



NEWS RELEASE

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Save time by cooking slowly

*By Kay Blakley,
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FORT LEE, Va. – Almost any food purchased at the commissary and prepared at home offers the advantage of better nutrition at a lower cost, but where will you find the time to cook? Just dust off your slow-cooker, spend 10 minutes filling it with ingredients before you head off to work, or school, or a day full of running errands, and come home to a meal that’s already made.

Keep the ingredients few, and keep them simple, to ensure they go together in a flash.

All the recipes featured in this week’s collection fit those requirements. And, if you think slow-cookers are only good for roasts and stews, think again. They can also produce tasty desserts like the Hot Fudge Sundae Cake, and flavorful vegetarian main dishes like Red Beans and Rice or Lentil and Mixed Vegetable Casserole.

Slow-cooker cooking is pretty basic, but do be sure to follow any special instructions pertaining to your specific model. Add these few “rule-of-thumb” tips and you’re good to go!

- **High temperature or low?** It’s always best to use the heat setting a recipe recommends, but if you need it done in a shorter or longer amount of time use the general guideline that 1 hour on high is equivalent to 2 to 2½ hours on low. If your recipe calls for 8 to 10 hours on low heat, cook it on high instead, for 4 to 5 hours.
- **Keep the lid on or off?** Nearly all recipes are cooked with the lid on, so keep it covered unless instructed to do otherwise. Don’t be tempted to peek, either. Each time you remove the cover adds another 15 to 20 minutes to the total cooking time.

- **How full to fill the pot:** For best results, a slow cooker should be between one-half and three-fourths full.
- **Other good-to-know tips:** Vegetables like potatoes and carrots take longer to cook, so slice or cut them into small pieces, and place them in the bottom of the pot.

For safety reasons, always brown and drain ground meats before adding to the slow-cooker. Browning other meats and poultry isn't necessary, but adds to flavor and appearance, especially with beef.

Use dried leaf herbs instead of ground – their flavor holds up better over the extended cooking time.

Go to http://www.commissaries.com/kays_kitchen.cfm to access the recipes mentioned in this article or click on the following links:

- Lentil and Mixed Vegetable Casserole: <http://tinyurl.com/vzprn7b>
- Beans and Rice: <http://tinyurl.com/ykbypxm>
- Sue's Amazing Beef: <http://tinyurl.com/yjazzkvd>
- Hidden Valley Pot Roast: <http://tinyurl.com/yhs7szd>
- Pulled Pork Sandwiches: <http://tinyurl.com/yzcn4e8>
- Barbeque Beef: <http://tinyurl.com/yhr8yag>
- Pot Roast Olé: <http://tinyurl.com/vgdkmog>
- Sweet and Saucy Thighs with Stir Fried Cabbage: <http://tinyurl.com/yjwhdo6>
- French Vegetable Ratatouille: <http://tinyurl.com/yg56j9o>
- Hot Fudge Sundae Cake: <http://tinyurl.com/yl7hz97>

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*