WINTER WEEKNIGHTS

Cozy December Weeknights

Five dinners, a weekend breakfast, a backup dinner, and a grocery list sorted by store aisle.

Do this first: thaw the chuck roast. Move it from the freezer to the refrigerator over the weekend. A frozen roast is not safe in the slow cooker, because it spends too long in the temperature zone where bacteria grow.

This Week's Dinners

DAY	DINNER (TAP A NAME FOR THE RECIPE)	TOTAL TIME	PER SERVING
MON	Mississippi Pot Roast Crock Pot	8 hr 15 min	566 cal / 44g protein
TUE	Black Pepper Chicken Stir Fry	40 min	222 cal / 31g protein
WED	30-Minute Calabrian Pasta with Spicy Sausage	25 min	785 cal / 33g protein
THU	Sheet Pan BBQ Chicken Thighs with Potatoes	45 min	687 cal / 33g protein
FRI	Spicy Vodka Pasta	30 min	934 cal / 17g protein

Total time, calories, and protein are per serving and come from each recipe card. They are estimates only, so please check the recipe card for the most current details. If you follow a special diet or have a health condition, check with your doctor or a registered dietitian.

Breakfast and Backup Dinner

WEEKEND BREAKFAST
Belgian Waffles
1 hr 55 min, mostly rising time · 236 cal / 5g protein each

BACKUP DINNER
Lasagna Soup
35 min · 530 cal / 27g protein

Weekly Spotlight: Fond (Those Browned Bits)

Fond is the browned layer that sticks to the bottom of the pan when you sear meat. Those bits are concentrated flavor, so never wipe them out. You will meet fond on Monday with the roast and on Wednesday with the sausage.
Chef Tip: let the meat sit in a hot pan until it releases on its own; if it sticks, it is not ready to flip. Then pour in a splash of liquid and scrape the bottom of the pan; that is deglazing, and it turns the pan into sauce.

Sides to Make With Dinner

Pot roast: crispy oven roasted baby potatoes, roasted asparagus, or a salad bar salad

Black pepper chicken: Ohana noodles, air fryer broccolini, or steamed jasmine rice

Calabrian pasta: crispy Brussels sprouts, marinated mozzarella, or garlic bread from the bakery

BBQ chicken thighs: Amish broccoli salad, warm cornbread muffins from the bakery, or sliced apples with sharp cheddar

Spicy vodka pasta: an arugula salad with lemon, olive oil, and shaved Parmesan, plus crusty bread

Food Safety for the Week

Check the chicken with an instant-read thermometer; it is done at 165F in the thickest part. Chill leftover pot roast within 2 hours of serving, and keep it in a covered container in the refrigerator.

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SHOPPING LIST

Grocery List

Covers the five dinners and the weekend breakfast. Sides and the backup dinner are shopped separately. Each line shows how much the recipes use.

PRODUCE

- [ ] 3 onions (use 2 medium + 1 small)
- [ ] 1 head garlic (use about 9 cloves)
- [ ] 2 medium green bell peppers (use 2)
- [ ] 1 bunch celery (use 2 stalks)
- [ ] 1 bag baby potatoes, 1½ lb (use 1½ lb)
- [ ] 1 bag green beans, 12 oz (use 12 oz)
- [ ] 3 mini ears corn on the cob (use 3)
- [ ] 1 bunch fresh basil (garnish for Wednesday and Friday)
- [ ] 1 small bunch fresh parsley, optional (garnish for Thursday)

PANTRY AND DRY GOODS

- [ ] 1 lb spaghetti (use 1 lb)
- [ ] 1 box rigatoni, penne, or orecchiette, 16 oz (use 8 oz)
- [ ] 1 can crushed San Marzano tomatoes, 28 oz (use 28 oz)
- [ ] 2 cans tomato paste, 6 oz each (use 6 oz + 2 Tbsp)
- [ ] 1 carton chicken stock, 32 oz (use ¾ cup)
- [ ] 1 carton beef stock, 32 oz (use ¼ cup; water works in a pinch)
- [ ] 1 bottle soy sauce (use 4 Tbsp)
- [ ] 1 bottle rice vinegar (use 2 Tbsp)
- [ ] 1 small bottle sesame oil (use 2 tsp)
- [ ] 1 bottle BBQ sauce, 18 oz (use ¾ cup)
- [ ] 1 jar pepperoncini peppers (use 8 peppers + ¼ cup juice)
- [ ] 1 packet ranch dressing mix (use 1 packet)
- [ ] 1 packet au jus gravy mix, 1 oz (use 1 packet; French onion soup mix works instead)
- [ ] 1 bag all-purpose flour (use 3 cups + 2 Tbsp)
- [ ] 1 bag Belgian pearl sugar (use 1 cup)
- [ ] 1 packet active dry yeast (use 2 tsp)
- [ ] 1 small bottle vodka (use ¼ cup)

DAIRY AND PROTEIN

- [ ] 1 chuck roast, 3 to 4 lb, well marbled (use all)
- [ ] 1¾ lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts (use 1¾ lb)
- [ ] 1 lb spicy sausage (use 1 lb)
- [ ] 6 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (use 6)
- [ ] 1 lb unsalted butter (use 22 Tbsp: 8 + 2 + 12)
- [ ] 1 pint heavy cream (use 1½ cups)
- [ ] 1 small wedge Parmesan (use ½ cup shredded)
- [ ] 1 dozen eggs (use 2)
- [ ] 1 small carton milk (use ¼ cup)

SPICES AND SEASONINGS

- [ ] Garlic powder (use 1 tsp)
- [ ] Paprika (use 1 tsp)
- [ ] Ground ginger (use 1 tsp)
- [ ] Red pepper flakes (use 1 tsp)

CHECK YOUR PANTRY

- [ ] Olive oil (use about ⅔ cup: 2 Tbsp + ½ cup)
- [ ] Vegetable oil (use 3 to 4 Tbsp)
- [ ] Cornstarch (use 2 Tbsp)
- [ ] Granulated sugar (use 2 Tbsp)
- [ ] Vanilla extract (use 1½ tsp)
- [ ] Salt (use 1¼ tsp, plus to taste)
- [ ] Black pepper (use 2½ to 3½ tsp)

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