



## **TIPS FOR FREEZER TO SLOW COOKER MEALS:**

- Plan ahead! If you are going to prep all the recipes provided in one day then shop one day, prepare the second.
- On prep day, wear tennis shoes and comfortable clothes. Your body will thank you that night.
- Print out the recipes so that you have them right in front of you without worry about spilling anything on them. Make notes on any changes or adaptations you made as you go. If you make them a second time you'll know what you did and what you like.
- Write the name of the dish, date, and anything extra you need to add the day of cooking on the bag before filling it. It's much easier to write on a clean flat bag then a full one.
- All recipes were tested with all ingredients going into the bag uncooked. You can sauté onions and sear the meat for additional depth of flavor though it adds to the overall prep time significantly.
- I don't like fresh potatoes, cauliflower, or broccoli frozen and then cooked in the slow cooker (sweet potatoes are fine though). If you are going to use these ingredients in a freezer to slow cooker type meal, I suggest buying them already frozen (instead of fresh), it works a little better.
- I prefer to use "baby bella" mushrooms in the slow cooker. They have great flavor and texture when cooked.
- I like to fold the top of the gallon bags over (so that the bag is about half as tall as it is wide) and then lay them flat to freeze. I have found that if I lay them out completely flat then they don't fit in my slow cooker once they are frozen.
- In my research I noticed that some people suggested thawing the freezer meal in the fridge overnight the night before they plan on cooking it. They then cooked a thawed from the freezer, freezer meal. I put my meals straight from the freezer into the crock pot during recipe testing. I assume that both methods work fine, but I haven't tested the thaw-first approach.
- Running the outside of the plastic bag under warm water for a minute or so made it easier to get the frozen contents out of the bag and into the slow cooker.
- In general cook frozen meals on high for 5 to 6 hours or on low for 7 to 8. I generally prefer the low and slow method, but a few times if I had forgotten to get the meal in the slow cooker until lunch then I would cook it on high for an hour or two and then drop it down to low heat for the last few hours.
- Most recipes call for one onion; in general, one onion is equivalent to 1 cup chopped onion. I don't often buy the pre-chopped garlic in a jar, but I did for these. I made all 10 recipes in one day and having the garlic already chopped was a great time saver.





## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Decide how many and which meals you plan to make.
- Make a shopping list. The shopping list provided is to make all 10 recipes but does not include any of the serving suggestions.
- Shop
- Day of freezer meal prep- collect all needed supplies, wear comfortable clothes and shoes, fun music and snacks are always smart too.
- Print out recipes to have handy without having to worry about spills getting on an electronic device.
- Label gallon zipper-top freezer bags with recipe name, date, ingredients that will need to be added to the slow cooker (such as water or broth and how much) on cooking day, and cook time.
- To make the freezer meals: Place all of the ingredients that are listed under the recipe title into the corresponding labeled gallon zipper-top freezer bag. Fold the top of the bag over and freeze lying flat.
- On cooking day, take the meal bag from the freezer, run it under warm water to loosen the contents from the bag, add the contents of the bag to the slow cooker, add additional ingredients as needed (broth or water), and cook according to directions.
- Salt and pepper have been added sparingly, so taste and adjust seasonings before serving.



## SHOPPING LIST:

### PRODUCE

9 onions  
2 heads garlic (or 1 jar chopped garlic)  
2 limes  
4 assorted bell peppers  
2 cups butternut squash (1 large)  
1 large sweet potato  
1 head celery  
4 carrots  
2 pounds Baby Bella mushrooms  
2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries  
2 cups green beans (about 1 pound)  
2 tablespoons fresh chopped cilantro

### MEAT/DAIRY/REFRIGERATED

6 pounds boneless skinless chicken, thighs or breast meat  
2-3 pounds pork roast (loin, butt, or shoulder)  
3 pounds stew meat  
Orange Juice Concentrate  
Apple Juice  
Frozen corn (2 cups)

### PANTRY STAPLES

Maple syrup  
Rice wine vinegar  
Soy sauce  
Brown or Dijon mustard  
Worcestershire sauce  
Beef stock base (I like Organic Better than Bullion), or equivalent  
10 zipper topped freezer bags, gallon-size

### HERBS AND SPICES

Salt  
Pepper  
Curry Powder  
Garam Marsala  
Cumin  
Oregano  
Basil  
Cinnamon

### CANNED/DRY GOODS

2, 15-ounce cans coconut milk,  
3, 15-ounce cans diced tomatoes,  
1, 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes  
1, 20-ounce can pineapple chunks  
4, 15-ounce cans black beans  
Red lentils (3 cups)  
Quinoa (½ cup)  
Pumpkin puree (1 cup)  
Pearl barley (1 cup)  
18 cups (4.5 quarts) of stock (I used vegetable)  
needed for cooking days, but not for freezer prep day



