

Midwest Living

Pulled Pork
Sandwiches with Root
Beer Barbecue Sauce
(recipe on next page)

TOP 10 Slow-cooker recipes

Italian Beef Sandwiches

PREP: 25 minutes **COOK:** 10 to 11 hours (low) or 5 to 5½ hours (high)

- 1 4-pound boneless beef sirloin or rump roast
- ½ cup water
- 1 0.7-ounce envelope Italian dry salad dressing mix
- 2 teaspoons dried Italian seasoning, crushed
- ½ to 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 10 to 12 hoagie buns, kaiser rolls or other sandwich rolls, split
- Assorted toppings (such as pickles, sliced onion, sliced pepperoncini salad peppers and/or roasted red sweet pepper strips; optional)
- 1½ cups shredded Italian cheese blend (6 ounces; optional)

1. Trim fat from beef; cut the meat into 2- to 3-inch pieces. Place pieces of meat in a 4- to 5-quart slow cooker. In a small bowl, stir together the water, salad dressing mix, Italian seasoning, crushed red pepper and garlic powder; pour over meat. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 10 to 11 hours or on high-heat setting for 5 to 5½ hours.
2. Remove the beef from cooker with a slotted spoon, reserving the cooking juices. Using two forks, pull meat apart into shreds. To serve, fill buns with meat and, if you like, assorted toppers. If you like, sprinkle sandwich filling with cheese and place sandwiches on two large baking sheets; broil sandwiches, one pan at a time, 4 to 5 inches from the heat for 1 to 2 minutes or until cheese is melted.
3. Strain cooking juices through a fine-mesh sieve. Drizzle each sandwich with some of the strained juices to moisten. If you like, serve remaining cooking juices for dipping.

Makes 10 to 12 sandwiches.

Nutrition facts per sandwich: 564 cal, 19 g fat, 117 mg chol, 921 mg sodium, 51 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 44 g pro.

Easy for entertaining!

Pulled Pork Sandwiches with Root Beer Barbecue Sauce

PREP: 25 minutes

COOK: 8 to 10 hours (low) or 4 to 5 hours (high)

- 1 2½- to 3-pound boneless pork sirloin roast
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 medium onions, cut into thin wedges
- 1 cup root beer
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 3 cups root beer (two 12-ounce cans or bottles)
- 1 cup bottled chili sauce
- ¼ teaspoon root beer concentrate (optional)
- 6 to 8 dashes bottled hot pepper sauce (optional)
- 8 to 10 kaiser rolls or hamburger buns, split (and toasted, if you like)
- Lettuce leaves (optional)
- Tomato slices (optional)

1. Trim fat from pork roast. If necessary, cut meat to fit into a 3½- to 5-quart slow cooker. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. In a large skillet, brown the pork roast on all sides in hot oil. Drain off fat. Transfer meat to slow cooker. Add onions, 1 cup root beer and the garlic. Cover and cook the mixture on low-heat setting for 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
2. Meanwhile, for sauce: In a medium saucepan, combine the 3 cups root beer and the chili sauce. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Boil gently, uncovered, about 30 minutes or until mixture is reduced to 2 cups, stirring occasionally. If you like, stir in root beer concentrate and hot pepper sauce.
3. Remove the meat and onions from cooker with a slotted spoon. Discard cooking liquid. Using two forks, pull meat apart into shreds. To serve, line rolls with some lettuce leaves and tomato slices, if you like. Fill with meat and onions; spoon on sauce. **Makes 8 to 10 sandwiches.**

Make-ahead tip: Prepare and cook meat as directed above. Place shredded meat and onions in a covered container and chill up to 24 hours. Or divide among 1-, 2-, or 4-serving-size freezer containers; seal, label and freeze for up to 1 month. Thaw overnight before serving. To reheat, transfer to saucepan; cover and cook over medium-low heat until heated through, stirring occasionally. If necessary, add 2 to 4 tablespoons water to keep mixture from sticking.

Too much sodium?: Trim that number by using less salt or choosing reduced-sodium ingredients for this or other slow cooker recipes.

Nutrition facts per sandwich: 421 cal, 9 g fat, 98 mg chol, 1,412 mg sodium, 48 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 35 g pro.

