

Chinese pork and vegetable hot pot

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The richly flavoured red braises characteristic of Chinese cooking make warming winter meals that can be adapted to a slow cooker.

Typically, seasonings of anise, cinnamon and ginger distinguish these dishes. [Pork](#) shoulder becomes meltingly tender during the slow braise. Serve over noodles or brown rice, with stir-fried cabbage.

Ingredients (serves 6)

- 2 cups baby carrots
- 2 medium white turnips, peeled and cut into 2cm-wide wedges
- 1 kg boneless free range pork shoulder, trimmed and cut into 4cm chunks
- 1 bunch spring onions, sliced, white and green parts separated
- 400 ml reduced-salt chicken stock
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup reduced-salt soy sauce
- 3 tbsp medium or dry sherry
- 4 tsp brown sugar
- 2 tbsp minced fresh ginger
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar
- 2–4 tsp Chinese chilli-garlic sauce
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 star anise pod or 1 tsp aniseed

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- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 tsp cornstarch mixed with 2 tbsp water
- 2 tbsp toasted sesame seeds (see Tip) for garnish

METHOD

Place carrots and turnips in the bottom, and up the sides of a large slow cooker. Top with pork and spring onion whites.

Bring stock, water, soy sauce, sherry, brown sugar, ginger, vinegar, chilli-garlic sauce to taste and garlic to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat.

Pour over the pork and vegetables. Nestle star anise pod (or aniseed) and cinnamon stick into the stew. Cover and cook until the pork and vegetables are tender, three to three-and-a-half hours on high or five-and-a-half to six hours on low.

Discard the star anise pod and cinnamon stick. Skim or blot any visible fat from the surface of the stew. Add the cornstarch mixture, cover and cook on high, stirring two or three times, until slightly thickened, 10 to 15 minutes. Serve sprinkled with spring onion greens and sesame seeds.

Recipe tip: Sesame seeds can be purchased already toasted. If you can't find them, toast your own in a small, dry pan over low heat, stirring constantly, until golden and fragrant, about two minutes.

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