the largest bowl you have. Add the apple, citrus zests, orange juice, brandy and stout. Stir everything together, cover with a clean tea towel and leave overnight to soak.
2. Add all the remaining ingredients to the bowl along with $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt and mix well to combine – don't forget to make a wish! Set the slow cooker to low.
3. Butter the pudding basin and line the base with a circle of baking parchment. Spoon in the pudding mixture, pressing it down well, then make a gap in the middle using the back of the spoon. Cover the surface with another circle of baking parchment, then stack a sheet of parchment over a sheet of foil, fold a pleat in the middle and use this to cover the basin. Secure at the rim with kitchen string and add a looped handle. Carefully lower the basin into the slow cooker, then fill with water so it comes halfway up the sides of the basin. Cook for 10 hrs, topping up with water as necessary. Once cooked, remove the basin from the slow cooker and leave to cool completely before storing in a cool, dark place for up to six months.
4. On the day you're ready to serve, return the pudding to the slow cooker set to low, and fill with water as before. Reheat for 4 hrs, then turn out onto a serving plate. Warm some triple sec in a small pan over a low heat, drizzle this over the pudding and carefully set alight. Serve with brandy butter or custard.

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