Wild Rice and Chicken Soup

PREP: 20 minutes

COOK: 6 to 8 hours (low) or 3 to 4 hours (high)

- 2½ cups chopped cooked chicken
- 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
- 2 medium carrots, coarsely shredded
- 2 stalks celery, sliced
- 1 10.75-ounce can reduced-fat and reduced-sodium condensed cream of chicken soup or cream of mushroom soup
- 1 6-ounce package long grain and wild rice mix
- 5 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 5 cups water
- Celery leaves (optional)

1. In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker, stir together the cooked chicken, fresh mushrooms, carrots, celery, cream of chicken soup, the long grain and wild rice with the contents of the rice seasoning packet. Gradually stir in chicken broth and the water.

2. Cover and cook the soup mixture on low-heat setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high-heat setting for 3 to 4 hours. If you like, garnish each serving with celery leaves. **Makes 8 to 10 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 203 cal, 5 g fat, 42 mg chol, 875 mg sodium, 23 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 18 g pro.

Southwestern Potato Sausage Chowder

PREP: 30 minutes **COOK:** 8 to 10 hours (low) or 4 to 5 hours (high)

- 1 pound bulk pork sausage
- 1 pound round red potatoes, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 medium red sweet pepper, chopped
- 1 medium green sweet pepper, chopped
- 1 serrano or jalapeño chile pepper, seeded and chopped* (optional)
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 14-ounce cans reduced-sodium chicken broth
- Shredded Monterey Jack cheese with jalapeño peppers (optional)
- Fried Potato Sticks or 1 cup canned shoestring potatoes (optional)

1. In a large skillet, cook sausage until no longer pink; drain off fat. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker, combine cooked sausage, potatoes, onion, sweet peppers, serrano pepper (if you like), cumin, garlic and black pepper. Stir in chicken broth.

2. Cover; cook on low-heat setting 8 to 10 hours or on high-heat setting 4 to 5 hours. If you like, top each serving with cheese and/or Fried Potato Sticks. **Makes 6 servings.**

Fried Potato Sticks: In skillet, cook 1 cup matchstick-size pieces of red potatoes in 2 tablespoons hot vegetable oil over medium heat 10 to 12 minutes or until golden and crisp, stirring occasionally. Sprinkle with ½ teaspoon salt and toss to coat. Remove with slotted spoon; drain on paper towels.

***Tip:** Because chile peppers contain oils that can burn skin and eyes, avoid contact with them as much as possible. When working with chile peppers, wear plastic or rubber gloves. If bare hands touch the peppers, wash hands and nails well with soap and water.

Nutrition facts per serving: 322 cal, 20 g fat, 54 mg chol, 804 mg sodium, 19 g carbo, 3 g fiber, 15 g pro.

Serve soup with thick slices of warm, crusty French bread for a no-fuss feast.

For hearty comfort food, try (right) Southwestern Potato Sausage Chowder and (below) Wild Rice and Chicken Soup.



For more soup ideas, visit midwestliving.com/soups.

Cheesy Potato Soup

PREP: 25 minutes

COOK: 9 to 10 hours (low) or 4½ to 5 hours (high)

6 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped (6 cups)

2½ cups water

½ cup chopped onion

2 teaspoons instant chicken

bouillon granules

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

1½ cups shredded American cheese

1 12-ounce can evaporated milk

Crumbled, cooked bacon (optional)

