PULSE

QUICK AND EASY CROCKPOT RECIPES

Crocktoberfest 2026



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Crockpot recipes for busy families, from Josh and the team at Pulse Personal Training

Welcome to Crocktoberfest

Dinner does not have to be a production. That's the whole idea behind this book.

If you've ever stood in the kitchen at 5:30 wondering what you're making, or ended up in the drive-through line because it was easier, you're not alone. I live that life too. Four kids, a full schedule, and a pile of things that all feel like they need to happen at once.

Every October, we pull out the crockpot and make it easy to eat real food at home. These are simple, family-friendly meals that cook while you do life. Nothing fancy. Nothing you have to track or weigh.

Here's how it works:

- **30 minutes or less of hands-on time.** The crockpot does the rest.
- **A variety of proteins.** Chicken, beef, pork, turkey, and a few meatless soups.
- **Simple ingredients.** Stuff you can find at your regular grocery store.

These meals don't have to be perfect. They just have to get made at home. Cooking at home is already a win, and small wins add up.

Every recipe includes a "Make it a win" tip for leftovers, easy swaps, or a little extra protein.

So pick one recipe this week, put the crockpot to work, and let's keep moving forward.

Josh

Before You Start: Crockpot Basics

A few habits make every recipe in this book turn out better.

- **Thaw your meat first.** Slow cookers heat gently, so frozen meat spends too long in the danger zone. Move it to the fridge the night before.
- **Keep the lid on.** Every peek adds 15 to 20 minutes to the cook time.

Low or high both work. Low is better for tough cuts like roasts and pork shoulder. High is your friend when you started late.

Add delicate things at the end. Broccoli, peas, spinach, and dairy go in near the finish so they don't turn to mush or curdle.

Shred in the juices. Pulled meat soaks up flavor when it goes back into the pot.

Use a liner. Cleanup is the difference between a meal you repeat and a meal you skip.

How these recipes fit your Foundations

Every recipe here supports the Pulse Nutrition Foundations: protein, vegetables, and eating meals at home. Most also give you an easy way to add water or fruit on the side. You don't need to count anything. Pick the recipe, make it at home, and you're already moving forward.

Each recipe makes about 6 servings. The nutrition numbers are estimates and will shift with brands, cuts, and portions. Calories, protein, carbs, fat, and sugar are listed per serving so you can see what's in your meal, not so you can obsess over it.

Buffalo Ranch Shredded Chicken



Hands-on: 5 min | Cook: Low 6-7 hrs or High 3-4 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

2 lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts ½ cup buffalo sauce
1 packet ranch seasoning
½ cup low-sodium chicken broth Celery and carrot sticks for serving

Steps

1. Add the chicken, broth, and ranch seasoning to the crockpot. 2. Cook until tender, then shred.
3. Stir in the buffalo sauce and let it soak up for 15 minutes.
4. Serve on buns, in lettuce wraps, or with the veggie sticks.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving (chicken only): 200 cal | 33g protein | 3g carbs | 5g fat | 1g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:Top with Greek yogurt in place of ranch dressing.

Honey Garlic Chicken Thighs



Hands-on: 10 min | Cook: Low 6 hrs or High 3 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

2 lbs boneless skinless chicken thighs
¼ cup honey
⅓ cup low-sodium soy sauce
¼ cup ketchup
5 garlic cloves, minced
Steamed green beans for serving (about 1 cup per serving)

Steps

1. Whisk the honey, soy sauce, ketchup, and garlic together. 2. Pour over the thighs in the crockpot.
3. Cook until tender, then spoon the sauce over the top.
4. Serve with green beans.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving (with green beans): 265 cal | 29g protein | 22g carbs | 8g fat | 15g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:This one is higher in sugar, so pair it with a plain veggie side.

Chicken Broccoli "Stir Fry" over Rice



Hands-on: 15 min | Cook: Low 4-5 hrs or High 2-3 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

2 lbs chicken breast, sliced into strips
⅓ cup low-sodium soy sauce
2 tbsp honey
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 tbsp fresh ginger, grated
1 tbsp cornstarch mixed with 2 tbsp cold water 4 cups broccoli florets
Cooked rice for serving (¾ cup per serving)

Steps

1. Add the chicken, soy sauce, honey, garlic, and ginger to the crockpot.
2. Cook until the chicken is tender.
3. Stir in the cornstarch mixture and the broccoli for the last 30 minutes so it stays crisp.
4. Serve over rice.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving (with rice): 370 cal | 38g protein | 40g carbs | 4g fat | 6g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:Double the broccoli. It's cheap and filling.

