

- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cook Time: 2 hours (on Low) or 1 hour (on High)
- Total Active & Passive Time: ~2 hours 15 minutes
- Yield: 12 to 16 servings (approx. 4 cups of dip)
- Cooking Intensity Level: Low (Gentle, slow-heat rendering for maximum smoothness)
- Skill Level: Beginner-Friendly

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Heat & Cooking Intensity Guide

Creating a smooth, silky cheese dip requires low, steady heat. High heat causes dairy proteins to seize, resulting in an oily or grainy texture. Here is how heat intensity is managed in this recipe:

- Sautéing / Browning Phase (Medium-High Heat – Stove Top): Used briefly on the stove to brown and season any optional sausage or ground beef, rendering out fat and developing deep savory flavor before transferring to the slow cooker.
- Slow Cooking Phase (Low Intensity – Slow Cooker): Gentle heating (around 170°F to 200°F / 77°C to 93°C) breaks down the cheese slowly, melting it evenly without scorching the bottom or separating the milk fats.
- Warm / Serving Phase (Ultra-Low Intensity): Once melted, switching the crockpot to the “Warm” setting keeps the dip at the perfect dipping consistency for hours without overcooking.

Ingredients

Primary Cheese & Dairy Base:

- Processed Melting Cheese (e.g., Velveeta): 16 oz (450g), cubed into 1-inch pieces *(provides smooth texture without separating)*
- Sharp Cheddar Cheese: 8 oz (225g), freshly shredded *(adds bold, authentic cheese flavor)*
- Cream Cheese: 4 oz (115g), softened and cubed *(adds richness and a luxurious mouthfeel)*
- Evaporated Milk or Whole Milk: 1/2 cup (120ml) *(adjusts thickness to desired consistency)*

Flavor Enhancers & Mix-Ins:

- Diced Tomatoes with Green Chilies (e.g., Ro-Tel): 1 can (10 oz / 283g), undrained
- Chopped Green Chilies: 1 small can (4 oz / 113g), mild or hot based on preference
- Cooked Breakfast Sausage or Ground Beef (Optional): 1/2 lb (225g), browned and

drained

- Sour Cream or Greek Yogurt: 1/4 cup (60g)

Seasonings & Aromatics:

- Garlic Powder: 1/2 teaspoon
- Onion Powder: 1/2 teaspoon
- Ground Cumin: 1/4 teaspoon
- Smoked Paprika: 1/4 teaspoon
- Fine Sea Salt & Fresh Black Pepper: To taste
- Fresh Cilantro & Jalapeño Slices: For garnish

Step-by-Step Cooking Instructions

Step 1: Prep and Brown Meat (Optional Step)

1. If adding meat, place a skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1/2 lb of breakfast sausage or lean ground beef.
2. Break up the meat with a wooden spoon and cook for 5 to 7 minutes until fully browned and no pink remains.
3. Drain excess grease thoroughly on a plate lined with paper towels and set aside.

Step 2: Assemble Ingredients in the Slow Cooker

1. Lightly spray the interior of your 3- to 4-quart slow cooker insert with non-stick cooking

spray to prevent sticking and simplify cleanup.

2. Place the cubed processed cheese, shredded sharp cheddar, and cubed cream cheese into the crockpot.
3. Pour in the canned diced tomatoes with green chilies (including the liquid), drained chopped green chilies, evaporated milk, and cooked browned meat (if using).
4. Sprinkle in the garlic powder, onion powder, ground cumin, and smoked paprika.

Step 3: Melt Low and Slow (Low Intensity)

1. Cover the slow cooker with its lid.
2. Set the heat intensity to LOW and cook for 1.5 to 2 hours (or on HIGH for 45 to 60 minutes).
3. Stir the mixture thoroughly every 30 minutes to help the cheeses integrate evenly with the spices and liquid.

Step 4: Final Adjustments & Garnishing

1. Once fully melted and smooth, stir in the 1/4 cup of sour cream.
2. Taste the dip and adjust seasoning with a pinch of salt or extra black pepper if needed.
3. If the dip appears too thick, stir in 1 to 2 tablespoons of warm milk until the desired dipping consistency is achieved.
4. Reduce the crockpot setting to WARM for serving.
5. Garnish the top with finely chopped fresh cilantro, fresh jalapeño slices, or a sprinkle of paprika right before serving.

Serving Suggestions

Serve warm directly from the crockpot accompanied by:

- Classic salted tortilla chips or corn scoops
- Warm soft pretzel bites or pita triangles
- Fresh cut vegetables (celery sticks, bell pepper strips, broccoli florets, and baby carrots)
- As a rich cheese sauce poured over nachos, tacos, or baked potatoes

Chef's Secrets for Success

- Freshly Shred Your Hard Cheese: Always shred block cheddar by hand. Pre-shredded bagged cheese contains potato starch coatings that keep the cheese from melting smoothly, causing a chalky finish.
- Keep It Warm: Leaving the slow cooker on the "Warm" setting prevents a skin from forming over the top during long parties. Stir occasionally to maintain a uniform texture.
- Control the Heat: If you want a spicier dip, substitute hot Ro-Tel, add 1/4 teaspoon of cayenne pepper, or toss in diced fresh habanero peppers.

Storage & Reheating Instructions

- Refrigeration: Allow leftovers to cool completely, then transfer to an airtight container. Refrigerate for up to 4 days.
- Reheating: Reheat in small portions in the microwave at 30-second intervals, stirring in between. Alternatively, return to the slow cooker on Low with a splash of milk until melted and smooth.

Complete Nutritional Information

(Calculated per serving based on 16 equal portions - approx. 1/4 cup per serving)

Nutrient	Amount per Serving	% Daily Value*
Calories	185 kcal	—
Total Fat	13.5g	17%
Saturated Fat	7.5g	38%
Trans Fat	0.0g	—
Cholesterol	38mg	13%
Sodium	480mg	21%
Total Carbohydrates	5.5g	2%
Dietary Fiber	0.5g	2%
Total Sugars	3.5g	—
<i>(Includes Added Sugars)</i>	<i>(0.0g)</i>	<i>(0%)</i>
Protein	10.5g	21%
Vitamin D	0.3mcg	2%
Calcium	260mg	20%
Iron	0.6mg	3%
Potassium	180mg	4%
Vitamin A	420 IU	8%
Vitamin C	8mg	9%