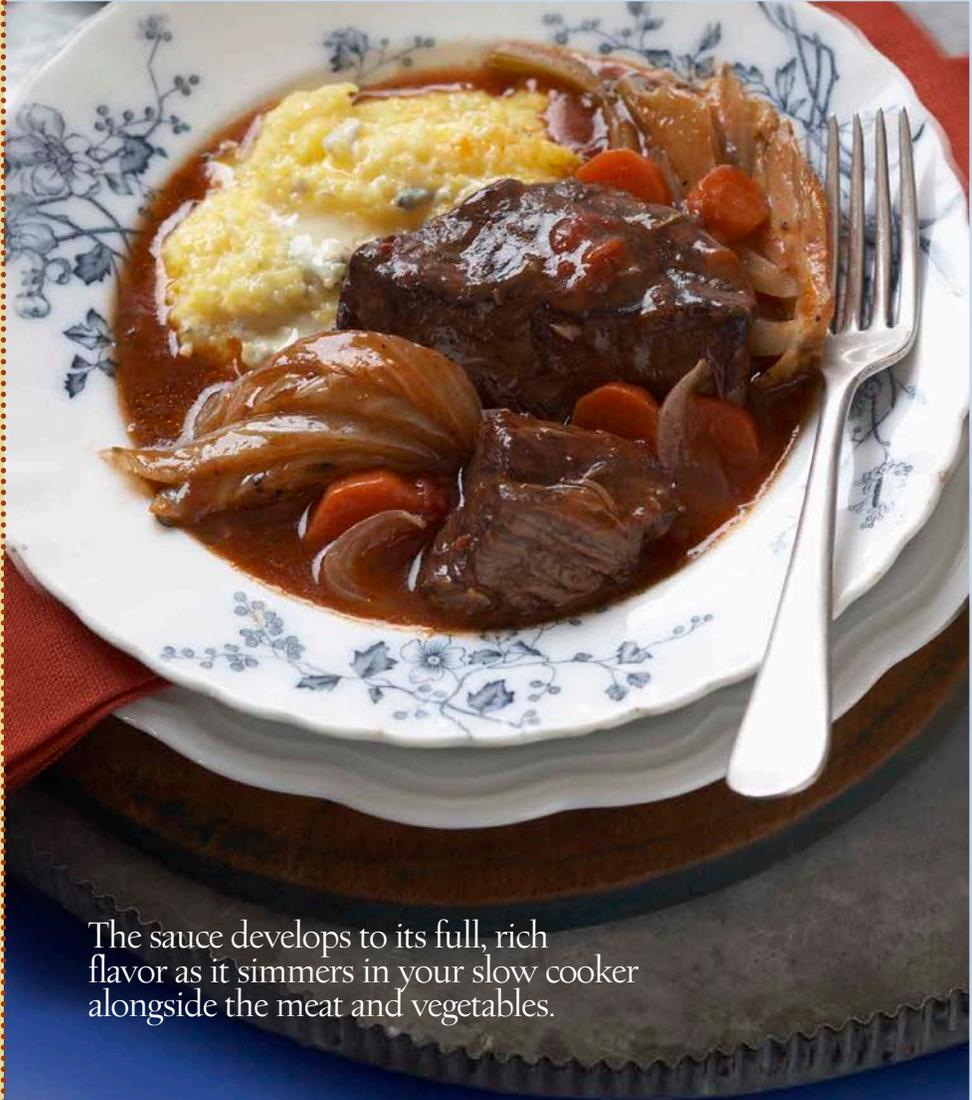
Snipped fresh chives (optional)

1. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker, combine potatoes, the water, onion, bouillon granules and pepper. Cover; cook on low-heat setting for 8 to 9 hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4½ hours.

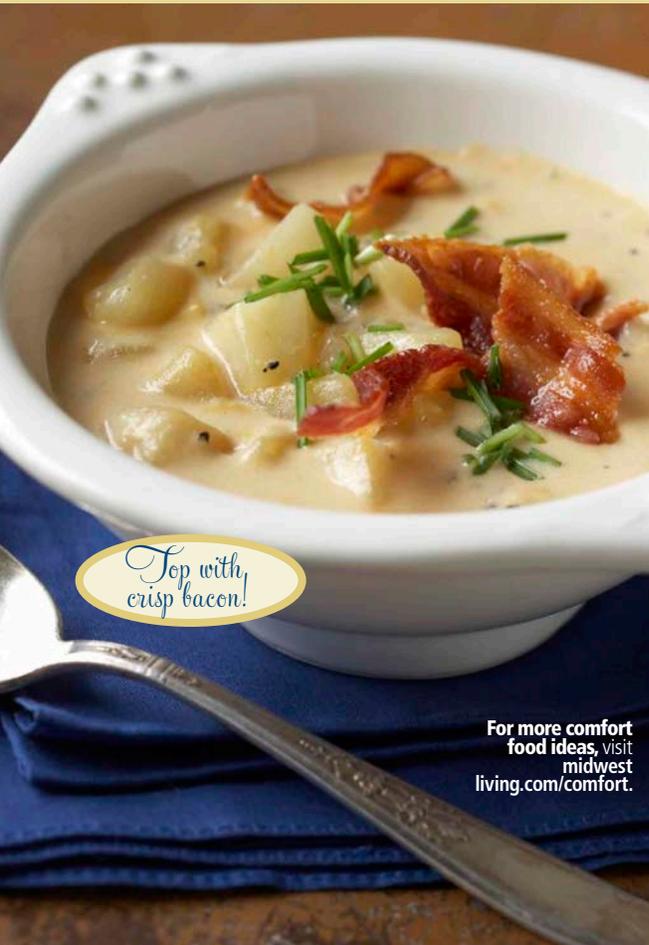
2. Stir cheese and milk into mixture in cooker. Cover; cook on low-heat setting for 1 hour more or on high-heat setting for 30 minutes more. For a thicker soup, mash potatoes slightly. If you like, sprinkle each serving with bacon and chives. **Makes 4 main-dish or 6 side-dish servings.**