Creamy Chicken and Rice



Hands-on: 15 min | Cook: High 3-4 hrs (check the rice at 3) | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

1½ lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts
1 cup long-grain white rice, uncooked (not instant) 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1 can (10.5 oz) cream of chicken soup
1 onion, diced
1 cup diced carrots
1 tsp garlic powder
½ tsp thyme
1 cup frozen peas

Steps

1. Add everything except the peas to the crockpot and stir.
2. Cook until the rice is tender and the chicken shreds.
3. Shred the chicken, stir the peas in, and let them warm for 5 minutes.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving: 360 cal | 31g protein | 38g carbs | 8g fat | 4g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:This is a one-pot dinner, so there are no extra dishes to wash.

Classic Pot Roast with Carrots and Potatoes



Hands-on: 15 min | Cook: Low 8-9 hrs or High 5-6 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

3 lb chuck roast
1½ lbs baby potatoes, halved 4 carrots, cut in big chunks
1 onion, cut in wedges
4 garlic cloves
2 cups low-sodium beef broth 1 tbsp tomato paste
2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce 1 tsp thyme
Salt and pepper

Steps

1. Put the potatoes, carrots, onion, and garlic in the bottom of the crockpot.
2. Season the roast with salt and pepper and set it on top.
3. Whisk the broth, tomato paste, Worcestershire, and thyme together and pour over
everything.
4. Cook until the roast pulls apart with a fork.
5. Shred the beef and serve it with the veggies and a spoonful of the juices.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving: 430 cal | 37g protein | 28g carbs | 18g fat | 6g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:Leftover roast makes a quick beef and veggie hash the next morning.

Beef and Broccoli



Hands-on: 15 min | Cook: Low 5-6 hrs or High 3 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

2 lbs flank steak or chuck roast, sliced thin against the grain ½ cup low-sodium beef broth
⅓ cup low-sodium soy sauce
2 tbsp honey
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 tbsp fresh ginger, grated
1 tbsp cornstarch mixed with 2 tbsp cold water
4 cups broccoli florets
Cooked rice for serving (¾ cup per serving)

Steps

1. Add the beef, broth, soy sauce, honey, garlic, and ginger to the crockpot. 2. Cook until the beef is tender.
3. Stir in the cornstarch mixture and the broccoli for the last 30 minutes.
4. Serve over rice.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving (with rice): 390 cal | 36g protein | 40g carbs | 9g fat | 7g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:Skip the takeout. This costs a fraction of it and takes about the same effort as ordering.

Italian Beef



Hands-on: 10 min | Cook: Low 8-9 hrs or High 5-6 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

3 lb chuck roast
1 cup low-sodium beef broth
1 packet Italian dressing seasoning
1 jar (12 oz) pepperoncini with about ¼ cup of the juice
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp Italian seasoning
Sandwich rolls, or a bed of greens and roasted peppers for serving

Steps

1. Add the roast, broth, seasonings, pepperoncini, and juice to the crockpot. 2. Cook until the beef falls apart.
3. Shred and stir it back into the juices.
4. Pile on rolls or over greens.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving (beef only): 290 cal | 38g protein | 2g carbs | 13g fat | 1g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:A roll adds about 150 calories and 3g sugar. Greens plus peppers keeps it lighter.

Hearty Beef and Bean Chili



Hands-on: 20 min (includes browning the beef) | Cook: Low 6-7 hrs or High 3-4 hrs |
Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

2 lbs lean ground beef (90/10)
1 onion, diced
1 bell pepper, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 can (28 oz) crushed tomatoes
1 can (15 oz) kidney beans, drained and rinsed 1 can (15 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup low-sodium beef broth
3 tbsp chili powder 1 tbsp cumin
1 tsp salt

Steps

1. Brown the beef with the onion in a skillet, then drain. 2. Add it to the crockpot with everything else and stir. 3. Cook until thick and flavorful.
4. Top with shredded cheese, Greek yogurt, or avocado.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving: 390 cal | 36g protein | 31g carbs | 13g fat | 8g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:Freezes well. Double it and stash a few containers for busy weeknights.

