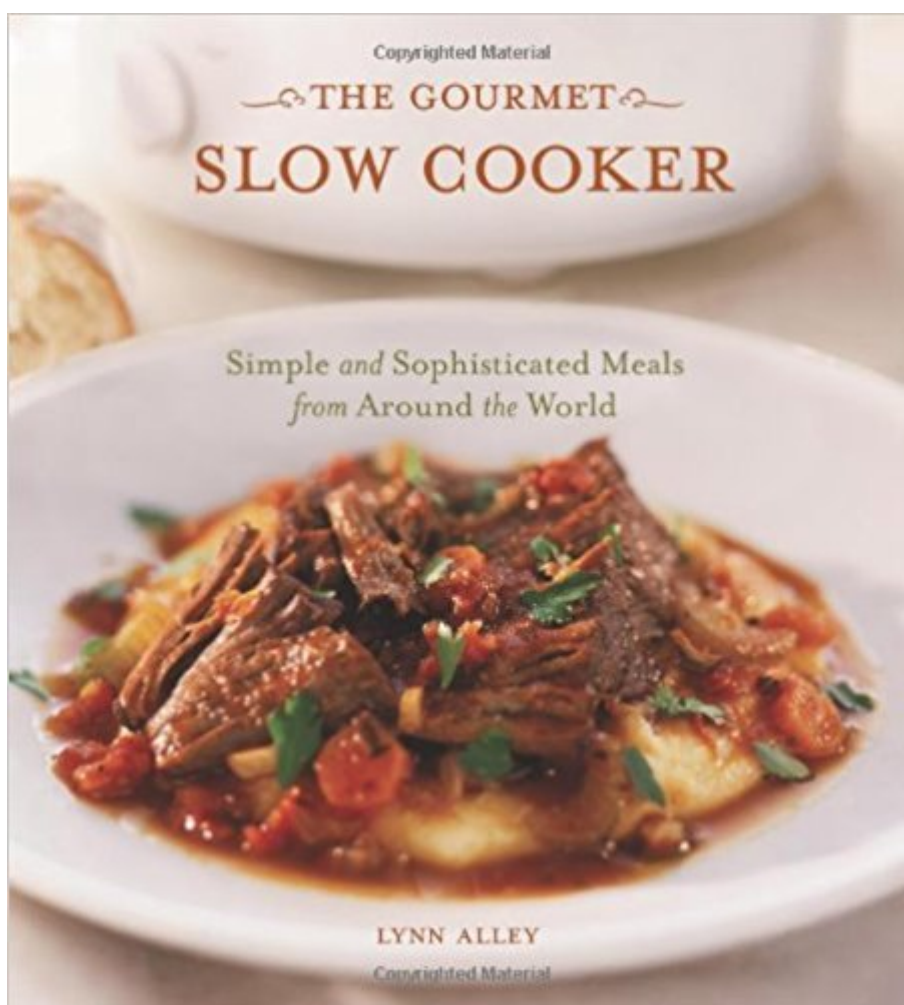


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The Gourmet Slow Cooker: Simple And Sophisticated Meals From Around The World



Synopsis

An upscale approach to the new-old phenomenon of cooking with a slow cooker, by author and food journalist Lynn Alley, featuring 60 recipes. With fresh ingredients and imaginative recipes, you can create delicious meals to serve with pride to your guests. Drawn from slow cooking traditions from around the world, the recipes in *The Gourmet Slow Cooker* include Lamb Shanks in Tomato Sauce from Greece; Apricot Chicken from India; Chicken Mole from Mexico; White Truffle Risotto from Italy; Provencal Chicken Stew from France; and Potato, Cheddar, and Chive Soup from the United States. Including chapter introductions to each region, and focusing on the slow-cooking traditions and techniques from that country; local wine or beer suggestions for all 60 recipes; and featuring 16 full-color recipe photographs, *The Gourmet Slow Cooker* will elevate your everyday dining from the mundane to the gourmet, while freeing you from hours of hard work in the kitchen.