For 5- to 6-quart slow cooker: Use 8 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped; 4 cups water; ¾ cup chopped onion; 1 tablespoon instant chicken bouillon granules; ¼ teaspoon pepper; 2 cups shredded American cheese (8 ounces); and one 12-ounce can evaporated milk plus one 5-ounce can evaporated milk. Prepare as directed. **Makes 6 main-dish or 8 to 10 side-dish servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 500 cal, 20 g fat, 65 mg chol, 1,132 mg sodium, 62 g carbo, 5 g fiber, 20 g pro.



The sauce develops to its full, rich flavor as it simmers in your slow cooker alongside the meat and vegetables.



Top with
crisp bacon!

For more comfort
food ideas, visit
midwest
living.com/comfort.

Beef Short Ribs over Gorgonzola Polenta

PREP: 20 minutes + 30 minutes (for polenta)

COOK: 9 to 10 hours (low) or 4½ to 5 hours (high)

2½ to 3 pounds boneless beef short ribs

2 large onions, cut into thin wedges

2 medium carrots, thinly sliced

1 medium fennel bulb, cored and cut

into thin wedges

1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained

1 cup dry red wine

2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca, crushed

2 tablespoons tomato paste

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed

½ teaspoon ground black pepper

Gorgonzola Polenta (recipe follows)

1. Trim fat from meat. In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker, combine onions, carrots and fennel. Top with meat.

2. In a medium bowl, combine undrained tomatoes, wine, tapioca, tomato paste, garlic, salt, rosemary and pepper. Pour over the meat and vegetables in the slow cooker.

3. Cover and cook on low-heat setting 9 to 10 hours or high-heat setting 4½ to 5 hours.

4. Meanwhile, prepare Gorgonzola Polenta. To serve, spoon polenta into shallow bowls. Top with meat and vegetable mixture. **Makes 6 servings.**

Gorgonzola Polenta: In a large saucepan, bring 2½ cups water to boiling.

Meanwhile, in a bowl, stir together 1 cup coarse-ground yellow cornmeal, 1 cup cold water and ½ teaspoon salt. Slowly add cornmeal mixture to boiling water, stirring constantly. Cook and stir until mixture returns to boiling. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cook for 25 to 30 minutes or until very thick, stirring frequently and adjusting heat as necessary to maintain a very slow boil. Stir in ½ cup crumbled Gorgonzola or other blue cheese or shredded Parmesan cheese.

Nutrition facts per serving: 502 cal, 18 g fat, 113 mg chol, 993 mg sodium, 35 g carbo, 6 g fiber, 42 g pro.

Angel Chicken

PREP: 15 minutes **COOK:** 4 to 5 hours (low)

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves (about 1½ pounds)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil (optional)
- 1 8-ounce package fresh button mushrooms, quartered
- 1 6-ounce package fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems removed and caps sliced
- ¼ cup butter
- 1 0.7-ounce envelope Italian dry salad dressing mix
- 1 10.75-ounce can condensed golden mushroom soup
- ½ of an 8-ounce tub cream cheese spread with chives and onion
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 2 cups hot cooked rice or angel hair pasta
- Sliced green onion or snipped fresh chives (optional)

1. If you like, in a large skillet, brown chicken on both sides in hot oil over medium heat. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker, combine button and shiitake mushrooms; top with chicken. In medium saucepan, melt butter; stir in Italian dressing mix. Stir in mushroom soup, cream cheese and white wine, until cheese is melted; pour over chicken.

2. Cover; cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours. Serve chicken and sauce over cooked rice. If you like, sprinkle with green onions. **Makes 4 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 602 cal, 25 g fat, 162 mg chol, 1,944 mg sodium, 41 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 47 g pro.

Slow-cook this so-easy main dish for a special family meal or as a simple entree for your next dinner party.



