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BBQ Pulled Chicken (from Skinny Taste and CDF Meal plan)

- 1.5 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed (or breasts work also)
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- freshly ground black pepper
- 3/4 cup store bought BBQ sauce or see recipe below for homemade healthy BBQ sauce

To make homemade Maple BBQ Sauce:

- 1/2 cup tomato paste, no sugar added
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce
- 2 Tbsp pure maple syrup
- 2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp onion powder
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp ground black pepper

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Use immediately or store in the fridge in an airtight container.

For the slow cooker:

- Season the chicken with the salt, garlic powder, and pepper.
- Place it in slow cooker and pour the BBQ sauce over the chicken.
- Cover and cook on low for 6 hours, or until the chicken is falling apart. Shred the chicken with 2 forks and serve.
- You can serve this in whole wheat or sprouted tortillas, in Bibb/butter lettuce leaves as a wrap, or on whole wheat buns or sandwich rounds of choice.

Indian Chicken and Peas (from Skinny Taste)

- 2 tsp ghee or unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp grated fresh ginger
- 1 pound ground chicken
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 3/4 cup canned tomato sauce
- 4 Tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 fresh jalapeño or other chile pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- 3/4 tsp ground coriander
- 3/4 tsp ground cumin
- 3/4 tsp chili powder
- 3/4 tsp ground turmeric
- 3/4 tsp garam masala
- 3/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 bay leaf
- 3/4 cup frozen peas

In a large, nonstick skillet, melt the ghee/butter over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until golden, 6-8 minutes.

Add the garlic and ginger and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes.

Add the ground chicken and salt and cook, breaking the meat up with a wooden spoon as it cooks, 5 to 6 minutes.

Transfer to a slow cooker and add (and stir well) the tomato sauce, 1/4 cup water, 2 Tbsp cilantro, the jalapeno, coriander, cumin, chili powder, turmeric, garam masala, cinnamon and bay leaf.

Cover and cook on high 3 to 4 hours or on low 6 to 8 hours, adding the peas during the last half hour of cooking time. Discard the bay leaf before serving garnished with remaining 2 Tbsp cilantro. Serve on buns, in tortillas or on Bibb/butter lettuce leaves.

Turkey Meatloaf (from Skinny Taste)

Meatloaf Ingredients:

- 1 tsp canola oil (I used EVOO)
- 1 large shallot, minced
- 1.5 pounds 93% lean ground turkey (I used 2 pounds)
- 2/3 cup Italian seasoned bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup chopped cremini mushrooms
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1 large egg white
- 1 tsp dried marjoram (I've never used or heard of this before! Yay for new things!)
- 1 tsp salt

Sauce Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp ketchup
- 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp light brown sugar

For the meatloaf: Cut a 15 x 8-inch piece of parchment paper and place it in a 5 quart slow cooker, allowing the edges to come up the sides (this will make it easier to take the loaf out after it's cooked).

In a small nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the shallot and cook, stirring, until golden, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl. Add the turkey, bread crumbs, mushrooms, ketchup, whole egg, egg white, marjoram, and salt. Mix well and shape into an oval loaf. Place in the slow cooker.

For the sauce: In a small bowl, whisk together all sauce ingredients. Brush half of the sauce over the loaf and refrigerate the remaining sauce.

Cover and cook on low for 6 hours, until a thermometer registers 165 degrees.

Preheat the broiler. Line a baking sheet with foil.

Transfer the meatloaf to the lined baking sheet. Brush with the reserved sauce. Broil until a crust forms, 1 to 2 minutes. Cut into 12 slices, divide among 6 plates, and serve.

