

Crock Pot Chicken and Quinoa

This is great sick food. Not food that will make you sick, but a food that falls into the same category as matzah ball soup, egg drop soup and homemade mashed potatoes– these foods all make you feel better! I'll warn you that this dish is very bland, so if you'd like to eat it when you are aren't queasy or feverish, you might want to add some more veggies and seasonings. When you read this recipe, save it to your favorites so that next time you are sick, you have a go-to recipe for an easy dish to make everyone feel better. Enjoy! (and stay healthy!)

1 c. quinoa, rinsed and drained

2 c. chicken broth

1/2 medium onion, chopped

3 carrots, sliced

6 skinless chicken thighs (about 1.5 lbs)

2 bay leaves

1 t. salt

1 t. black pepper

1 T. parsley flakes

1 t. celery seed

Put quinoa and broth in crock pot and stir. Add onions and carrots, stir again and then place chicken thighs in. Sprinkle seasonings all over everything. Cook on high for 2.5-3 hours. How to tell it's done: each quinoa grain has a white string that appears on it when it's cooked, chicken thighs need to be cooked through and carrots need to be soft.

Crock Pot Stuffing Balls



Stuffing is an under-appreciated side dish. It completely defines a Thanksgiving dinner and can sometimes be found at kitschy homecooking restaurants, but there is no reason to leave it alone for the rest of the year. Plus, it's a great way to use leftover or stale bread. The more variety you use in your bread selection will equal a total change in the taste of the end result.

In my fridge right now, I have half a loaf of wheat bread (very dense and yeast-smelling) and half a loaf of what was labeled a "tomato bread" (tastes like Italian bread with a swirl of seasoned tomato paste in it). Here is how to prep your bread for stuffing: cut into slices and then into bite-sized cubes. For example, I would cut a normal piece of wheat bread four times each way = 16 smaller pieces. Then, lay cubes out in one layer on a cookie sheet and cook for about 10-15 minutes at 350 degrees, just until the bread toasts.

Instead of just pouring the stuffing into a pan, I love the idea of hand rolling the stuffing into balls. It cooks into nice individual servings and leaves lots of surface area to crisp. These balls also freeze really well, so make a full recipe and then save what you don't consume. Enjoy!

6 cups homemade stuffing cubes

1/2 medium onion, chopped

1/2 green pepper, chopped

2 eggs, beaten



1/4 c. water

1 16 oz. can cream-style corn

1 T. parsley

1 t. salt

1 t. black pepper

1 t. celery seed

1/2 t. paprika

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

10 little pads of butter or margarine

In a bowl, mix together all ingredients, except butter or margarine. After combined, mixture should be moist, but not dripping wet. Form 10 balls, using your hands and mush it together so that it can stand on it's own. Coat oval-shaped crock pot with non-stick spray. Place stuffing balls side by side in crock pot. Place one little pad of butter or margarine on top of each stuffing ball. Cook on low for 3 hours.

(The original inspiration from this dish came from crock pot maven Mable Hoffman's Crockery Cookery Cookbook. No offense, but her recipe was bland and suggested using packaged stuffing mix; my adaptation takes it up a notch and makes it flavorful and heartier.)

Crock Pot Tuna Casserole

OK, so this one might seem a little like “school lunch”, but I like the combination of creamy noodles and easy protein. Anytime I make this in the oven, I always wind up burning the edges. When I make it in the crock pot, it keeps the meal warm and creamy and doesn’t get crispy crusts. (Although, if the crispy crusts are your favorite part, feel free to use this recipe and just shove it in the oven for an hour instead.)



One of the things that is really unique about my tuna casserole is that I used diced water chestnuts. I like the surprise burst of these moist, crunchy morsels. They keep to the neutral color of the dish and add a little bit of jazz that is pleasing to the palate. I also suggest using tuna from a foil

packet, not from a can. The canned fish is great for tuna salad, but I like that the foiled fish has better texture and bigger chunks. If you are not a fan of peas, you can try any frozen vegetable— corn, green beans and mixed veggies are good ones to try, too.

One last big difference in my version is that most tuna casseroles call for cheddar cheese and mine adds something extra. While I think melted cheddar cheese adds to the creaminess, I think including something like feta actually gives the whole dish more flavor and an overall better success. With these modifications, we are taking “school lunch” into the adult world. You could serve this to family or

friends on real plates.

The only thing that could be better than this tuna casserole would be if the school lunch ladies could be here to serve and clean everything up. Enjoy!

