

AT A GLANCE:

Makes 6–8 servings

Prep time 20 minutes

Brown time 15–20 min

Cook time 7 hours

Crock-Pot HIGH

No added salt

INGREDIENTS:

- * 3 lb beef rump roast
- * 1 Tbsp butter
- * ¾ cup frozen chopped onion
- * 2 Tbsp frozen chopped garlic
- * ½ cup Merlot
- * 3 fresh carrots, cut into pieces
- * 3 ears fresh corn on the cob
- * 1½ cups chopped cabbage
- * 3 small fresh tomatoes about golf-ball size
- * 1 tsp turmeric
- * 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- * 1 tsp smoked paprika
- * 1 tsp black pepper
- * Water, enough to cover


DIRECTIONS:
1. Brown the beef.

Melt the butter in a large skillet. Add the rump roast (frozen is fine) and brown the exterior well. The goal is to develop a flavorful browned crust and plenty of good browned bits—not to cook the roast through.

2. Add the onion and garlic.

Transfer the roast to the Crock-Pot. Add the frozen onion and garlic to the hot skillet and cook in the butter and drippings, scraping up the browned bits as they soften.

3. Deglaze with Merlot.

Pour the Merlot into the skillet. Scrape the bottom thoroughly to release the fond. Pour everything—wine, onion, garlic, and browned bits—over the roast.

4. Add the vegetables.

Add the carrots, corn on the cob, chopped cabbage, and tomatoes to the Crock-Pot.

5. Season.

Add turmeric, nutmeg, smoked paprika, and black pepper. Do not add salt.

6. Add water.

Pour in enough water to cover the roast and vegetables.

7. Slow cook.

Cover and cook on HIGH for approximately 7 hours, until the roast is very tender and the vegetables have richly flavored the broth.

WE ALL START SOMEWHERE

*“The end of a thing is better than its beginning;
The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.”
Ecclesiastes 7:8 (NKJV)*

Early in our marriage, Rick and I were building a barn for our horses. My father-in-law was coming to help us, and because we were both working, I decided to put a stew in the Crock-Pot before I left for work that morning.

There was only one problem.

I really didn't know how to make a pot roast.

I didn't know about browning the meat. I didn't know about building layers of flavor or deglazing a pan. I simply put the meat in the Crock-Pot, added a bunch of frozen vegetables, turned it on HIGH, and left for work.

I did have one good idea—or so I thought.

There was a container in the freezer that I thought held about a cup and a half of leftover baked beans. I knew the beans would add flavor and give the broth a nice texture, so into the Crock-Pot they went.

That evening, we picked up my father-in-law at the airport and brought him home. I had made cornbread to go with the stew, and the three of us sat down to dinner.

My father-in-law took a bite and got the funniest look on his face, but he didn't say a word.

Rick took a bite—he got a funny look on his face too. He didn't say anything either.

Then I took a bite.

The stew was sweet.

What in the world?

What I had pulled from the freezer wasn't baked beans at all.

It was leftover sweet-potato casserole—complete with brown sugar and peanut crumb topping.

There I sat with my husband and father-in-law, serving the sweetest beef stew flavored with sweet potatoes, brown sugar, and peanuts. It was pretty delicious, I have to admit.

And neither one of those dear men had said a word.

It took a while, but now, more than thirty years later, I can laugh about it.

And I can brown a roast.

I know now that those brown bits left in the skillet are worth keeping. I know how to cook onion and garlic in them and loosen all that wonderful flavor with a little wine. I can look at cabbage, carrots, corn, and three tiny tomatoes from the garden and imagine how I want them to taste together. I can reach for turmeric, nutmeg, smoked paprika, and pepper because I have a particular flavor in mind.

But I didn't know those things when I started.

I learned them.

Perhaps you've never made a pot roast. Maybe you've read a recipe that told you to “brown the meat” or “deglaze the pan” and quietly wondered what on earth that meant.

Maybe there are things about cooking, sewing, gardening, preserving food, keeping a home—or simply managing everyday life—that you think everyone else somehow knows.

They don't.

And there is no shame in not knowing something you haven't learned yet.

Scripture tells us, “The end of a thing is better than its beginning.”

Beginnings can be awkward. Sometimes they're messy. Occasionally, apparently, they involve brown sugar and peanuts in the beef stew.

Don't let embarrassment keep you from beginning.

Learn one thing. Then learn another. Ask when you don't know. Laugh when you get it wrong. And tomorrow, try again.

One day you may put a roast into a Crock-Pot, sit down to Sunday dinner with the people you love, and discover that it tastes exactly the way you imagined it would.

You may not even notice how far you've come.

And when someone younger asks you how you did it, remember your own beginning—you'll say

“Come here. Pull up a chair. I'll show you.”

From My Heart to Yours

No one began as an expert. We need the humility to learn, the patience to practice, and the willingness to keep going. The skills that look effortless in someone else's hands may represent decades of ordinary beginnings, mistakes, practice, and growth. Be careful not to compare your beginning to someone else's home stretch.

A Moment to Reflect

1. What is something you've avoided learning because you feel as though you should already know how to do it?

2. Think of something that once seemed difficult but now comes naturally. What did it take for you to learn?

3. What have you learned that you could now pass along to someone else? Who might need to hear you say, “Come here. I'll show you”?