Carne Desmechada (from Skinny Taste)

- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1/3 cup chopped scallions
- 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 plum tomatoes, chopped
- 1.5 tsp salt
- 1.5 tsp ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 cup reduced-sodium beef broth
- 1.5 cups canned tomato sauce
- 1.5 pounds flank steak, fat trimmed
- 2 bay leaves

Heat a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the oil, scallions, bell pepper, and garlic and cook, stirring, until tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes, 1/2 teaspoon of the cumin, and the garlic powder and cook until the tomatoes soften and begin to break up, 4 to 5 minutes more. Transfer to a slow cooker. Add the broth and tomato sauce and stir well.

Season the meat with the remaining 1 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon cumin, and place in the slow cooker, making sure the liquid covers the meat. If it does not, add a little more broth. Add the bay leaves.

Cover and cook on high for 4 hours or on low for 8 hours, until the meat is tender and easily shreds. Discard the bay leaves. Carefully transfer the meat to a plate and shred with 2 forks. Return the meat to the slow cooker and keep warm until ready to serve.

Maple-Dijon Chicken Drumsticks (from Skinny Taste)

- 8 skinless chicken drumsticks (28 ounces total)
- 3/4 tsp garlic salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/4 cup Dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar

Season the chicken with the garlic salt and pepper to taste. Place in a slow cooker.

In a small bowl, whisk together the maple syrup, mustard, and vinegar. Pour the mixture over the chicken legs, making sure the chicken is covered.

Cover and cook on high for 4 hours, or until cooked through and tender. Serve warm. If you'd like to get a little brown color on the chicken, set the slow cooker to warm and leave the chicken alone for 3 to 4 hours.

Overnight Banana Bread Oatmeal (source unknown)

- 3 cups water
- 4 cups unsweetened almond milk, divided use
- 1 cup dry steel-cut oats
- 3 large ripe bananas, mashed
- 6 Tbsp ground flaxseed
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup
- 6 Tbsp chopped raw walnuts (optional)

Place water, 1 cup almond milk, oats, bananas, flaxseed, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg in a 3 quart slow cooker and cover. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours, or until oats are soft and chewy.

Top each serving evenly with maple syrup, walnuts, and remaining almond milk; serve immediately. Makes 6 servings.

12 Tips and Hacks for Getting the Most out of your Slow Cooker Experience

1. Cook your protein to use all week long.

One of the simplest, smartest ways to streamline your weekly meal prep is by slow-cooking a large batch of one protein on the weekend, and then adding it to multiple dishes throughout the week. Most of these dishes are extremely versatile; try them in salads, sandwiches, rice bowls, tacos, and burritos.

2. Meal prep as much as possible.

Find a slew of slow cooker recipes and spend a weekend afternoon chopping and assembling the ingredients into labeled, freezer-friendly bags. The night before you cook, move the bags into the fridge so they can thaw. You'll save time by prepping en masse, and you'll also cut costs by purchasing items, such as meat, in larger, value-priced packages.

3. Batch cook your breakfasts.

Dinner isn't the only meal magically transformed by slow cookers. Wake up from dreamland to a piping hot breakfast with overnight slow cooker dishes such as the Banana Bread Oatmeal. Another great option is Slow Cooked Steel-Cut Oatmeal with Apples and Cinnamon: <https://www.beachbodyondemand.com/blog/slow-cooked-steel-cut-oatmeal-apples-cinnamon>

You can even store this in the fridge for several days. That's a great heat-and-go option!

4. Simmer in your slow cooker instead of on the stove.

Dried beans, pasta sauces, chicken stock, granola--all these staples can be slow-cooked in large batches to help you throw together meals easily. You can simply make bone broth in a slow cooker. Save your leftover chicken bones (from a rotisserie chicken) and add to crockpot. Cover with water + 2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar. Add an onion (whole is fine), a couple stalks of celery, some carrots, pretty much any veggie you have in the fridge + some salt and pepper and simmer for 8-24 hours. Drain the liquid and store in the fridge. It's delicious as is but you can also use as the base for soups.

5. Make a double batch to enjoy now and later.

The Crockpot Challenge

Most soups and stews taste equally good if not better as leftovers. With a large slow cooker it's easy to make extra and get two meals for the work of one. Can't stand a repeat dinner in a single week? Just choose freezer-friendly recipes and stash half to enjoy in a few weeks.

