



CSF4

COOKING SKILLS & FOOD

Tasty, Affordable Meals for Busy Families

Time: 70 Minutes

Experience the ease and affordability of healthy meal making. You'll practice cooking a one-dish meal while embracing a new way to love dinner!

OBJECTIVES:

Learn how to effectively and efficiently use a slow cooker.

Create a heart-healthy, one-dish meal.

SETUP

- Review resource list and print it out. Purchase all necessary supplies.
- Set up demo station with the necessary activity resources.
- Provide computer, internet access, and projector, if available.
- White board/flip chart with markers.

INTRO

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself.
- Take care of any housekeeping items (closest bathroom, water fountain, etc.).
- Give a brief description of the educational experience.
- Engage in an icebreaker to gauge topic knowledge from the bank of options provided in the facilitator guide. *10 Minutes*

DEMO

- Demonstrate content (see demo script). *10 Minutes*

ACTIVITY

- Participants will break into teams to practice cooking a simple, healthy and affordable one-dish meal packed with fruits and vegetables, lean protein, and grains. *20 Minutes*

RECAP

- Pass out the handout(s) and invite participants to taste their healthy dish while going through the handout(s) together. Consider passing out a slow cooker recipe as well. *10 Minutes*

GOAL SETTING/CLOSING

- Engage in a goal setting activity from the bank of options provided in the facilitator guide. Pass out the Setting SMART Goals handout to participants.
- Thank participants and encourage them to join the next activity. (Provide date/time/location if known.) *20 Minutes*



NOTES: Read legal liability disclaimer(s), if applicable, before activity. Refer to Resource List for all necessary supplies and handouts.

Tasty, Affordable Meals for Busy Families Resources

HANDOUTS/VIDEOS

These resources can be found on the AHA's YouTube channel or heart.org.

- [Black Bean Soup recipe](#) **or**
[One-Dish Meal recipes](#)
- Optional – [Slow Cooker recipes \(choose one to print and distribute\)](#)
- Slow Cooker Savvy Tips handout (please locate in this guide)
- Setting SMART Goals handout (please locate in this guide)

SPACE SETUP

- Demo table
- Chairs and tables for participants
- Pens for participants
- Folders
- Computer, internet access if available

DEMO SUPPLIES

- White board/flip chart with markers

ACTIVITY INGREDIENTS* AND SUPPLIES** for the Black Bean soup;
if using other one-dish meal recipe, collect applicable ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 1 medium onion
- 1 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 jalapeño, seeds and ribs removed
- 2 16-oz. cans low-sodium black beans (undrained)
- 1 15-oz. can no salt-added diced tomatoes (undrained)
- 1 cup low-sodium, fat-free chicken broth
- Large pot with cover
- Chef's knives
- Cutting boards
- Measuring cups/spoons
- Can opener
- Electric burners
- Forks
- Bowls (for tasting)
- Spoons (for tasting)

**Recipe serves 4 people; please multiply ingredients as necessary for your participants.*

***Purchase appropriate number of supplies for your participants. Participants can divide into teams and share supplies and ingredients.*

Tasty, Affordable Meals for Busy Families Demo Script

 **SAY:** Whether you are tight on time or on cash, one of the best cooking tools is a slow cooker. A brand new 5-quart slow cooker can cost about \$30 or you might even be able to borrow one from a neighbor or friend for free. The basic appliance hasn't changed much in years, so even an older model from a resale shop will do.

 There are plenty of healthy slow cooker recipes on the American Heart Association's website, and I will go through tips for slow cooker success. However, if you want to convert a traditional healthy home-cooked recipe into a slow cooker recipe, I can teach you how to do that too! On the other hand, if you don't have a slow cooker at home, you will also learn about one-dish meals.

  Slow cooker cooking times in recipes are often estimates. If you do not have enough time to cook low and slow, you can speed it up by turning your slow cooker to high for about half the time. Also, some slow cookers cook faster than others. If the slow cooker you are using is larger or smaller than the one specified in the recipe, the meal may cook more slowly or quickly than the recipe states.

 Now, if you're converting a traditional recipe into a slow cooker recipe, a general rule of thumb is that if your recipe advises 15 to 30 minutes of cooking that equates to 4-6 hours on low or 2-3 hours on high for a slow cooker.

 First, you can save time by chopping and cutting the recipe ingredients the night before and putting them in a container in the refrigerator. The next morning, you can simply empty the container of ingredients into the slow cooker and cook according to the recipe instructions.

 When you start putting your ingredients in the slow cooker, layering is key!

Draw on the white board/flip chart a picture of a slow cooker with proper ingredient layering.

 **SAY:** If you are cooking vegetables in the slow cooker, put dense, tough ones, like potatoes, winter squash, cabbage and turnips, on the bottom where they are closest to the heating element and can tenderize. On the other hand, if you're cooking delicate vegetables, such as zucchini, broccoli, spinach and peas, place

them on top or add them later in cooking if the recipe calls for it since they can't hold up to hours of heat. If you're converting your recipe for a slow cooker, make sure to reduce the liquid by about half since a slow cooker doesn't boil as much liquid away. But make sure to add at least ½ cup of broth or water if the traditional recipe doesn't call for any since the cooker needs steam to cook your food!