Cranberry-Sauced Meatballs

PREP: 30 minutes **BAKE:** 15 minutes

COOK: 2 to 3 hours (low) or 1 to 1½ hours (high)

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 egg
- ½ cup seasoned fine dry bread crumbs
- ½ cup dried cranberries, snipped, or golden raisins, snipped
- ¼ cup finely chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves or allspice
- 2 pounds uncooked ground chicken or turkey
- 1 16-ounce can jellied cranberry sauce
- 1 cup barbecue sauce

1. Lightly coat a 15x10x1-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray; set aside. For meatballs: In very large bowl, beat egg with fork. Stir in the bread crumbs, dried cranberries, onion, salt, garlic powder and cloves. Add ground chicken and mix well. Shape the mixture into 60 meatballs.

2. Place the shaped meatballs in the prepared baking pan. Bake in 350° oven for 15 to 18 minutes or until the meatballs are done (165°).*

3. In a 3½- or 4-quart slow cooker, stir together cranberry sauce and barbecue sauce. Add cooked meatballs, stirring gently to coat. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 2 to 3 hours or on high-heat setting for 1 to 1½ hours. Serve immediately or keep warm in the cooker on low-heat setting for up to 1 hour. Serve the meatballs with cocktail picks or toothpicks. **Makes 60 meatballs.**

Make-ahead tip: Prepare meatballs as directed through Step 1. Cover and chill for up to 24 hours. Continue as directed in steps 2 and 3, using the maximum timings to bake and to heat in slow cooker.

***Note:** The inside color of a meatball is not a reliable doneness indicator. A poultry meatball cooked to 165° is safe, regardless of color. To measure the doneness of a meatball, insert an instant-read thermometer into the center of meatball.

Nutrition facts per meatball: 48 cal, 1 g fat, 17 mg chol, 122 mg sodium, 6 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.

For more appetizer ideas, visit midwestliving.com/party.



Swiss Artichoke Dip

PREP: 15 minutes

COOK: 2½ to 3 hours (low) or 1½ hours (high)

- 1 8- or 9-ounce package frozen artichoke hearts, thawed and coarsely chopped
- 2 3-ounce packages cream cheese, cut up
- 2 ounces process Swiss cheese slices, torn into small pieces
- ¼ cup snipped dried tomatoes (not oil packed)
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 teaspoon dried minced onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Baguette slices or crackers, toasted

1. In a 1½-quart slow cooker, stir together the artichoke hearts, cream cheese, Swiss cheese, dried tomatoes, mayonnaise, milk, dried onion and garlic.
2. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours or on high-heat setting for 1½ hours. If no heat setting is available, cook for 1½ hours.
3. Stir the dip just before serving. Serve warm with baguette slices or crackers. **Makes 12 (¼-cup) servings.**
Nutrition facts per serving (dip only): 113 cal, 10 g fat, 22 mg chol, 173 mg sodium, 3 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

Have fun choosing the dippers for this decadent dessert fondue—anything from your favorite candy bars to cake cubes and fresh fruit.

Chocolate-Caramel Fondue

PREP: 15 minutes **COOK:** 2½ to 3 hours (low) or 1½ hours (high)

- 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 12-ounce jar caramel ice cream topping
- 9 ounces semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped, or ½ cups semisweet chocolate pieces
- Assorted dippers (such as angel food or pound cake cubes, cereal bars or brownie squares, cut-up salted nut rolls, large marshmallows, dried apricots, strawberries, banana slices, purchased cookies and/or pineapple chunks)
- Milk

1. In 1½-quart slow cooker, mix sweetened condensed milk, topping and chocolate.
2. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 2½ to 3 hours or on high-heat setting for 1½ hours, stirring once halfway through cooking. If no heat setting is available, cook for 1½ hours. Stir until chocolate is melted. Serve immediately or keep warm in the cooker on low-heat setting (if available) for up to 1 hour. (Chocolate mixture may become grainy if held longer.)
3. To serve, spear dippers with fondue forks. Dip into chocolate mixture, swirling as you dip. If the mixture thickens, stir in a little milk to thin. **Makes 12 (¼-cup) servings.**
Nutrition facts per serving (fondue only): 295 cal, 10 g fat, 11 mg chol, 104 mg sodium, 50 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 6 g pro.

For more dessert ideas, visit midwestliving.com/desserts.