

Tasty, Affordable Meals for Busy Families Demo Script

SAY:

Whether you are tight on time or on cash, one of the best cooking tools is a slow cooker. A brand new 5-quart slow cooker can cost about \$30 or you might even be able to borrow one from a neighbor or friend. The basic appliance hasn't changed much in years, so even an older model from a resale shop will do.

There are plenty of healthy [slow cooker recipes](#) on the American Heart Association's website, and I will go through tips for slow cooker success. However, if you want to convert a traditional healthy home-cooked recipe into a slow cooker recipe, I can teach you how to do that, too! If you don't have a slow cooker at home, you will also learn about one-dish meals.

Slow cooker cooking times in recipes are often estimates. If you do not have enough time to cook low and slow, you can speed it up by turning your slow cooker to high for about half the time. Also, some slow cookers cook faster than others. If the slow cooker you are using is larger or smaller than the one specified in the recipe, the meal may cook more quickly or slowly than the recipe states.

Now, if you're converting a traditional recipe into a slow cooker recipe, a general rule of thumb is that if your recipe advises 15 to 30 minutes of cooking that equates to 4-6 hours on low or 2-3 hours on high for a slow cooker.

First, you can save time by chopping and cutting the recipe ingredients the night before and putting them in a container in the refrigerator. The next morning, you can simply empty the container of ingredients into the slow cooker and cook according to the recipe instructions.

When you start putting your ingredients in the slow cooker, layering is key!

Draw on the white board/flip chart a picture of a slow cooker with proper ingredient layering.

SAY:

If you are cooking vegetables in the slow cooker, put dense, tough ones, like potatoes, winter squash, cabbage and turnips, on the bottom where they are closest to the heating element and can tenderize. On the other hand, if you're cooking delicate

vegetables, such as zucchini, broccoli, spinach and peas, place them on top or add them later in cooking if the recipe calls for it since they can't hold up to hours of heat. If you're converting your recipe for a slow cooker, make sure to reduce the liquid by about half since a slow cooker doesn't boil as much liquid away. But make sure to add at least ½ cup of broth or water if the traditional recipe doesn't call for any since the cooker needs steam to cook your food!

If you're at home while your slow cooker is cooking, remember to not peek. Lifting the lid during cooking will release built-up steam, and then you'll need to cook the food longer.

When you're reaching the end of the cooking, you can add lemon juice or fresh herbs to make the flavor of the dish really pop. Fresh herbs (except for hearty rosemary or sage) added at the beginning of the cooking time may lose their flavor. You can add dried herbs at the beginning as they can withstand longer cooking times.

Once you're ready to serve your dish, make sure that your food has reached the minimum safe internal temperature. A recipe is done if the vegetables are very tender and the meat registers an internal temperature of 145°F Fahrenheit (165°F for poultry, 160°F for ground meats and 165°F for casseroles).

Now, if you can't borrow a slow cooker or don't have one at home, try making one of the AHA's many [one-dish meal recipes](#). These meals are based on grains, pastas, beans, starchy vegetables, poultry, seafood and meats to give you a healthy portion of

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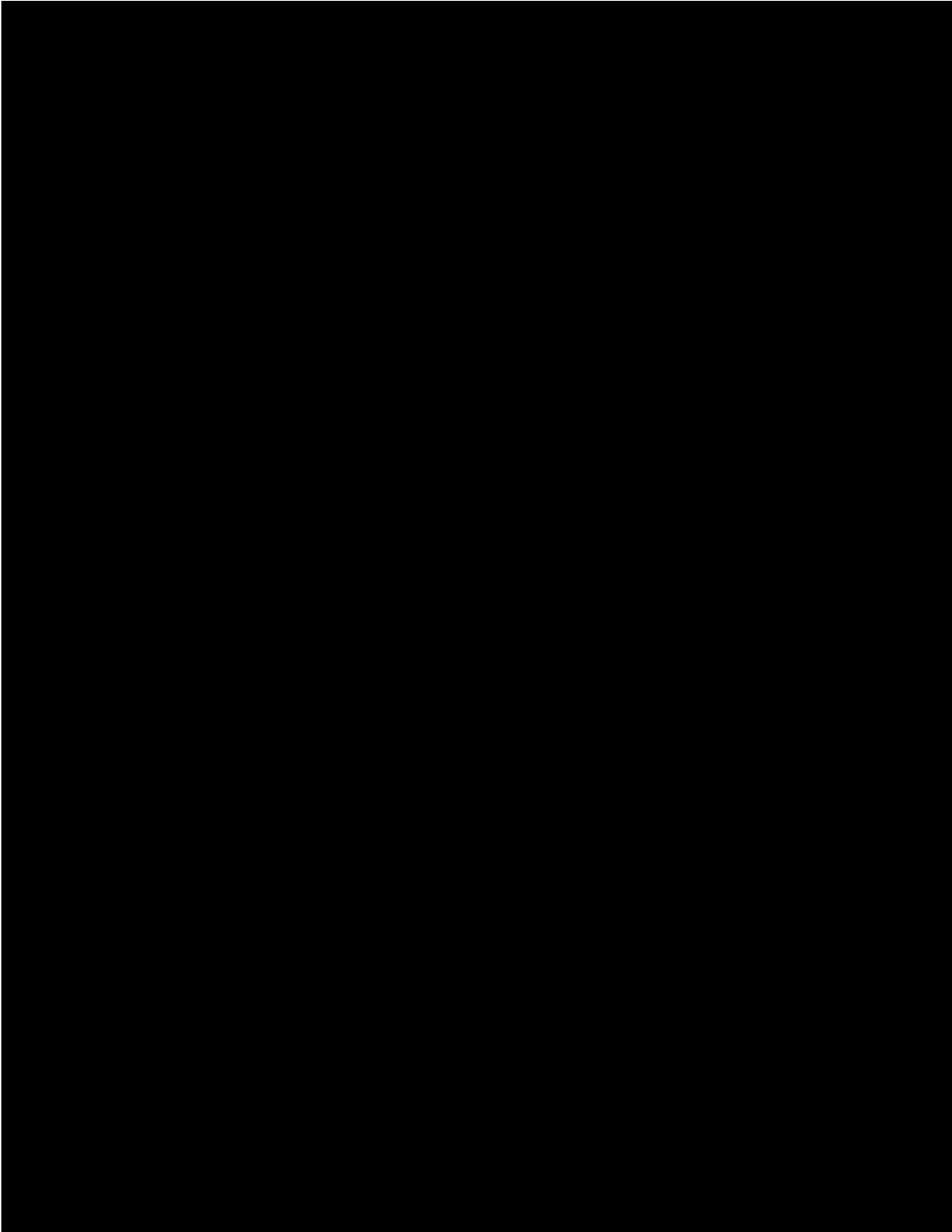
Divide up participants into groups to make their one-dish meal.

Invite group members to pick up their resources (recipe, ingredients and cooking supplies).

Alternatively, if you have set everything up at their stations beforehand, participants can go

Slow Cooker Savvy and Food Safety Tips

- Save time – Put all the recipe ingredients in a



- What exactly do you want to accomplish?
- How will you track your progress towards your goal?
- Is this goal SMART?