## **VEGETABLE BEEF STEW:**

- 2 pounds stew meat
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 2 cups green beans, broke into bite-sized pieces
- 1 cup sweet corn
- 2 tablespoons beef stock base (I like Organic Better than Bullion)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup apple juice
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

**DAY OF:** Add 1 1/2 cups of water to slow cooker before cooking

- Cook Time: 8 to 10 hours on low
- Serve with: fresh bread or biscuits
- Serves 6 to 8

## **BEEF STROGANOFF:**

- 1 pounds stew meat
- 1 pound sliced baby bella mushrooms
- 1 onion, diced
- ½ cup apple juice
- 1 tablespoon beef stock base (I like Organic Better than Bullion)
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

**DAY OF:** Add 1 cup water to the slow cooker before cooking. Stir in 1 cup of sour cream just before serving.

- Cook Time: 8 hours on low
- Serve with: egg noodles or rice
- Serves 6 to 8

## **CRANBERRY-MUSTARD PORK ROAST:**

- 2-3 pounds pork roast (lion, butt, or shoulder)
- 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- ½ cup orange juice concentrate
- 1 tablespoon brown or Dijon mustard
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon, optional

### **DAY OF:**

- Cook Time: 8 to 10 hours on low
- Serve with: mashed potatoes and steamed green vegetables or side salad
- Serves 6 to 8

## **MUSHROOM BARLEY STEW:**

- 1 pound Baby Bella mushrooms, sliced
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 1 rib celery, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 1, 15-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup uncooked pearl barley
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon black pepper

**DAY OF:** Add 6 cups of vegetable stock to the slow cooker before cooking.

- Cook Time: 8 hours on low
- Serve with: hot crusty bread or rolls
- Serves 6 to 8



### **BLACK BEAN CHILI:**

- 3, 15-ounce cans black beans
- 1, 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 1 ½ cups chopped onion
- 1 cup pumpkin
- 1 cup assorted chopped bell pepper
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

**DAY OF:** Add 4 cups stock (I used vegetable stock) to the slow cooker before cooking.

- Cook Time: 6- 8 hours Low or 5-6 hours High
- Serve with: Tortilla chips and top with sour cream, cheese, and/or hot sauce
- Serves 6 to 8

### **HEARTY LENTIL STEW:**

- 1 onion, diced
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 2 cups peeled and diced (1/4 inch cubes) sweet potatoes
- 1 cup red lentils
- ½ cup washed quinoa
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon oregano

**DAY OF:** Add 5 cups stock (I used vegetable stock) to the slow cooker before cooking.

- Cook Time: 6-8 hours Low or 5-6 hours High
- Serve with: fresh breadsticks
- Serves 6 to 8

### **LENTIL BUTTERNUT SQUASH CURRY:**

- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cups red lentils
- 2 cups diced butternut squash
- 1, 14-ounce can coconut milk (I used full fat)
- 1, 15-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon Garam Marsala
- 1 teaspoon cumin

**DAY OF:** Add 5 cups of water to the slow cooker before cooking. Just before serving add an additional teaspoon of both curry powder and graham Marsala if desired, stirring to combine.

- Cook Time: 6-8 hours Low or 5-6 hours High
- Serve with: rice, flatbread or naan and roasted vegetables
- Serves 6 to 8

### **TERYAKI CHICKEN:**

- 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken, thighs or breast, cut into bite-size pieces (I recommend thighs, they don't dry out as much in the slow cooker)
- ½ cup soy sauce
- ¼ cup rice wine vinegar
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- 1, 20-ounce can pineapple chunks
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

**DAY OF:**

- Cook Time: 8 hours on low
- Serve with: cooked brown rice and green veggies
- Serves 6 to 8



## **CILANTRO LIME CHICKEN WITH CORN AND BLACK BEANS:**

- 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken, thighs or breast (I recommend thighs, they don't dry out as much in the slow cooker)
- 1 cup corn
- 1, 15-ounce can black beans
- 1 orange bell pepper, diced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- Juice from 2 limes
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh chopped cilantro

### **DAY OF:**

- Cook Time: 6- 8 hours Low or 5-6 hours High
- Serve with: treat this like you would taco filling – add to tacos, burritos, taco salad, nachos, or make burrito bowls with it. It's very flexible. Stir in 2 tablespoons fresh chopped cilantro before serving.
- Serves 6 to 8

## **BUTTER CHICKEN:**

- 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken, thighs or breast, cut into bite-size pieces (I recommend thighs, they don't dry out as much in the slow cooker)
- 1, 15-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1, 15-ounce can coconut milk (I used full fat)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 teaspoons Garam Marsala
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

### **DAY OF:**

- Cook Time: 8 hours on low
- Serve with: cooked brown rice and green veggies
- Serves 6 to 8