1 lb. broad egg noodles, cooked and drained

1 6 oz. foil packet of albacore tuna

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1 c. milk

8 oz. frozen peas

1 8 oz. can of diced water chestnuts, drained

1 c. crumbled feta cheese

1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

1/2 t. salt

1.2 t. black pepper

1 T. parsley

1/2 t. celery seed

1/4 t. ground mustard

Cook noodles according to directions on package. Combine all ingredients in crock pot and stir until well mixed. Warm on low for 2-3 hours.

Crock Pot Cabbage Roll Casserole

One of my favorite dishes that my grandmother made is cabbage rolls, but honestly– who has time for all the steps?! I have made them before in the crock pot (use the search function to see my recipe) but today's version is even easier. It has almost all the same components, but only takes a cutting board, a knife and a spoon to get everything into the crock pot.

I really like that this casserole is thick, there isn't much broth left in the pot. I suggest serving it over some mashed potatoes. It's like a complete meal in one bowl!

1 lb ground turkey, not cooked

1 c. brown rice, not cooked

2 c. spaghetti sauce

1 c. vegetable juice

1/2 head cabbage, chopped fine

1/2 medium onion, chopped

2 T. brown sugar

2 T. apple cider vinegar

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

1 t. celery seed

1 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

1 T. parsley

1/2 c. water

Put cabbage and onion in crock pot first, then top with rice, all seasonings and garlic. Pour sauce and juice in next and stir well. Place ground meat on top of mixture. Cook on low for 4 hours. When meat browns, break up with a spoon and/or fork and stir entire contents. Add water and cook one hour more.

Crock Pot Baked Ziti with Mini Meatballs

We love pasta. Sometimes in a ridiculous way. I don't know if that makes me a carb-a-vore or a carb-a-whore, but either way, it's one of my favorite meals to make... and eat. I especially like when the kids eat pasta because I know that the sauce sneaks in lots of great vegetables and nutrients. The problem with an elaborate dish like baked ziti is that it can take a lot more work and I don't have time to do all the steps in time for dinner. So, I've figured out a way to make some of my favorite dishes using my handy dandy crock pot. Time is no longer a nuisance.



All the parts of this recipe can be made separately and ahead of time, so if it helps you to make the meatballs and boil the pasta the night before, then go ahead and save yourself those steps. But I do recommend making homemade meatballs (recipe is listed below). In fact, you can make them and freeze them

without sauce so that when you want to eat them, you can decide later if you want them in marinara, stroganoff, alfredo, or sweet and sour. (PS— IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A VEGETARIAN ENTREE, FOLLOW ALL THESE STEPS EXCEPT FOR THE MINI MEATBALLS. YOU CAN ADD FRESH ZUCCHINI, MUSHROOMS OR SPINACH IF YOU'D LIKE ADDITIONAL FLAVORS.)

After you make the mini meatballs, these are the other things you'll need for the baked ziti:

1 lb cooked ziti (al dente)

2 1/2 c. spaghetti sauce

2 c. shredded mozzarella cheese

1/2 c. parmesan cheese

1 T. oregano

Pour hot, drained pasta into crock pot. Top with spaghetti sauce, but save 1/2 c. for later. Stir until pasta is coated then add cheeses, but save 1/2 c. of mozz cheese for later. Stir until cheese is starting to melt. Top with oregano and stir through one more time. When meatballs are done, line them on top of pasta and sauce mixture. Pour remaining sauce on top of meatballs and then sprinkle with remaining cheese. Warm on low for 2 hours. Enjoy!

Mini Meatballs (makes 48 balls)

1 lb. ground turkey

1 c. bread crumbs

1/2 c. parmesan cheese

1 t. oregano

1 T. parsley

2-3 cloves chopped garlic

1/2 t. black pepper

1 beaten egg (if needed)

Mix all ingredients together with your hands. If consistency isn't wet enough to bind, add egg (I prefer mine without it). Roll meat mixture into small, bite-sized balls and place on foil covered cookie sheet. Cook in oven at 350 degrees for 25 minutes and then broil on high for 3-5 minutes to brown but NOT BURN outside of ball. When cooled, balls can be frozen and saved for later use.

Crock Pot Chicken Cordon Bleu

After three days of amazing holiday weekend barbecues, I am ready for something without sauce, sides of beans or cool whip desserts. I have had the pleasure of attending festivities at friends' homes so I actually haven't had to do much cooking! My crock pot has been sitting pretty for a few days now and I will neglect it no longer— it's time for a new recipe. I've had some requests for more chicken recipes, so today I am

presenting you with a classic favorite, plus an alternative way to do it.



