

Nan's Slow Cooker Dog Food Recipe 2015 Version

For 8 border collies, average weight 20 kg:

- 900 g (2 pounds) mince
- 2 c frozen vegetables (I use frozen chopped mixed vegetables)
- 2 c brown rice
- 2 c pearl barley
- 2 apples or pears (cored and chopped—I've also used beets)
- 6 litres (quarts) water (may need more or less depending on your grain)

Divide the ingredients evenly into two large capacity slow cookers (I use Cuisinart 6.5 l cookers). Cook on high for 4 hours, then switch to warm for 8 hours (mine does this automatically). I start cooking mid-day the day before, so the food is ready (and cooled off) in the morning. This may not work for you in a warm climate, or you may have to refrigerate the food once it's done cooking.

Before serving, add herbs and spices as you like. I use about two tablespoons each of 3 herbs and 1 tablespoon of spice each day, and vary them in random rotation. Herbs: basil, dill, coriander, oregano, parsley, sage, spearmint, tarragon, thyme (you may think of others). Spices: cinnamon, cumin, nutmeg, ginger and allspice. I buy the herbs and spices, as well as the grain, in bulk.

My dogs get breakfast and dinner—one slow cooker for each meal. I serve the meat porridge over raw rolled oats—1/2 cup per dog per meal. The amount oats can be varied with season (I feed more in winter) and for individual dogs that need more—like my three boys. Oats are a great source of nourishment, high in protein and fat as well as carbohydrates.

Young dogs and pregnant females need more protein than older dogs. In fact, the really older dogs can't process as much protein. My recipe is an average over the spectrum of ages. I try to make sure the youngsters get extra bits of mince and the oldies get less.

I've done a rough cost comparison, and would say that my dog food costs about the same per serving as a mid-range dry dog food, like Bonnie Working Dog. It is more work, of course! But it's certainly much less expensive than the top of the line brands like Royal Canin.