

Cooking Corner

Time-Saving Slow Cooking

(NAPSA)—On those busy days when you don't have much time, a slow cooker can be the solution to getting a hot, wholesome meal on the table. Simply add all the ingredients in the morning, turn on the device, and you get to come home to a wholesome, hot meal, especially good on chilly days.

So many recipes, especially ones for slow cookers, soups, stews, and roasts call for an onion. That is because onions stand up to slow cooking and enhance the flavor of everything cooked with them.

Onions are one of the most versatile vegetables. Use these tips for buying and storing them.

Choose onions with dry outer skins, free of spots or blemishes. They should be firm and have no scent. Avoid bulbs that have begun to sprout.

Not sure what color to use? Really, you can use all three any way you like, but these guidelines will help.

Yellow onions are all-purpose, great raw or cooked. Most well-known sweet onions are yellow. Red onions are best for roasting or grilling. White onions are commonly used in Mexican and Italian cuisine, prepared salads, and sauces.

Whole, unpeeled, onions should be stored in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place, out of direct sunlight. Lack of air circulation will reduce their storage life. Do not store with potatoes.

Cut onions should be refrigerated and can be stored in a sealed container for up to 7 days.

Here's a recipe that will appeal to both children and adults: It's a fresh take on classic onion soup that combines onions with apples.

Slow Cooker French Onion Country Apple Soup with Cinnamon Cheese Toast

Serves 4–6

- ¼ cup olive oil**
- 4 large yellow onions, thinly sliced into rings**
- 3 apples, peeled and diced**
- 3 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour**
- 5 cups low-sodium beef broth**



Slow Cooker French Onion Country Apple Soup with Cinnamon Cheese Toast can make for a great hot meal on a cold night when you don't have time to cook.

- ½ cup apple cider**
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce**
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme**
- ½ teaspoon black pepper, freshly ground**
- 6 slices French bread, cut ½–¾-inch thick**
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 1½ cups hickory-smoked Gruyère cheese, shredded**
- 6 slices turkey bacon, cooked and crumbled (optional)**

Heat oil in a large skillet. Add onion slices and cook on medium heat until transparent, stirring frequently to avoid sticking. Add apples and garlic; stir until warmed through. Transfer the onion-apple mixture to a slow cooker and add in beef broth, apple cider, Worcestershire sauce, brown sugar, salt, thyme and black pepper. Cook on low for 6–8 hours. Before serving, place French bread slices on a baking sheet. Top each with ¼ cup Gruyère cheese, sprinkle lightly with cinnamon and broil for 1–2 minutes, until just browned. Garnish soup with turkey bacon crumbles and apple slices. Serve bread alongside each bowl of soup.

Recipe and image provided by the National Onion Association. For more facts and great recipes visit www.onions-usa.org and www.usapple.org.