

Buying a new crock pot

I remember when I bought my first [crock pot](#). No wait, that's a lie. I remember when I picked my first crock pot and scanned the bar code ever so sweetly to add it to my wedding registry in the hopes that a dear friend or family member would buy it for me. If it was you, thanks again. Look what you've started! And if it wasn't you, then make a mental note— when you get married, you can put money on the fact that I'll be the one to buy your crock pot.

But what now? It's been years since I've been married, I've got months until my next birthday and let's face it, December is a loong way away. I need to buy one for myself. So last night, I sat down with my computer and went shopping. I read reviews, I priced things out, I compared chain stores vs. internet sales. I even checked out craigslist and a variety of other web sites to see if I could buy one that was already loved and enjoyed.

Before I tell you which one I bought (no endorsements here or paid advertising, I'll just tell you since you're curious), I'd like to walk you through my process. You might find yourself in the same situation the more you visit me and want to cook in your crock pot even more!

DISCLAIMER: Crock Pot is actually a brand name. I technically should be using the term "slow cooker" and this site should be called "dinnerisaslowcook" but that wouldn't be as funny. I use the term crock pot in the same way I ask for a Kleenex after I sneeze— you know exactly what I'm talking about without me needing to ask for a facial tissue.

My primary concern for my new crockpot was shape. I have a Proctor Silex round one that I love, but I really wanted an oval shaped pot. In order to do chicken (see *my roasted*

chicken and curried chicken salad post), corned beef (*check back next week*), or other meats, I really needed the oval shape. Plus, it works well to use a trivet in an oval pot, giving me the opportunity to also make custards, breads or desserts.

I also wanted a larger pot. The one I use now is 5-quart and that works really well for soups especially. But I wanted to upgrade to the 6-quart capacity since it always seems my pot is filled to the lid with everything I make. I was thrilled to find out that in the last 10 years there are also so many advancements that have happened to the crock pot! You can now get different colors or stainless steel, delayed starts and timers.

Warranties are also important to me. People— do not throw away that quick survey that comes with your crock pot, fill it out and send it in. This is such an easy thing to do and I bet the number of people that don't do it is astonishing. You don't even need to supply your own stamp, now come on.

I decided on the 6-quart, oval shaped, stainless steel Crock Pot brand slow cooker. It met all my criteria and was an affordable price. I really like that I can set it for a certain amount of time and when it's done, it automatically switches to keep warm. The pot itself is dishwasher, freezer and oven safe. It also has a longer cord than most slow cookers; it may sound like a silly feature, but check out your kitchen and you too will realize how few outlets you have and even less counter space near the outlets.

I guess slow cookers are not big draw items— crock pots were priced the same everywhere that I looked. You can order it from Amazon and get free super saver shipping. Free shipping is much easier than going shopping anywhere. I'm not lazy, I'm efficient. If you can wait a few days to get it, why gas up the car and go somewhere?! Order it from the comforts of your own couch.

I also really liked the Hamilton Beach Set 'n' Forget Slow Cooker because it had a temperature probe attached so that the pot can tell when meat hits a certain temperature and is done. Such a smart tool! I actually already had bought my husband a temperature probe to use on the grill- it has a digital list of cooking temperatures for a variety of meats. So I figured I didn't need this addition, but it's a great way to make sure your crock pot meats are cooked perfectly.

On Amazon, a bunch of the Crock Pot brand pots are actually being sold right now include the "little dipper"- a 16 ounce mini crock pot, for free. This is a great mini-vesrion of the crock pot that can be used to keep dip warms, make fondue or make an individual bowl of oatmeal. I already owned one of these, so it wasn't a huge selling feature for me. Yes, I have a lot of kitchen gadgets and yes, I'm running out of room but no, I am not ready to stop buying fun tools for cooking.

So there you have it. If you are looking to buy a crock pot, I hope this advice has been helpful. If you've read this far and didn't need a crock pot, well then I've been happy to entertain you with my adventure. Maybe you've realized that you too need a second crock pot and whether it's a 6-quart one or a little dipper, I hope it helps bring you together with friends a family. Enjoy!