Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 6–8 hours (Low) | Total Time: 6 hours 15 minutes – 8 hours 15 minutes

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Introduction

Crockpot Cowboy Soup is the ultimate hearty, set-it-and-forget-it meal. Packed with seasoned ground beef, smoky bacon, tender potatoes, and a rich tomato-beef broth, this soup has all the bold, comforting flavors of a cowboy's campfire dinner—made easy in your slow cooker. It's a crowd-pleaser that feeds a family, freezes beautifully, and requires just 15 minutes of hands-on prep. Whether you're feeding hungry ranch hands or a busy weeknight family, this soup delivers big flavor with minimal effort.

Ingredients

- 1 lb ground beef (80/20 recommended)

- 6 slices bacon, chopped
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced

- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups low-sodium beef broth
- 1 (15 oz) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 (15 oz) can tomato sauce
- 1 (15 oz) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15 oz) can pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15 oz) can corn, drained
- 3 medium russet potatoes, peeled and diced into ½-inch cubes
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 (4 oz) can diced green chiles
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp salt (plus more to taste)
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper (optional, for heat)

Optional Toppings: shredded cheddar cheese, sour cream, sliced green onions, crushed tortilla chips, or cornbread on the side.

Equipment

- 6-quart slow cooker (crockpot)
- Large skillet
- Wooden spoon
- Can opener and colander

Instructions

Step 1: Brown the Beef and Bacon (15 minutes | Medium-High Heat)

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chopped bacon and cook for 4–5 minutes until crispy. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon and set aside on a paper towel-lined plate, leaving about 1 tablespoon of bacon grease in the pan. Add the ground beef to the same skillet and cook for 5–6 minutes, breaking it apart with a wooden spoon, until fully browned. Drain excess fat if needed. Add the diced onion and minced garlic; sauté for 2–3 minutes until the onion is translucent and fragrant.

Step 2: Layer the Slow Cooker (5 minutes | No Heat)

Transfer the beef mixture to the bottom of your 6-quart slow cooker. Add the cooked bacon, beef broth, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, kidney beans, pinto beans, corn, potatoes, carrots, green bell pepper, and green chiles. Stir gently to combine.

Step 3: Season and Stir (2 minutes | No Heat)

Add the chili powder, smoked paprika, cumin, oregano, salt, black pepper, and cayenne (if using). Stir everything together until the seasonings are evenly distributed. Taste the broth and adjust salt if needed—remember the flavors will concentrate during cooking.

Step 4: Slow Cook (6–8 hours on Low or 3–4 hours on High)

Cover and cook on LOW for 6–8 hours or HIGH for 3–4 hours, until the potatoes and carrots are fork-tender. Stir once halfway through cooking if you're home, though it's not strictly necessary. Avoid lifting the lid too often, as it releases heat and extends cooking time.

Step 5: Finish and Serve (5 minutes | Low Heat)

Once the vegetables are tender, taste and adjust seasonings. If the soup is too thick, add a splash of beef broth; if too thin, simmer uncovered on HIGH for 20–30 minutes to reduce. Ladle into bowls and top with shredded cheddar, sour cream, and green onions. Serve with cornbread or crusty bread for dipping.

Recipe Notes

- Make it thicker: Mash a few potato chunks against the side of the slow cooker with a spoon to naturally thicken the broth.
- Make it spicier: Add a diced jalapeño or a pinch of red pepper flakes with the other seasonings.
- Swap proteins: Ground turkey or chicken works well; use smoked sausage for extra cowboy flair.
- Meal prep: Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. Freeze for up to 3 months; thaw overnight in the fridge and reheat on the stovetop or in the microwave.
- Salt awareness: Bacon, canned beans, and broth all contain sodium—taste before adding

extra salt.

Nutrition Information (Per Serving, 1/8 of recipe, without optional toppings)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	385 kcal
Total Fat	14 g
Saturated Fat	5 g
Cholesterol	55 mg
Sodium	890 mg
Total Carbohydrates	38 g
Dietary Fiber	8 g
Total Sugars	7 g
Protein	24 g
Vitamin C	35% DV
Calcium	8% DV
Iron	20% DV
Potassium	950 mg