

## OVERNIGHT SUCCESS, SLOW COOKERS ON TEST

I love making our dinner in the slow cooker. There's something special and nice about knowing that you have a fabulous meal simmering and blending away all on its own, whilst you are working away all day. All you need to do when you get home is EAT!...

Model	 Morphy Richards Intellichef 48810	 Breville VTP062	 Cuisinart CSC650U
	<p><b>The Intellichef combines the ability to slow cook, steam, bake, boil, shallow fry, rice-cook, warm and reheat food in one compact appliance, making it ideal for small kitchens.</b></p> <p>Using only a fraction of the energy used by other slow cookers the stew setting produced a rich sauce and succulent beef.</p> <p>On the low setting the Intellichef produced a stew rich in colour with a creamy well-reduced sauce and the beef chunks were evenly cooked throughout the pot. The bowl is big enough to hold 4 adult sized portions and is easy to clean, the bowl is dishwasher safe and as the lid isn't detachable it has to be wiped clean.</p> <p>The Intellichef's cooking options and timer settings are controlled with buttons on the front. The large number of these settings and buttons can appear confusing initially, but can be quickly mastered.</p> <p>This appliance is solidly built, takes up little worktop space, and can be stored in a</p>	<p><b>The Breville VTP062 6.5-litre slow cooker is big enough to cook for up to eight people but it's big and heavy.</b></p> <p>You get excellent results using either the high or low setting and the glass lid allows you to watch cooking progress.</p> <p>The cooker itself is really straightforward to use. The control dial is a good size, and its ribbed edge makes it easy to grip and move. The handles on the outer casing are big enough for even large hands to grip easily.</p> <p>The VTP062 comes with a helpful guide to slow cooking and how to convert standard recipe times to slow cooking times.</p> <p>Stainless steel is often hard to clean and you need to buff it up after use although cleaning the stoneware cooking pot is fairly easy, it doesn't have a non-stick surface so a bit of soaking and scrubbing will be needed for burnt-on food.</p> <p>Only the lid is dishwasher safe.</p>	<p><b>The CSC650U slow cooker by Cuisinart is really good at cooking stews, but its instructions strangely ban the roasting of whole chickens.</b></p> <p>You can roast joints of beef or lamb, but unlike the other slow cookers on test, the instructions say it may not reach a safe temperature when used to roast whole chickens.</p> <p>The CSC650U features a great hold function, which keeps food warm but prevents it from overcooking and drying out. The 4.5-litre ceramic cooking pot makes it ideal for large families or dinner parties.</p> <p>It comes with 28 recipes, including sauces, stocks, starters and desserts, printed on wipe clean pages</p>

	cupboard when not in use. It's quite easy to move, thanks to the integrated handle, though is fairly hefty at around 4kg.  You can program it to cook up to 24 hours in advance. It comes with a wipe-clean illustrated recipe book.		
<b>Pro's</b>	Versatile, great slow cooking results, suitable for small kitchens, easy to clean	Generous capacity, excellent stews, clear instructions, easy to use	Hold function, wipe clean instruction/ recipe book, 5 year guarantee
<b>Con's</b>	Quite heavy, initially confusing and can be expensive to purchase	No keep-warm setting, heavy & only the lid is dishwasher safe	Very heavy, recipes not illustrated, can't use it to roast a chicken
Test Results:			
<b>Cooking</b>	<b>Cooking = 4 star</b>	<b>Cooking = 5 star</b>	<b>Cooking = 5 star</b>
<b>Roasting</b>	<b>Roasting = 2 star</b>	<b>Roasting = 4 star</b>	<b>Roasting = 0 star</b>
<b>Ease of Use</b>	<b>Ease of Use = 4 star</b>	<b>Ease of Use = 3 star</b>	<b>Ease of Use = 5 star</b>

***Oval or Round isn't quite the dilemma it's what will you cook in it!***

Round slow cookers are best for cooking stews or curries.

Oval slow cookers are the most common bowl shape available and can also accommodate joints of meat for roasting.



Most slow cookers have timers.

Slow cooking of cheaper cuts of meat on a low setting will give you a great tasting dish and when there are just a few ingredients in the recipe, it's even better! You can assemble the dish in just five minutes, you can use ingredients that fulfil multiple roles, e.g. tinned tomatoes with herb & onion, or tinned tomatoes with green chilli & garlic which combine three ingredients into one and the recipes taste like so much more than the sum of their ingredients.

Try this easy recipe

**Beef Rib Stew**

**Ingredients:**

5lbs / 2kg of beef ribs, 3 large carrots, 2 onions, 3 potatoes,  
5 pieces of star anise, 7 pieces of cloves, 2 x 140g tubs of tomato paste,  
2 tablespoon Worchester sauce, 1 tablespoon soy sauce  
2 tablespoon of sugar, 4 bay leaves, 500ml water

**Directions:**

1. Cut carrots, and onions into pieces.
2. Peel and cut potatoes into 1/8th pieces.
3. Combine carrots, onions, beef in the slow cooker.
4. Add tomato paste, star anise, cloves, bay leaf, Worcester sauce, soy sauce, sugar and water.
5. Stir ingredients in slow cooker to mix.
6. Cover and cook on low heat for 2 hours and then add potatoes and top up water if necessary..
7. Cook for another 6-7 hours. (Optional: set cooker to high heat and cook for 4 hours to save time).
8. Serve warm with buttered bread rolls.

**Slow Cookers General Cooking Tips**

Only fill the cooking pot one half to two thirds full. The foods will not cook properly if it's filled to the brim. If the food and liquid level is lower, the foods will cook too quickly.

Foods cooked on the bottom of the slow cooker cook faster and will be moister because they are immersed in the simmering liquid.

Remove skin from poultry, and trim excess fat from meats. Fats will melt with long cooking times, and will add an unpleasant texture to the finished dish. Fatty foods will also cook too quickly.

You can thicken the juices and concentrate flavours by removing the lid and cooking on HIGH for the last half hour of cooking time.

Most meats require 8 hours of cooking on LOW. Use cheaper cuts of meat - not only do you save money, but these meats work better in the slow cooker. Cheaper cuts of meat have less fat, which makes them more suited to slow cooking. Moist, long cooking times result in very tender meats.

Follow the layering instructions carefully.

Don't lift the lid to stir, especially if you are cooking on the low setting. Each time you lift the lid, enough heat will escape that the cooking time should be extended by 20 minutes to half an hour. To check progress without lifting the lid, spin the cover until the condensation falls off. Then it's easy to see inside.

Information provided by: "Which" Magazine