

Crock Pot Collard Greens & Ham: Soulful Southern Comfort

Get ready to experience the true taste of down-home Southern comfort with these incredible



METHOD

Slow cooker

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ChefManiac

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large ham hocks or ham pieces (smoked ham hocks are traditional)
- 2 lbs collard greens, cleaned, stems removed and leaves roughly chopped
- 4 cups chicken broth (low-sodium recommended)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional, adjust to taste)
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon sugar (optional, to balance bitterness)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (optional, for additional richness)

Swaps and Notes:

Ham Hocks/Ham Pieces: Smoked ham hocks are traditional and provide deep smoky flavor and gelatinous richness. Smoked turkey legs or wings can be used for a lighter option, or a leftover ham bone with some meat attached. If using plain ham pieces, you might add a dash of liquid smoke.

Collard Greens: Fresh collard greens are best. Ensure they are thoroughly washed, de-stemmed, and chopped. You can also use pre-bagged chopped collards for convenience.

Chicken Broth: Low-sodium chicken broth is recommended to control saltiness, as ham can be

very salty.

Onion & Garlic: Essential aromatics for building the flavor base.

Apple Cider Vinegar: This is crucial! It brightens the greens and cuts through the richness, balancing any bitterness.

Crushed Red Pepper Flakes: Add a subtle kick of heat. Adjust to your preference.

Smoked Paprika: Adds a lovely smoky depth that complements the ham.

Sugar: Optional, but often used to balance any bitterness in the greens. Adjust to your taste.

Salt & Black Pepper: Season to taste, keeping in mind the saltiness of the ham and broth.

Olive Oil: An optional drizzle for extra richness and flavor, especially if using leaner ham pieces.

DIRECTIONS

1. Let's get these soulful : Crock Pot Collard Greens and Ham simmering!
2. Prepare the : Crock Pot: Place the 2 large ham hocks or ham pieces in the bottom of your slow cooker. Add the chopped large onion and minced 4 garlic cloves around the ham hocks.
3. Add the : Collard Greens: Layer the cleaned, de-stemmed, and roughly chopped collard greens on top of the ham hocks. Depending on the size of your slow cooker, you may need to add the greens in batches, pressing them down as they wilt slightly before adding more. They will cook down considerably.
4. Add : Liquid and Seasonings: Pour the 4 cups of chicken broth and 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar over the greens. Add the 1 teaspoon of crushed red pepper flakes (if using), 1 teaspoon of smoked paprika, and 1 teaspoon of sugar (if using). Season with salt and black pepper to taste. You can also drizzle 1 tablespoon of olive oil over the top for added richness (optional).
5. Slow : Cook: Cover the slow cooker with its lid. Cook on low for 8 hours, or on high for 4-5 hours, until the ham is incredibly tender and nearly falling off the bone, and the collard greens are wonderfully soft and flavorful.
6. Serve: Once done, carefully remove the ham hocks from the crock pot. Shred the tender meat from the bones and discard the bones, skin, and any excess fat. Return the shredded ham meat to the collard greens in the slow cooker. Stir everything together. Taste the greens and adjust seasoning if needed (you might need a bit more salt, pepper, or vinegar/sugar to balance).

Serve hot and enjoy this incredibly comforting Southern dish!

SWAPS & NOTES

Ham Hocks/Ham Pieces: Smoked ham hocks are traditional and provide deep smoky flavor and gelatinous richness.

Smoked turkey legs or wings can be used for a lighter option, or a leftover ham bone with some meat attached.

If using plain ham pieces, you might add a dash of liquid smoke.

Collard Greens: Fresh collard greens are best.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Clean Greens Thoroughly: Collard greens can be gritty.

Wash them very well, even soaking in water for a bit, to remove all grit.

Remove Tough Stems: Always remove the thick, tough stems from the collard greens before chopping.

Don't Rush Slow Cook: The long, slow cooking time is essential for tenderizing the greens and infusing them with the ham hock flavor.

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