Apple Cider Pulled Pork



Hands-on: 10 min | Cook: Low 8-10 hrs or High 5-6 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

3 lb boneless pork shoulder, cut in 3-4 big chunks 1 cup unsweetened apple cider
1 onion, sliced
2 tbsp brown sugar
2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 tbsp smoked paprika
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
Coleslaw mix or shredded cabbage for serving

Steps

1. Lay the onion in the bottom of the crockpot and set the pork on top. 2. Mix the spices and brown sugar and rub them over the pork.
3. Pour the cider and vinegar around the pork.
4. Cook until it shreds easily, then shred and stir it back into the juices. 5. Serve on buns, over baked potatoes, or on a bed of slaw.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving (pork only): 310 cal | 32g protein | 9g carbs | 16g fat | 8g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:Skim the fat off the juices before stirring them back in. It's an easy way to lighten it up.

Pork Carnitas



Hands-on: 10 min | Cook: Low 8-9 hrs or High 5-6 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

3 lb boneless pork shoulder, cut in big chunks
1 onion, quartered
4 garlic cloves
Juice of 2 oranges (about ½ cup)
Juice of 2 limes
2 tsp cumin
2 tsp oregano
1 tsp chili powder
1 tsp salt
Corn tortillas, shredded cabbage, salsa, and cilantro for serving

Steps

1. Add the pork, onion, and garlic to the crockpot.
2. Mix the juices and spices and pour over the top.
3. Cook until the pork is fall-apart tender, then shred.
4. For crispy edges, spread the shredded pork on a sheet pan with a few spoonfuls of juice and broil 5 minutes.
5. Serve in tortillas with cabbage and salsa.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving (pork only): 300 cal | 33g protein | 4g carbs | 16g fat | 2g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:Leftovers work in eggs, burrito bowls, or on a salad. One cook gets you three meals.

Sausage, Peppers, and Onions



Hands-on: 15 min | Cook: Low 4-5 hrs or High 2-3 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

2 lbs Italian sausage links (sweet or hot)
3 bell peppers (mixed colors), sliced
1 large onion, sliced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 can (15 oz) diced tomatoes, drained
1 tsp Italian seasoning
Salt and pepper
Rolls, rice, or roasted potatoes for serving

Steps

1. Layer the peppers, onion, and garlic in the crockpot.
2. Nestle the sausages on top and add the tomatoes and seasonings.
3. Cook until the sausages are cooked through and the peppers are soft. 4. Slice the sausages and stir everything together.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving (pork sausage, no sides): 380 cal | 22g protein | 10g carbs | 28g fat | 6g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:Swap in chicken or turkey sausage and it drops to about 230 cal, 22g protein, 12g carbs, 10g fat, 6g sugar.

Turkey Taco Chili



Hands-on: 20 min (includes browning the turkey) | Cook: Low 6-7 hrs or High 3-4 hrs |
Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

2 lbs ground turkey (93/7)
1 onion, diced
1 bell pepper, diced
1 can (28 oz) crushed tomatoes
1 can (15 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed
1 can (15 oz) pinto beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup frozen corn
1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
2 packets taco seasoning
Toppings: shredded cheese, Greek yogurt, avocado, tortilla chips

Steps

1. Brown the turkey with the onion in a skillet, then drain. 2. Add it to the crockpot with everything else and stir.
3. Cook until thick and flavorful.
4. Top with whatever your family likes.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving (no toppings): 340 cal | 33g protein | 35g carbs | 7g fat | 8g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:Taco seasoning packets can be salty. Use one packet plus extra chili powder and cumin if you want to cut back.

White Turkey Chili



Hands-on: 15 min | Cook: Low 6-7 hrs or High 3-4 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

1½ lbs turkey breast tenderloins (or chicken breasts)
2 cans (15 oz) great northern beans, drained and rinsed 1 can (4 oz) diced green chiles
1 onion, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1 cup frozen corn
2 tsp cumin
1 tsp oregano
½ tsp salt
4 oz cream cheese, cubed

Steps

1. Add everything except the cream cheese to the crockpot.
2. Cook until the turkey shreds easily.
3. Shred the turkey, add the cream cheese, and stir until it melts in. 4. Serve with a squeeze of lime.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving: 330 cal | 37g protein | 28g carbs | 7g fat | 3g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:Swap the cream cheese for ½ cup plain Greek yogurt (stirred in off the heat) to add protein and trim fat.

