

Slow Cooker Japanese Pork and Ramen Soup (serves 8)

To start soup:

2 onions, chopped fine
6 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger
1 tablespoon oil
8 cups chicken broth (I use homemade)
12 ounces shitake mushrooms (I use regular)
1 1/2 pounds boneless country-style pork ribs, trimmed of excess fat

To finish soup:

2 3-ounce packages ramen noodles, seasoning packets discarded
6 ounces (6 cups) baby spinach
2 tablespoons white miso (I didn't add this bc I couldn't find it at the store!)
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon mirin
1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
2 thinly sliced scallions

Easy prep directions: Microwave onions, garlic, ginger, and oil stirring intermittently, until onions are softened. Transfer to crock-pot, add broth and mushrooms. Season ribs with salt and pepper and add to slow cooker.

Harder prep directions: Heat oil or bacon fat (my choice!) in a stock pot. Season ribs with salt and pepper and cook for several minutes on each side, or until nicely browned. Set aside. Add onions to pot; cook 5 minutes, or until softened. Stir in garlic and ginger and cook for one minute.

Add a cup or two of the chicken broth and heat, scraping bottom of pot to loosen browned bits. Pour all the broth (8 cups total) into slow cooker and add pork ribs and mushrooms.

Cover slow-cooker and cook until pork is tender, 7-8 hours on low or 4-5 hours on high. When pork is tender, remove from pot, let cool, and shred into small pieces.

Skim extra fat from surface of broth, then stir in ramen noodles. Cook for 8 minutes, or until noodles are tender.

Stir in spinach, shredded pork, miso, soy sauce, mirin, and sesame oil and let the soup sit 5 minutes, or until pork is heated through.

Serve with a garnish of chopped scallions, and/or crispy noodles if you wish.