Tips For Cooking Healthy Meals in the Slow Cooker

A slow cooker is one of the best appliances you can have when you want to cook healthy meals without spending too much extra time. There are different types of slow cookers to choose from, from compact ones to larger varieties. Some slow cookers also have timers, so that you set when it should be turned on and off, so your meals can be done at the right time. Here are some tips for using the slow cooker to cook healthy meals.

**Trim the Fat From Meat**

If you are going to cook meat in the slow cooker, trim the fat first. This will keep the lean meat as healthy as possible, and will also reduce the amount of oil that is sitting in the slow cooker. You don’t want all that extra oil and fat as it isn’t necessary for cooking your meat. You will still get plenty of seasoning and natural oils from the meat itself, so take a few minutes to trim the fat and you will be pleasantly surprised.

**Don’t Open the Lid Too Much**

It is tempting to keep opening the lid of the slow cooker when you have a meal cooking in there, but this is going to increase how long it takes for your meal to cook thoroughly. Every time you open the lid, add a few minutes to the overall cooking time. In most cases, you don’t need to do any excessive stirring of the ingredients like you would in a pan. The ingredients shouldn’t stick and should mix together naturally, so only open the lid when absolutely necessary.

**Be Careful When Filling the Appliance**

While you can fit a good amount of ingredients in a slow cooker, you don’t want to fill it up too much. If you fill it too much ,it might overflow when you aren’t at home, and you come home to a complete mess. Try to keep it to half full or 2/3 full at the most. Some of your ingredients might increase in size while they are cooking, so keep that in mind when deciding how much to stuff in the slow cooker. Filling it up too much also increases the overall cooking time.

**Add Your Dairy Last**

When filling up a slow cooker for your next meal, your dairy should be added to the appliance last. The dairy is going to break down in the slow cooker, so if you are adding yogurt, milk, or sour cream to your meal, do it near the end of the cooking process. They should be added in the last 15-20 minutes unless you are coking a cream-based meal, such as clam chowder.