A New Way to (Slow) Cook

We know what you’re thinking: While it’s inarguably practical, there’s nothing remotely sexy about a slow cooker. **Think again.** That bulky contraption you only break out for Chili Night is one of the most powerful and versatile tools in your kitchen. Because of its supergentle, supereven heat, it makes stews, braises and beans **more flavorful** than the stove or oven ever could. Chefs love them: **Grant Achatz** employs a fleet of slow cookers at Next, and **Christina Tosi** bakes buttermilk cakes in hers. Now it’s your turn to plug in and expand your repertoire beyond pulled pork and beef stew. On the following pages, we’re upping your slow cooker game with a few **smart tricks.** Your weeknights just got way more exciting.

**RECIPES BY SARAH DIGREGORIO  PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN KERNICK**
Layer It On

Instead of adding harissa all at once, stir it in at the beginning to build a base, then at the end for a bright pop of heat.

Slow and Low Poach chicken in seasoned olive oil to make it rich and tender, then use the oil for a delicious aioli.

Slow Cooking

1 tsp. grated lemon zest
2 scallions, thinly sliced
1 1/2 cups (9 oz.) farro
1 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
1 tsp. dried oregano
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp. dried oregano
1 tsp. crushed red pepper
1/2 tsp. fennel seeds, crushed
1 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
1 1/2 cups (9 oz.) farro
One 28-oz. can crushed fire-roasted tomatoes
2 scallions, thinly sliced
1/2 cups panko
1/2 cup chopped parsley
1 tsp. grated lemon zest

1. In a large bowl, whisk 5 cups of cold water with the fine salt and sugar until dissolved. Squeeze and add 2 of the lemon quarters to the bowl. Add the chicken, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 6 hours.

2. Meanwhile, add the olive oil to a 6-quart slow cooker along with the garlic bay leaves, thyme and rosemary sprigs, black peppercorns, 1/4 teaspoons of kosher salt and the remaining 2 lemon quarters. Cover and cook on low until the oil registers 207° on an instant-read thermometer, about 11 hours. (The oil can be kept in the slow cooker on low for up to 6 hours.)

3. Remove the chicken from the brine and pat dry; transfer to a plate. Discard the brine. Using tongs, carefully lower the chicken into the warm oil. Cover and cook on low until the chicken registers 155° on an instant-read thermometer, about 40 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the chicken and garlic to a plate. Cover with foil and keep warm. Discard the lemon quarters and herbs. Using a ladle, transfer 1 cup of the infused oil to a measuring cup (do not use the pepper corns) and let cool until just warm, 15 minutes. Reserve the remaining oil for another use.

4. In a blender, puree the egg yolks with the lemon juice, 1/2 of the cooked garlic cloves and 1/2 teaspoon of kosher salt until smooth, about 30 seconds. With the machine on, gradually add 1 cup of cooled oil until creamy, about 1 minute. Season with kosher salt.

5. Slice the chicken and serve with the aioli, bread and salad.

WINE Citrus Chilled Chardonnay 2014 Monterey Alpha.

1/2 cup plus 3 Tbsp. harissa
1/2 tsp. ground cumin
1 Tbsp. sweet paprika
1 lb. dried cannellini beans
2 large carrots, sliced
1/8 inch thick
3 thyme sprigs plus 1/2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
2 fresh bay leaves
One 3-inch strip of lemon zest plus 3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
1/2 cup plus 2 1/2 Tbsp. finely chopped parsley
1/2 cup leaves for garnish
1/2 preserved lemon, pulp discarded and rind thinly sliced

1. In a large skillet, melt 2 tablespoons of the butter. Add the onion and garlic, season generously with salt and cook over moderately high heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion has softened and is starting to brown, about 8 minutes. In 1/4 cup of the harissa and the tomato paste and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in the cumin and paprika, then add 2 1/2 cups of water and bring to a simmer, scraping up any browned bits on the bottom of the pan. Transfer to a 4-quart slow cooker along with the dried beans, carrots, thyme sprigs, bay leaves, lemon zest and lemon juice. Add 1 tablespoon of salt and 3 cups of water. Cover and cook on high until the beans are tender, about 5 hours. Slowly whisk in the yogurt until smooth. Season with salt.

2. Meanwhile, in a small non-stick skillet, melt the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter. Add the turmeric and cook over moderately low heat, stirring constantly, until it dissolves, about 30 seconds. Transfer to a medium bowl and let cool slightly, about 5 minutes. Slowly stir in the yogurt until smooth. Season with salt.

3. Discard the bay leaves and thyme sprigs from the stew. Just before serving, stir in the thyme leaves and the remaining 3 tablespoons of harissa, season with salt. Ladle into bowls and garnish with the preserved lemon and parsley leaves. Serve, passing the turmeric yogurt at the table.

WINE Peppery Mediterranean Monastrell 2015 Bodegas Volkar Tarina Hill.

1/2 inch thick

Serves 4 to 6

Active 30 min; Total 2 hr 30 min

Active 30 min; Total 3 hr

Active 30 min; Total 2 hr 30 min

Wine

Ripe, intense Primitivo MONASTRELL 2015 Bodegas Riojanas.

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