

✓ **WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** Cocktail franks are a party favorite and an easy, kid-friendly hors d'oeuvres. We make them even easier by using the slow cooker, where they can gently simmer in a flavorful sauce without worry of scorching. We guarantee this will be your go-to method from now on. We found that sweet and tangy barbecue sauce brought out the subtle smoky flavor of the franks nicely. Since the sauce was the star of the show, we skipped the bottled barbecue and threw together a simple homemade sauce. We started with tangy ketchup and added some molasses for its rich sweetness and Dijon mustard and cider vinegar for a dose of acidity. A combination of chili powder and cayenne added complex but not overwhelming heat. For a spicier barbecue sauce, use the larger amount of cayenne.

- 1 cup ketchup**
- ½ cup molasses**
- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar**
- 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard**
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar**
- 2 teaspoons chili powder**
- ⅛-¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper**
- 1 pound cocktail franks**

Combine ketchup, molasses, vinegar, mustard, sugar, chili powder, and cayenne in slow cooker, then stir in cocktail franks. Cover and cook until franks are heated through, about 1 hour on high. Serve. (Cocktail franks can be held on warm or low setting for up to 2 hours; loosen sauce with hot water 2 tablespoons at a time as needed.)

---

## Spicy Mustard Cocktail Franks

**Serves** 8 to 10    **Cooking Time** 1 to 2 hours on Low    **Slow Cooker Size** 3½ to 7 quarts

✓ **WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** For a quick and easy variation on our barbecued cocktail franks, we decided to make a spicy mustard sauce. Yellow mustard had plenty of the bright, tangy flavor we were after, and we added some spice by mixing in a couple tablespoons of hot sauce. To balance the heat with some sweetness, we tried honey, but when heated in the slow cooker it thinned out the sauce and prevented it from clinging to the franks. Instead we turned to apricot preserves, which were sweet, fruity, and flavorful and made our sauce thick and clingy. If you prefer a milder sauce, reduce the amount of hot sauce.

- 1 cup yellow mustard**
- ½ cup apricot preserves**
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar**
- 2 tablespoons hot sauce**
- 1 pound cocktail franks**

Combine mustard, preserves, sugar, and hot sauce in slow cooker, then stir in cocktail franks. Cover and cook until franks are heated through, about 1 hour on high. Serve. (Cocktail franks can be held on warm or low setting for up to 2 hours; loosen sauce with hot water 2 tablespoons at a time as needed.)