

Crock Pot Turkey Legs

Thanksgiving might just be one of my favorite holidays. There is something about preparing so many amazing dishes all day long and then sitting around the table with friends and family as we all oooh and ahhh about the foods. That feeling should not just be reserved for one or two days a year! Therefore, I am offering up a delicious new way of preparing turkey and I suggest serving it with ONE of your favorite side dishes from Thanksgiving.

I think most people are fans of turkey's white meat, but I actually prefer the dark meat. It's juicier, has more flavor and has a much less likelihood of getting dried out when cooked. Also, turkey legs are really inexpensive to buy, compared to buying a whole bird, and still tastes amazing. When you make this recipe, the meat will literally fall off of the bone, it is soft and moist without tasting greasy or fatty.

Herbs de provence sounds more foreign than it tastes. I like easy seasonings that blend together in harmony. It's a sultry combination of thyme, rosemary, basil, tarragon and lavender flowers. It's great on meats or can add lots of flavor to soups and vegetable dishes.

My brother said this recipe is "caveman chic". There's no need to be savage, all the meat falls off the bones before serving it. But if you prefer to dive in without silverware, at least you have the lavender flowers in the herbs de provence to make you seem a little civilized.

3-4 turkey legs (about 2-2.5 lbs)

1 T. olive oil

2 T. herbs de provence

Coat crock pot with non-stick spray so the turkey skin doesn't stick to the pot too much. Place legs in pot and then brush lightly with olive oil. Shake herbs de provence all over turkey legs. Cook for 6 hours on low.

Crock Pot Ratatouille

In the Pixar movie by this name, the character Linguini says "Ratatouille. It's like a stew, right? Why do they call it that? If you're gonna name a food, you should give it a name that sounds delicious. Ratatouille doesn't sound delicious. It sounds like "rat" and "patootie." Rat-patootie, which does not sound delicious. " But with Remy's help, Linguini learned to cook, to enjoy it and to share great delicious dishes to others.

In our house, this movie is a favorite because it also teaches lots of great lessons. For example: we shouldn't judge others based on their families or where they came from, you should pursue your interests with passion and dedication, you shouldn't steal from others, in order to have great success we all need to work together and there will always be people to criticize, but even more people we can make happy.

This recipe is easy to make, maybe even for a movie night with your friends or family. Enjoy and remember "anyone can cook!"

1 medium eggplant, peeled and cubed
2-3 zucchini, sliced $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick
2-3 yellow squash, sliced $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick
1 medium onion, sliced into strips
2 cans diced tomatoes, NOT drained
2-3 cloves chopped garlic

Salt and pepper

Parmesan cheese

Sauté onion and garlic in a little bit of olive oil, just until onion is soft. Put eggplant, zucchini and squash in crockpot. Add onion and garlic on top, then both cans of diced tomatoes. Add salt and pepper to your liking. Cook on high for 3-4 hours.

Serve on top of egg noodles. Top with a bit of fresh parmesan cheese. Enjoy!

The methods of my madness



I had a tough workout at the gym this morning, getting brutalized by my trainer for a solid hour. After a quick shower, I threw on my clothes and slumped down by the lockers to apply some quick makeup. Another woman asked me, “how can you put your makeup on without a mirror??” I replied, “well, this has been my face for a really long time. I guess I just know it.”

That’s how I feel about my recipes too. I have to remake some of these dishes so I can write down how it’s done, what to measure and how to cook it. I’ve been cooking for most of my life and while I might search a cookbook for inspiration, I am hardly an engineer about my cooking. So writing this blog is a fun way for me to examine my favorites so I can share them with you.

I’ve been asked to post more “how to” suggestions about crock potting. Here are some tried and true methods to make your meals even easier.

1. The crockpot is meant to cook everything without burning it. But, it needs enough liquid to create steam and enough contents to prevent dehydration. No one wants to eat crocked beef jerky. You can always thicken too much liquid to make gravy.

2. Frozen vegetables and meats are fine to use without thawing, but you might need to add a little cooking time to compensate.

3. It's a great idea to freeze a crockpot meal— let it cool first and then put it in a plastic container with a tight-fitted lid. I prefer ones that are more sturdy, some are even specified as freezer-friendly. Label the meal and date it. You can also put a meal in a freezer bag, lay it flat to freeze and then stand it up in the freezer to store it-- you can make a library of good meals! Most crockpot meals are fine for at least 3 months, but remember that the freezer only makes food spoil slower, it doesn't preserve foods forever.

4. Thawing a meal should take as long as it did to cook it. Take a frozen meal out at least a day ahead and put it in the refrigerator to thaw. If you want it to speed up this process, put the plastic container/freezer bag in warm water in the sink to help it thaw. You can microwave the thawed meal or put it in a pan to simmer back to life.

5. Don't refreeze meats that have already been frozen though, so cook them fresh and then freeze the entire meal.

6. Crockpot meals are great for guests and for gifts. It's ok if you don't know exactly what time your guests are arriving— crock pot beef can be done perfectly without an exact time— beef wellington in the oven cannot! Crockpot meals are also great to take to new neighbors, ill friends or new parents. You can deliver the meal fresh or frozen easily.

7. Meat to liquid ratios might vary depending if your crockpot is more vertical or more horizontal. If you want a glaze to

form, make sure your meat isn't entirely covered by liquid. If you want to make pulled or stewed meat, then you need more coverage.

8. Don't just think about dinner ideas, you can crockpot any meal, side dishes, dips, drinks, sauces, jellies and desserts. The possibilities are easy and endless! Please continue to visit this page often for inspiration and ideas.

Now that the crock pot seems a little more approachable, what are YOU making for dinner??