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Customer Reviews

In this volume, Alley (*Lost Arts: A Celebration of Culinary Traditions*) provides a montage of surprising and intriguing recipes-everything from White Truffle Risotto to Chocolate Chip Cookies-all of which are made in a slow cooker. Chapters are divided by country, and include France, Great Britain, India, Italy, Mexico and the U.S. According to Alley, signature meals, side dishes and even desserts from each of these countries, such as Chicken Mole from Mexico, Eggplant and Pea Curry from India, Pork with Prunes from France and Anise Biscotti from Italy, can be made simply in one pot. Alley includes drink recommendations with each recipe. These are generally wine pairings (with

Provençal Beef Stew, "a Cotes de Provence rose or medium-bodied red table wine would do well") but the author refrains from going over the top to underscore the sophistication angle. For chocolate chip cookies, she writes, "milk is the only proper accompaniment." Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"Go ahead and sneer. I love my slow cooker.... Even food snobs like me are realizing their potential, albeit a little later than the more than perhaps 100 million Americans who already own one."

Judging from reviews of slow cooking cook books there seem to be two distinct groups of users - those who work all day and need something ready when they get home and those whose interest in slow cooking is the quality that slow cooking adds to many foods. This is a book for the latter group. The recipes are delicious but may require attention during the cooking. When I bought my slow cooker I read the reviews and bought 4 slow cooker cook books. This is the only one I have used and the results have been great. The recipes in the other books seemed uninspired and except for the Betty Crocker book were not accompanied by photos to entice me. The Greek lamb shanks were a snap and delicious. The Moussaka was a little more complex and required adding the topping after 3 hours but tasted great. The recipes are organized by country of origin and include French, Greek, Indian, Mexican, Italian, English and American. If you need a dinner ready when you get home from work this is probably not the book for you but if you want to have dishes that you will be proud to serve to guests this is the best of the 4 books I purchased.

As other reviewers have already said, this book makes you re-think your slow cooker. For years, the only thing I've made in mine is pulled pork barbecue. Since buying this book, I have made Apricot Chicken (though I substituted mangoes), Chicken Curry, Pork Stew in Tomatillo Sauce (outstanding!), Spiced Meatballs in Chipotle Chile Sauce (also excellent), as well as recipes not from the book that I hadn't done in a slow cooker before (beef bourguignon, cassoulet, and coq au vin). These recipes require significant prep time, but the results are well worth it. My slow cooker is now getting a weekly workout and my family is very pleased with the meals inspired by this distinctive cookbook.

So far every recipe I've tried out of the book has been a winner. They are also easily adapted to oven cooking using the Le Creuset 4.5 Qt. Casserole. I've got to say, however, that these are the first crockpot recipes I've tried that are really, really tasty. Yes, they do call for you to do a few things

outside the crockpot like browning your meat and sauteing your vegetables, but that's all about flavor. If you just want to mush your meat and vegetables into the thing raw and wind up with grey, tasteless glop, this book is NOT for you.

We think of slow cookers as labor saving devices, and they are. However this book focuses on utilizing the slow cooker as another tool in the kitchen, one that, by its design, results in tender cooked meats. This is not a book for those who want to be able to throw stuff into the cooker and come back 8 hours later. There is a lot of prep work, and, the three recipes I have prepared so far, require sautee skills, blender skills, roaster skills. Excellent, flavorful end results though. I have tried chicken and dumplings, tamale pie, and pork stew with tomatillos. The winner is the pork stew. Honestly I have never tried a recipe that required 3 lbs of tomatillos. But it worked. Also I haven't ever used my broiler before to roast chiles, onions, tomatillos, etc. I always used my comal on top of the stove. But the broiler method worked great. Of the tamale pie and chicken with dumplings recipes, neither the dumplings nor the cornbread were spectacular, but the flavor was very good. For the way I cook, and because I enjoy prep work, I can recommend this book. But be warned. Supplemental: The artichoke risotto was a complete bust. It just didn't work. I don't know what kind of crockpot she was testing this recipe in, but I followed the directions to the letter, and after two hours on high, the risotto was inedible. I moved it over to a rice cooker to finish off. So my rating goes down to 3 stars with this experience.

This really is a book for those who already have some cooking experience and a not very complete one at that. It is definitely not a beginners book. It's not that I haven't had success with these recipes but rather that I have had to adjust the very basic instructions. And it isn't an expert book because there isn't much on detail. The pictures are nice and the recipes provide a base to work from but at that point why not just have a good slow cooker book? Or go on line and find some more complete recipes? For example, the Tuscan Bean Soup recipe is very bland due to a lack of basic seasoning that you will find in other sources. A lot of the recipes require so much time out of the slow cooker that it almost seems like the author is forcing some recipes into her slow cooker. In addition, many of the recipes are hardly fit for a slow cooker, especially the desserts, and are more a novelty item.

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