



CSF4

COOKING SKILLS AND 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 after reviewing the [HFL Cost Calculator](#).
- Set up demo station with the necessary activity resources.
- Provide computer, internet access, and projector, if available.
- White board/flip chart with markers.

INTRO (10 Minutes)

- 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 [Welcome Toolkit](#).

DEMO (10 Minutes)

- Demonstrate content (see demo script).

ACTIVITY (20 Minutes)

- Participants will break into teams to practice cooking a simple, healthy and affordable soup that's packed with nutrition and very low in sodium.

RECAP (10 Minutes)

- Pass out handout(s) and invite participants to taste their healthy dish while going through the handout(s) together.

GOAL SETTING/CLOSING (20 Minutes)

- Engage in a goal setting activity from the bank of options provided in the [Welcome Toolkit](#). 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.)



NOTES: Read legal liability disclaimer before activity: [Food Liability Disclaimer](#). Refer to Resource List for all necessary supplies and handouts. This Healthy for Life® Educational Experience was created by Aramark and the American Heart Association as part of our Healthy for Life® 20 By 20 Initiative. We are proud to be working together to help improve the health of all Americans.

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Tasty, Affordable Meals for Busy Families Resource List

HANDOUTS/VIDEOS

Find these resources on AHA's YouTube channel or heart.org/healthyforgood

- ❑ Recipes – [One-Dish Meals](#)
- ❑ Recipes – [Slow Cooker](#) (choose one to print and distribute)
- ❑ Article – [Healthy Foods Under \\$1 Per Serving](#)

Find these resources in this lesson

- ❑ Recipe – [Black Bean Soup](#)
- ❑ Handout – [Slow Cooker Savvy and Food Safety Tips](#)
- ❑ Handout – [Life's Simple 7: How to Eat Better](#)
- ❑ Handout – [Setting SMART Goals](#)

SPACE SETUP

- ❑ Chairs and tables for participants
- ❑ Demo table
- ❑ Pens for participants
- ❑ Folders
- ❑ Computer and 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 tablespoon minced garlic
- ❑ 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- ❑ 1 medium fresh jalapeño, seeds and ribs removed
- ❑ 2 16-ounce cans low-sodium black beans (undrained)
- ❑ 1 15-ounce can no salt-added diced tomatoes (undrained)
- ❑ 1 cup fat-free, low-sodium 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. 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! 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 quickly or slowly 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 registers an internal temperature of 145°F Fahrenheit (165°F for poultry, 160°F for ground meats and 165°F 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, starchy vegetables, poultry, seafood and meats to give you a healthy portion of protein. They include a range of colorful fruits and non-starchy vegetables. 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 (if you're using them right away) or frozen (for longer storage).

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.



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 onion; walk around the room to check on participants.



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

Pause for 1 minute.



Please add your beans with liquid and lightly mash them with your fork. Once that's done, just add your tomatoes with liquid and broth and bring the soup to a boil over high heat. Reduce to medium 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.



Once everyone has finished making the dish, divide it into bowls and share with your team.

Makes 4 servings; 1 ½ cups per serving
Per serving: 245 Calories; 0.0 g Saturated Fat; 34 mg Sodium



Although it tastes as if it simmered for hours, this super-simple soup takes only minutes to cook. It's budget-friendly and full of protein and fiber.

INGREDIENTS


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

DIRECTIONS

1. Lightly spray a large pot with cooking spray.
2. Cook the onion over medium-high heat for about 5 minutes, or until very soft, stirring frequently. Stir in the garlic, cumin and jalapeño. Cook for 1 minute.
3. Stir in the beans with liquid. Lightly mash them using a potato masher or fork. Stir in the tomatoes with liquid and broth. Reduce the heat to medium. Simmer, covered, for 15 minutes.
4. Serve the soup topped with the cilantro.

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

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- **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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- Before putting them in the cooker, thaw frozen foods, especially meats and poultry, in the fridge or microwave—but not at room temperature. Frozen ingredients may keep the contents of the crock from reaching high-enough temperatures to cook properly.
 - To prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying, avoid leaving your slow cooker on the warm or off setting for more than 2 hours.
 - Reheat slow cooker leftovers in the microwave or on the stove. Bacteria can grow in the time it takes for food to reach a safe temperature if it's reheating in the crock.



HOW TO EAT BETTER

1 CREATE A HEALTHY DIETARY PATTERN

Make smart choices and swaps to build an overall healthy eating style. Watch calories and eat smaller portions.



vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, plant-based proteins, lean animal proteins, skinless poultry, fish



sweetened drinks, sodium, processed meats, refined carbohydrates like added sugars and processed grain foods, full-fat dairy products, eggs, highly processed foods, tropical oils like coconut and palm



trans fat and partially hydrogenated oils (found in some commercial baked goods and fried foods)

2 READ NUTRITION LABELS

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
N Daily Value*	
Total Fat 10g	20%
Saturated Fat 1g	2%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%

Learning how to read and understand food labels can help you make healthier choices.

When you have more than one choice, compare nutrition facts. Choose products with lower amounts of sodium, saturated fat and added sugars.

LEARN MORE AT HEART.ORG/MYLIFECHECK AND HEART.ORG/EATSMART

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3 TIPS FOR SUCCESS



WATCH CALORIES

Eat only as many calories as you use up through physical activity. Understand serving sizes and keep portions reasonable.



COOK AT HOME

Take control over the nutritional content of your food by learning healthy preparation methods.



LOOK FOR THE HEART-CHECK

The Heart-Check mark helps you find foods that can be part of a healthy eating plan.



LEARN THE SALTY SIX

Limit the amount of sodium you eat each day. Learn the Salty Six. These common foods can be loaded with excess sodium:

- Breads & Rolls
- Pizza
- Sandwiches
- Cold Cuts & Cured Meats
- Soups
- Burritos & Tacos

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:
