



The Mediterranean Slow Cooker

By Michele Scicolone

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With the combination of tradition, innovation, and ease that have made her recipes so popular, Michele Scicolone gathers intriguing dishes from every corner of the Mediterranean and streamlines them for the slow cooker. The range is eye-opening: from simplified and freshened classics like Greek shrimp with tomatoes and feta, to Israeli sweet and sour meatballs, to Moroccan vegetable tagine, to coffee-caramel flan from Spain. But Scicolone also serves up a profusion of fascinating lesser-known dishes: a creamy polenta lasagna, a port-braised chicken from Portugal, a spiced frittata from Tunisia, and Bandit's Lamb, as well as her own seductive creations, like Cannoli Cheesecake.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Michele Scicolone is the author of *The Italian Vegetable Cookbook*, *The Italian Slow Cooker*, *The French Slow Cooker*, *The Sopranos Family Cookbook*, a *New York Times* bestseller, and *Entertaining with the Sopranos*. Her *1000 Italian Recipes* and *A Fresh Taste of Italy* were nominated for James Beard and International Association of Culinary Professionals Awards.

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Beef Stew with Tiny Onions and Cinnamon

— GREECE —

This Greek-style beef stew looks and tastes familiar, but it's just different enough to make it special. Part of the secret to its elusive flavor is a dash of vinegar. I serve the stew with cauliflower and potatoes mashed with olive oil.

SERVES 6 TO 8

3 tablespoons olive oil
3½ pounds beef chuck, cut into 2-inch pieces
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 large onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, very finely chopped
24 pearl onions, trimmed
½ cup dry red wine
¼ cup red wine vinegar
1 28-ounce can tomato puree
1 bay leaf
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Heat the oil in a large heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Pat the beef dry with paper towels. Add the beef in batches, without crowding the pan. Brown it well on all sides, about 15 minutes per batch. With a slotted spoon, transfer it to a large slow cooker and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Add the chopped onion to the skillet and cook, stirring often, until softened, about 10 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for 1 minute more. Stir in the pearl onions, wine, and vinegar. Bring the liquid to a simmer. Pour the mixture into the slow cooker. Stir in the tomato puree, bay leaf, and cinnamon.

Cover and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours, or until the beef is very tender. Discard the bay leaf. Serve hot.

Pulled Pork

— PORTUGAL —

Portuguese fishermen who settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, brought with them a love for this flavorful stew. The traditional way to make it is in a clay pot called a cacoila, but a slow cooker is the perfect substitute. The shredded meat that emerges is still a favorite at street fairs and in local sandwich shops. Serve it over rice or pile it into crisp rolls and top with hot pickled peppers for a casual party.

SERVES 8

2 tablespoons olive oil
3 pounds boneless pork shoulder roast, rolled and tied
Salt and freshly ground pepper
2 large onions, sliced
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup red wine vinegar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
2 tablespoons smoked paprika
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 cup water

In a large skillet, heat the oil. Pat the pork dry with paper towels and brown it well on all sides, about 20 minutes. Transfer the pork to a large slow cooker and sprinkle it with salt and pepper.

Add the onions and garlic to the skillet and cook, stirring often, until tender and golden, about 10 minutes. Stir in the vinegar and bring it to a simmer. Pour the mixture over the pork. Add the spices, salt and pepper to taste, and water. Cover and cook for 8 to 10 hours, or until the pork is fork-tender.

Remove the pork to a cutting board, but leave the sauce in the slow cooker with the heat on. With two forks, tear the pork into bite-size pieces. Return the meat to the slow cooker to reheat and serve.

Coffee Caramel Flan

— SPAIN —

With canned sweetened condensed milk and evaporated milk in the pantry, you can put this dessert together any time.

SERVES 8

1 cup sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
1 12-ounce can evaporated milk
1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
2 large eggs
2 large egg yolks
2 tablespoons instant espresso powder, dissolved in 1 tablespoon hot water

Combine the sugar and the water in a small saucepan. Cook over medium heat, swirling the pan occasionally, until the sugar is dissolved. Simmer the mixture without stirring until it begins to turn brown around the edges, about 10 minutes. Gently swirl the pan until the syrup is evenly caramelized.

Protecting your hand with an oven mitt, pour the hot syrup into a 6-cup soufflé dish, turning the dish to coat the bottom evenly. Let cool until the caramel is just set.

In a bowl, whisk together the canned milks. Beat in the eggs, egg yolks, and espresso until blended. Pour the mixture into the soufflé dish.

Place the dish on a rack in a large slow cooker. Pour hot water to a depth of 1 inch around the dish. Cover and cook on high for 2 to 2½ hours, or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean.

Carefully remove the dish from the slow cooker. Let cool slightly, then cover and refrigerate until chilled, several hours or overnight.

To serve, run a knife around the inside of the dish. Invert a serving plate on top and quickly invert the two. Carefully remove the soufflé dish, allowing the caramel to drizzle over the cream. Cut into wedges and serve.

Users Review

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