

- ◆ **Dutch oven.** Usually made from cast iron, the Dutch oven is used for top-of-the-stove cooking. The cast iron evenly distributes heat and is ideal for low-temperature simmering.
- ◆ **Slow cooker.** *This electrical appliance cooks at a very low temperature. It may take 4 to 8 hours to cook a pot roast, but it is ideal for when you will be away from home for hours. It uses very little electricity, and the newer models clean up easily, as the crockery cooking chamber comes out and can go into the dishwasher.* Don't lift the lid on your slow cooker during cooking. Every time you do, it can take the pot 20 minutes to return to its previous cooking temperature.

With one-pot meals, you cook vegetables and meat together so you get both complete protein and at least one vegetable and often two—a balanced and nutritious meal. You can serve each of these recipes by itself or add one more vegetable or salad as a side dish if you prefer. These vegetable and meat combinations are low-carb and are hearty enough to serve you and your entire family.

Adapting for the Slow Cooker

You can adapt any of these recipes to cook in the slow cooker. Just follow these guidelines:

- ◆ **Vegetables.** Dense vegetables like carrots and other root vegetables should be cut no larger than 1-inch thick and placed in the bottom of the pot because they take longer to cook. Other vegetables, such as tomatoes and parsley, can be put on top of the meat or mixed in with it.
- ◆ **Liquids.** Decrease the quantity of liquids in slow cooking to about half the recipe's recommended amount. One cup liquid is usually plenty.
- ◆ **Herbs and spices.** Whole herbs release flavors over time, so they are a good choice for slow cooking. Ground herbs and spices lose pungency when slow cooked, so add them near the end of cooking, about an hour before serving. As in all cooking, taste and adjust seasonings, if necessary, before serving.
- ◆ **Milk/cheese.** Add these during the last hour, as they don't hold up well during slow cooking.
- ◆ **Preparation.** Browning meats first in a heavy skillet can enhance flavor. This also decreases the amount of fat in the food. For a special taste treat, after browning, deglaze the skillet with wine, a little vinegar, lemon, or broth, and add the liquid to the pot.

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Prep time

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Follow this time guide for converting regular one-pot recipes for the slow cooker.

Conventional Recipe	Low (200°F)	High (300°F)
15 to 30 minutes	4 to 6 hours	1½ to 2 hours
35 to 45 minutes	6 to 10 hours	3 to 4 hours
50 minutes to 3 hours	8 to 18 hours	4 to 6 hours

One-Pot Ingredients

One-pot recipes lend themselves to the use of almost any ingredient imaginable. Fresh ingredients are best, of course, as they contain more nutrients, but because everything is cooked all together, you can often use canned ingredients and not notice much difference in taste.

Peasant Beef Casserole

Prep time: 15 minutes • Cook time: 5 hours • Serves 8 • Serving size: ¾ cup

Each serving has: 13 grams carbohydrate • 3 grams fiber • 10 grams nutritive carbohydrate
• 31 grams total protein • 28 grams from animal source • 3 grams from plant source

2 lb. beef stew meat, cubed

3 tomatoes, chopped

2 cups frozen peas

¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

1½ cups sliced carrots

1 tsp. salt

2 large onions, chopped

¼ tsp. pepper

¾ cup water

Preheat oven to 275°F.

Mix meat, peas, carrots, onions, water, tomatoes, parsley, salt, and pepper in a 3-quart casserole with a tight lid. Bake, covered, for 5 hours.

Variation: To spice up this recipe, add ¼ teaspoon each rosemary, basil, and oregano for an Italian taste. Add ¼ teaspoon each dried cilantro and crushed red pepper plus a small can of green chilies for a Mexican flavor. Or add 1 lemon, sliced, and 8 to 10 green olives for a piquant taste. Serve with a salad or fruit and you have a complete balanced meal.