Turkey Meatball Marinara



Hands-on: 25 min (rolling the meatballs) | Cook: Low 4-5 hrs or High 2-3 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

2 lbs ground turkey
½ cup breadcrumbs
¼ cup grated Parmesan
1 egg
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 tsp Italian seasoning
1 tsp salt
1 jar (24 oz) marinara sauce
2 handfuls fresh spinach
Pasta, zucchini noodles, or spaghetti squash for serving

Steps

1. Mix the turkey, breadcrumbs, Parmesan, egg, garlic, and seasonings. Roll into about 24 meatballs.
2. Pour half the marinara into the crockpot, add the meatballs, and cover with the rest of the sauce. No browning needed.
3. Cook until the meatballs are cooked through.
4. Gently stir in the spinach and let it wilt for 5 minutes.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving (meatballs and sauce, no pasta): 320 cal | 33g protein | 17g carbs | 13g fat | 8g sugar

Tip: Make it a win:Choose a marinara with no added sugar. Some jars sneak in 10g or more per serving.

Hearty Vegetable Soup



Hands-on: 20 min | Cook: Low 7-8 hrs or High 4-5 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

1 onion, diced
3 carrots, sliced
3 celery stalks, sliced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1½ lbs potatoes, diced
1 can (28 oz) diced tomatoes
6 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
2 tsp Italian seasoning
1 bay leaf
2 cups green beans, trimmed and cut in thirds
1 cup frozen corn or peas

Steps

1. Add everything except the green beans and corn to the crockpot. 2. Cook until the potatoes and carrots are tender.
3. Stir in the green beans and corn for the last 45 minutes.
4. Remove the bay leaf and season with salt and pepper.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving: 180 cal | 6g protein | 38g carbs | 1g fat | 10g sugar
Protein boost: Stir in shredded chicken or a can of white beans, or top with a scoop of Greek yogurt.

Tip: Make it a win:Clean out the produce drawer. Almost any veggie works here.

Sweet Potato Soup



Hands-on: 15 min | Cook: Low 6-7 hrs or High 3-4 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

2½ lbs sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 onion, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
4 cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
1 tsp cumin
1 tsp smoked paprika
½ tsp cinnamon
1 can (13.5 oz) light coconut milk (or 1 cup milk) Salt and pepper

Steps

1. Add the sweet potatoes, onion, garlic, broth, and spices to the crockpot.
2. Cook until the sweet potatoes are very soft.
3. Blend with an immersion blender (or in batches in a regular blender) until smooth.
4. Stir in the coconut milk and warm through for 10 minutes.

Per serving: 230 cal | 4g protein | 42g carbs | 5g fat | 11g sugar
Protein boost: Top with Greek yogurt and roasted chickpeas, or stir in shredded chicken.
Make it a win: Sweet potatoes are naturally sweet, so there's no added sugar needed.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Loaded Potato Soup



Hands-on: 15 min | Cook: Low 7-8 hrs or High 4 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

3 lbs russet potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 onion, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
1 cup milk
4 oz cream cheese, cubed
1 cup shredded cheddar
Toppings: green onions, extra cheddar, Greek yogurt, crumbled bacon (optional)

Steps

1. Add the potatoes, onion, garlic, broth, salt, and pepper to the crockpot. 2. Cook until the potatoes are fork-tender.
3. Mash some of the potatoes right in the pot, leaving plenty of chunks.
4. Stir in the milk, cream cheese, and cheddar and let it melt for 15 minutes.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving (no toppings): 330 cal | 12g protein | 40g carbs | 13g fat | 5g sugar
Protein boost: Swap the cream cheese for ½ cup plain Greek yogurt (stirred in off the heat) and top with bacon or shredded chicken.

Tip: Make it a win:Let everyone build their own bowl. Kids love the topping bar.

Broccoli Cheddar Soup



Hands-on: 20 min | Cook: Low 5-6 hrs or High 2½-3 hrs | Serves: 6
Ingredients

Ingredients

1½ lbs broccoli florets, chopped small
3 carrots, shredded
1 onion, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
½ tsp mustard powder
2 cups milk
2 tbsp cornstarch mixed with 2 tbsp cold water 2 cups sharp cheddar, freshly shredded
Salt and pepper

Steps

1. Add the broccoli, carrots, onion, garlic, broth, and mustard powder to the crockpot. 2. Cook until the broccoli is very tender.
3. Stir in the milk and cornstarch mixture and cook on high 20 more minutes to thicken. 4. Turn off the heat, add the cheddar a handful at a time, and stir until smooth.

Nutrition (Per Serving)

Per serving: 260 cal | 15g protein | 22g carbs | 14g fat | 8g sugar

Tip: Protein boost:Stir in shredded chicken or ham, or top with Greek yogurt.