 If you're at home while your slow cooker is cooking, remember to not peek. Lifting the lid during cooking will release built-up steam, and then you'll need to cook the food longer.

 When you're reaching the end of the cooking, you can add lemon juice or fresh herbs to make the flavor of the dish really pop. Fresh herbs (except for hearty rosemary or sage) added at the beginning of the cooking time may lose their flavor. You can add dried herbs at the beginning as they can withstand longer cooking times.

 Once you're ready to serve your dish, make sure that your food has reached the minimum safe internal temperature. A recipe is done if the vegetables are very tender and the meat is an internal temperature of 145° Fahrenheit (165° F for poultry, 160° F for ground meats, and 165° for casseroles).

 Now, if you can't borrow a slow cooker or don't have one at home, try making one of the AHA's many one-dish meal recipes. These meals are based on grains, pastas, beans and starchy vegetables, with a range of colorful fruits and nonstarchy vegetables plus a healthy portion of protein. One-dish meals don't require elaborate cooking techniques or a pile of pots and pans to wash afterwards.

 They also help families save money and time by extending limited protein ingredients and creating hearty meals from healthy, less expensive ingredients, such as beans and grains. You don't have to coordinate multiple dishes and try to get everything on the table at the same time. You just need to watch one pot. It can even be faster than waiting for delivery or picking up takeout! You can make one-dish meals ahead of time and keep them refrigerated or frozen.

Tasty, Affordable Meals for Busy Families Activity Script

Divide up participants into groups to make their one-dish meal.

Invite group members to pick up their resources (recipe, ingredients and cooking supplies). Alternatively, if you have set everything up at their stations beforehand, participants can go straight to their cooking stations.

Remind participants to share the following ingredients with one another: the cooking spray, jarred garlic, cumin, and chicken broth.



SAY: You can all follow the directions provided on the recipe or follow along with me.

First, dice the onion and jalapeño using your chef's knife and cutting board.

Pause for participants to dice their ingredients.



SAY: Next, spray your large pot with cooking spray. Heat it over medium-high heat. We'll then add our diced onion and cook it until translucent, about 5 minutes.

Pause for 5 minutes while they cook their onions; walk around the room to check on participants.



SAY: Now, we can add our garlic, cumin and jalapeño and cook for about 1 minute more.

Pause for 1 minute.



SAY: Please add your beans and lightly mash them with your fork. Once that's done, just add your tomatoes and broth and bring the soup to a boil. Reduce to medium-high heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.

While the group is waiting for the soup to cook, encourage participants to talk with their team members about their cooking experiences.



SAY: Once everyone is done making the dish, divide it into bowls and share with your team.

Black Bean Soup



Per serving:
245 Calories
0 g Sat. Fat
34 mg Sodium
\$1.36

Makes 4 Servings

You will love this American Heart Association recipe because it's simple to make, heart-healthy and budget-friendly.

INGREDIENTS

- Cooking spray
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 jalapeño, seeds and ribs removed, chopped
- 2 16 oz. cans low-sodium black beans (undrained)
- 1 15 oz. can no-salt-added, diced tomatoes (undrained)
- 1 cup low-sodium, fat-free chicken broth
- Chopped, fresh cilantro (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Spray large pot with cooking spray. Heat over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook for about 5 minutes, or until it's translucent.
2. Add garlic, cumin and jalapeño and cook 1 minute more.
3. Add beans to pot and lightly mash with a potato masher or fork.
4. Add tomatoes and broth. Bring to a boil and reduce to medium heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.
5. Serve topped with chopped fresh cilantro (optional).

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TIP:

Serve this as a side soup with a meal, or warm it in the microwave and use it as a filling for tacos!

Slow Cooker Savvy Tips



- Save time – Put all the recipe ingredients in a container the night before and place it in the refrigerator.
- Don't peek – Lifting the lid during the cooking time will release the built-up steam, and then you'll need to cook the food longer.
- Layer right – Place dense, tough vegetables, like potatoes, on the bottom closer to the heat. Delicate vegetables, like peas, can't hold up to hours of heat. Place them on top or add them later in cooking if the recipe calls for it.
- Finish fresh – Lemon juice or fresh herbs sprinkled on at the end of the cooking time will make the dish's flavor pop. Fresh herbs added at the beginning of cooking may lose their flavor. You can add dried herbs at the beginning as they can handle longer cooking times.
- Save money – Inexpensive, tougher cuts of meat become moist and tender when cooked in a slow cooker.
- Prep meat – The trick is to sear or brown the meat for about 5 minutes per side in a skillet before adding it to the slow cooker. Caramelizing the meat's surface gives it a richer flavor. When you need shredded meat for a recipe – like for tacos or barbecue pork – the extra step of searing isn't necessary.

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Setting SMART Goals

SPECIFIC

- What exactly do you want to accomplish?

MEASURABLE

- How will you track your progress towards your goal?

ACHIEVABLE

- Is reaching your goal possible with your full effort?

REALISTIC

- Do you have the resources and ability to achieve your goal? If not, how can you get them?

TIME-BOUND

- When will your goal be achieved?

EXAMPLE OF A SMART GOAL:

I will increase the number of fruit servings I eat daily by 2 cups within the next 3 months.

Personal SMART goal:
