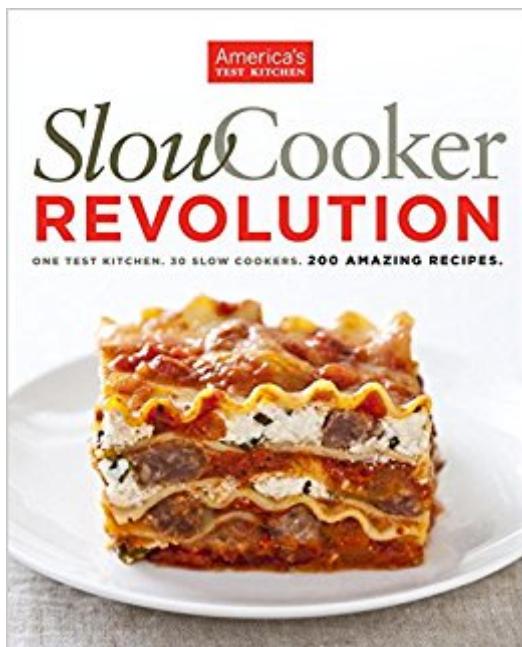


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# Slow Cooker Revolution: One Test Kitchen. 30 Slow Cookers. 200 Amazing Recipes.



## Synopsis

The 200 recipes in this family-friendly collection deliver a revolution in slow cooking like only America's Test Kitchen can! Who doesn't like the idea of throwing ingredients into a slow cooker and coming back hours later to a finished meal? Too bad most slow cooker recipes deliver mediocre results you'd rather forget than fix again. A team of ten test cooks at America's Test Kitchen spent a year developing recipes, and what they discovered will change the way you use your slow cooker. Did you know that onions, garlic, and spices should be bloomed in the microwave for five minutes before they go into the slow cooker? This simple step intensifies their flavor and requires no extra work. Did you know that a little soy sauce mixed with tomato paste adds meaty flavors to almost any stew and can often replace the tedious step of browning the meat? And do you know the secret to a moist slow-cooker chicken? Start the bird upside down to protect the delicate white meat from drying out.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

America's Test Kitchen is well-known for its top-rated television shows with more than 4 million weekly public television viewers, bestselling cookbooks, magazines, websites, and cooking school. The highly reputable and recognizable brands of America's Test Kitchen, Cook's Illustrated, and Cook's Country are the work of over 60 passionate chefs based in Boston, Massachusetts, who put ingredients, cookware, equipment, and recipes through objective, rigorous testing to identify the very best. Discover, learn, and expand your cooking repertoire with Julia Collin Davison, Bridget Lancaster, Jack Bishop, Dan Souza, Lisa McManus,

Tucker Shaw, Bryan Roof, and our fabulous team of test cooks!

I agree with many others that there are often numerous steps. However, the end results have generally been worth it. I've been cooking from this book for several years now and I reach for it again and again. My favorites:1. Moroccan Beef Chili with Chickpeas - I make this at least once a month2. Weeknight Meat Sauce - worth the price of the book3. Easy Barbecued Ribs - very easy and good for weeknights4. Sticky Wings - so good and I don't typically enjoy wings5. Tuscan White Bean Soup - soaked beans overnight in fridge6. Beef Goulash - easy and very good7. Braised Brisket and Onions - quick prep and a good end result8. Chicken in a Pot - my husband said this was the best thing I've ever made. Delicious and very juicy9. Sloppy Joes - a big favorite of my husband10. Mashed potatoes - very good and has been helpful at the holidays. Opens up a burner and keeps them warm as the meal comes together.11. Irish Oatmeal - so the cooking time is ridiculous. We actually eat the oatmeal as part of "breakfast for dinner" on weekend nights. It's inconvenient but very, very good. And it seems like less bother to me because it isn't boiling over every 5 minutes. Recipes that didn't work:1. 15-Bean Soup - it never quite came together although I tried it a few times2. Chicken Curry in a Hurry - just ok, nothing special3. Beef Stroganoff was good but the listed cooking time is off and I burned it4. Big-Batch Bolognese Sauce - bland and makes about 4 pounds of food. This was the biggest disappointment simply because of the sheer amount of meat that I felt like I wasted. For some background, I prefer to cook with fresh ingredients. I have a well-stocked pantry and enjoy cuisine from all over the world. The "unusual" ingredients in many of the recipes are something I enjoy and consider a positive. I also have figured out what I can simplify in the recipes I cook frequently. I will microwave ingredients rather than cooking on the stove to save time. I skip the panade (bread mixed into meat) to save the bother or need for bread and I haven't noticed a difference. I also have a cooker with a timer which switches over to warm. This has helped me use the book while I'm at work or away longer than the specified cooking time. I also appreciate other aspects of slow cooking in addition to convenience such as keeping the kitchen cool in the summer or freeing up space while making a large meal. I also appreciate the added moisture and stable cooking temperature as I live at high altitude. I find most recipes to make a huge amount of food so I often cut recipes in half. Every cooker is different but mine runs hot. I cook at the minimum of the time range listed.

I'm a big fan of *Â Cook's Illustrated* . I get their flagship magazine and *Â Cook's Country* and watch both America's Test Kitchen versions faithfully on PBS. I'm also a frequent

buyer of their cookbooks and have found many of my all-time favorite recipes in their pages. Unfortunately, after making three of the recipes from "Slow Cooker Revolution," I'm not sold on this particular effort. All were OK, none spectacular, and, as far as I can tell, just about every one previously published. (A cheat often used by Cook's, but still annoying for its most loyal readers.) My major complaint--and it seems to be in most of the recipes, not just the three I've attempted so far--is that Cook's takes what is best about the slow cooker, it's convenience (set it and forget it one-pot meals), and throws it out the window by requiring countless pre-cooking steps--far more than just browning meat or sautÃ©ing vegetables--that often dirty multiple pots, pans and bowls before you ever even get the ingredients into the slow cooker itself. There's also a good bit of post-cooking in many of these recipes, along with mid-cooking steps/additions that means you're constantly babysitting the slow cooker, even after getting the ingredients going. Not terribly practical for a device specifically designed to cook while you're not here. If I'm going to use a dishwasher full of dishes, what's the point of dragging out the crockpot just to do the heating? Often the recipes I've read and tried seem like they'd be better served being made in a Dutch oven and then cooked in a low oven, thus saving multiple steps and plenty of dishwashing. Kind of defies basic cooking logic. Sorry Cook's, I just can't recommend this one.

EDITED TO ADD: After seeing a trend with these reviews to dismiss negative reviewers as submitted by lazy cooks who just don't get it, I wanted to point out that I'm someone who sincerely enjoys the process of cooking, and a Slow Food devotee. I put a great deal of effort into using organically, locally-sourced, seasonal ingredients in my day-to-day life. I rarely, if ever, use ANY processed food. I bake bread from scratch several times a week. I would never even consider using a cake mix or a condensed soup base. Basically, I'm not really looking for shortcuts. My problem with "Slow Cooker Revolution" isn't so much the prep, but the fact that the recipes, despite all the extra steps, aren't very good. If the end results were outstanding, I wouldn't really question what went into the creation, as many meals I happily prepare take hours and hours to complete. Unfortunately, that just isn't the case from what I've seen here, which seems to be Cook's effort to shoe-horn better, oven or stove-top recipes into a slow cooker with lackluster, at best, results. Does the multi-step beef stew recipe in this cookbook taste better than some meat and potato cubes tossed into the cooker along with canned broth and onion soup mix and left to sit for 12 hours? Most definitely! Does it taste as good as my favorite stove-top to oven recipe that requires approximately the same amount of effort? Nope. Not even close. The same with the turkey chili and short rib recipes I've tried. Other recipes, including Cook's traditionally cooked and previously published versions, are vastly superior to the results you get using the "Slow Cooker Revolution" way. And THAT is my problem with this cookbook. I've long been of the theory

that there is very little a slow cooker does better than a low oven and good cast iron pot. Nothing I've tried, or read, in "Slow Cooker Revolution," has made me think I'm going to be pulling my crockpot out of the pantry more than once or twice a year, at best.

Slow Cooker Revolution is a good cookbook, and I definitely recommend it if you have a slow cooker or are interested in getting one. To be realistic, however, it's not quite as good as Cook's best work (e.g., The New Best Recipe, The Cook's Illustrated Cookbook). It's true that the recipes require more work than typical slow cooker recipes. Anyone who is familiar with Cook's Illustrated won't be surprised by this, and it's not a fair criticism. If your idea of cooking is to put a hunk of raw meat into a pot along with a can of cream of mushroom soup, this isn't your cookbook. Some of the recipes are excellent (e.g., the braised brisket). Others are good but could use some tweaking (e.g., bbq baby back ribs; they tasted great but fell apart when I tried to move them from the slow cooker to a baking sheet to brown). My complaint is that some of the recipes in this cookbook just aren't very good relative to Cook's usual standard. The ground turkey taco filling was pretty bad and making a better version in a skillet would have been quicker and easier. So overall, the cookbook is well worth getting and experimenting with; you will probably learn to some tricks and some recipes that you like. But I wouldn't quite call it a "revolution."

A delicious compendium of slow cooker recipes. My husband went thru the offerings and has a list of at least 15 he wants to try. We have had the book for just a few weeks so have only had time to try a couple (Goulash and the Korean Short Ribs). Both were delicious, relatively easy to prepare, and called for ingredients we could find up here in northern VT. Next up: Chicken and Dumplings. We have always wanted to find ways to make better use of our crockpot, this does it.

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