6. Treat your oven to some time off.

Tackling a bunch of recipes at once for a big dinner or holiday feast? Solve the traffic jam for the oven and stove by delegating a side dish to the slow cooker, such as baked and mashed potatoes, stuffed peppers, sauces, and even fruit crisps and baked apple desserts.

7. Shred faster.

Instead of the typical method of pulling apart cooked chicken and pork with forks, fast-forward the process in seconds with a potato masher or hand mixer. Dunk the masher or mixer right into the crock pot to shred the meat, then let it laze in the saucy pool before being spooned onto plates.

8. Eliminate tedious pot scrubbing.

You can skip post-meal soaking and scrubbing by using slow-cooker liners, many of which are BPA-free. Use them once and toss for quick cleanup. I'm all about fewer dishes to wash.

9. Don't open the lid unless you have to (or unless you end up with too much liquid).

Unless you're adding ingredients or the directions call for you to give your food a quick stir, avoid lifting the lid. The lid traps heat, and every time you remove it, it can take up to 30 minutes to return to the right temperature.

If you've accidentally added too much liquid, or if you end up with a watery dish, remove the lid for the last 30 minutes of cooking. This will let some of that extra liquid reduce down.

10. Avoid overcooking by running the slow cooker overnight instead of during the day.

No more stressing out about leaving work on time or letting that pulled pork overcook while you're stuck in traffic. Cooking overnight allows you to take your time with any prep the night before instead of rushing through it in the morning. If leaving an appliance on overnight causes you to break out in a cold sweat, consider investing in one you can program with a delayed start.

11. Get rid of stubborn stains and make your crock-pot look new again.

The Crockpot Challenge

Seriously, check out this tutorial for cleaning the grime off of your crock: <http://lifeshouldcostless.com/2012/12/lifechanging-healthy-way-to-clean-that.html>

12. Learn how to convert your favorite oven recipes for the slow cooker.

I've adapted a couple of my recipes over the years. Almost anything that cooks in the oven can be adapted for the slow cooker. Some things may take trial and error but this chart is very useful: <http://crockingirls.com/2013/01/convert-recipes-for-the-slow-cooker/>

Grocery List

Meat / Poultry

- 1.5 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs or breasts
- 1 pound ground chicken
- 1.5 pounds 93% lean ground turkey
- 1.5 pounds flank steak, fat trimmed
- 8 skinless chicken drumsticks (approximately 28 ounces)

Dairy / Non Dairy

- 2 tsp ghee or unsalted butter
- Unsweetened Almond Milk

Produce

- 1 medium onion
- 6 garlic cloves
- 1 tsp grated fresh ginger
- 4 Tbsp fresh cilantro
- 1 fresh jalapeño or other chile pepper
- 3 bay leaves
- 3/4 cup frozen peas
- 1 large shallot
- 1/2 cup chopped cremini mushrooms
- 1/3 cup chopped scallions
- 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 2 plum tomatoes
- 3 large, ripe bananas

Pantry Staples

- 1/2 cup tomato paste, no sugar added
- Worcestershire sauce
- Pure maple syrup
- Apple cider vinegar

- Balsamic Vinegar
- 3/4 + 1.5 cups canned tomato sauce
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 2/3 cup Italian seasoned bread crumbs
- Ketchup
- 2 large eggs
- Dijon Mustard
- Light Brown Sugar
- Reduced Sodium Beef Broth (chicken broth also works)
- Dry Steel Cut Oats
- Ground Flaxseed
- Raw Walnuts

Spices

- Sea Salt
- Garlic Powder
- Ground Black Pepper
- Onion Powder
- Coriander
- Cumin
- Chili Powder
- Turmeric
- Garam Masala
- Cinnamon
- Dried Marjoram
- Nutmeg