Chicken Cordon Bleu is a popular dish, but I think it's more American than French cuisine. Stuffed meat isn't that new of a concept and there is nothing actually blue in this dish. From what I understand, Cordon Bleu actually means "blue ribbon" in French and is an award given to culinary masterpieces. Here in

the states, I advocate for using deli ham and Swiss cheese in your chicken, but if you'd like to make it more exotic, feel free to try prosciutto and Gruyere cheese for more bite.

You need to start by venting your frustrations on a piece of meat. Place each boneless/skinless chicken breast in a zipped plastic bag and go to town on it. Use a rolling pin, a mallet, a can of soup... anything that will apply weighted pressure. You want the meat to be tenderized and spread thinner.

If you'd like to make this dairy-free/kosher/healthier, try using different filling in your meat. I suggest trying a combination of fresh spinach, sliced mushrooms and roasted garlic instead of ham and Swiss in your chicken rolls. You can use all the same directions, just substitute your inner components. Feel free to experiment and find out what earns the "blue ribbon" in your kitchen. Enjoy!

4 boneless/skinless chicken breasts

1/4 lb. deli ham, sliced thin

1/4 lb. Swiss cheese, sliced thin

4 t. Dijon mustard

1 t. celery seed

1 T. dried parsley flakes

salt and pepper

1 c. white wine

Beat chicken into flat, thin pieces. Lay flat and smear with mustard. Layer one piece of cheese and one piece of ham, then start at end and begin rolling chicken. Place each roll seam side down in the crock pot. Sprinkle seasonings on chicken rolls, then pour wine into crock pot, but do not rinse the seasonings back off. Cook on low for 4 hours. Remove rolls from pot and let cool for a few minutes so that juices can settle. Serve hot.

Crock Pot Sweet Potatoes-- kid friendly!

I'm always looking for new foods that will be tasty to my palate, but that my kids will still eat. This recipe is a compromise of an easy go-to baby food and a flavorful combination of sweets. The sweet potatoes turn out smooth in the crock pot and you don't have to worry about burned edges or the sugary syrup burning like when you cook sweet potatoes in the oven. I'd suggest serving this with something more bland—grilled chicken or tilapia maybe or even something easy like chicken nuggets or hot dogs. Any meal that can feed the masses and enjoyed by all is a winner in my household!

I like sweet potatoes almost any way they are prepared. At Thanksgiving, I love the marshmallows crisped to a sweet

burn up on top; I love the Hawaiian dish made with crushed pineapple and coconut milk and I also love tzimmes (do a search on my site for the recipe!). Today's recipe is similar to tzimmes, but a better take on the old world concoction. This is a little lighter and the little oranges have a sweeter flavor.

Serve this to your whole family and even if your kids want to dip the potatoes in ketchup (like mine sometimes do), remember that they are getting lots of great vitamins and nutrients from this delicious, vegetarian side dish!

4 sweet potatoes, peeled and chunked

1 can (11 oz.) mandarin oranges in juice (not syrup) DO NOT DRAIN

3 T. honey

Coat crock pot in non-stick spray. Dump in sweet potatoes. Pour oranges and juice on top of potatoes. Drizzle honey over everything. Cover and cook on high for 3 hours.

Crock Pot Turkey A La King

Hear ye, hear ye.... thy dinner is potting! Thy royal family shall enjoy a delicious banquet of wild bird prepared in a lavish sauce that is truly fit for a king. Only, I don't have a royal chef, a housekeeping staff, a castle moat or a dragon. I think the term "a la king" actually refers to the "richness" of the sauce on the meat. But instead of doing shredded or cubed chicken, I've decided to continue the royal renaissance theme to the meal and use whole turkey

legs instead.

You don't need to be savage in eating the turkey legs, simply serve them over pasta or rice or even biscuits and use a fork and knife instead of your hands. Enjoy this tender meat and please realize that you don't need to be royalty to enjoy a divine meal.

3-4 turkey legs (2-3 lbs)

1 can condensed cream of mushroom soup

1 can condensed cream of celery soup

1/2 c. milk

3 T. flour

1 t. black pepper

1 t. paprika

1 t. celery seed

1 medium onion, diced

1 stalks celery, diced

1 roasted red pepper, sliced

Place turkey legs in crock pot laying flat (it's best to use an oval shaped crock pot). Add onion and celery. Mix flour, seasonings, milk and soups in a separate bowl and then pour on top of meat and vegetables. Cook on low 6 hours. Add sliced roasted red pepper as garnish when serving.

Crock Pot Inside Out Stuffed Peppers

Stuffed peppers are a delicious union of textures and are meant for slow cooking. But sometimes, the prep work of cutting and chopping and mixing and stuffing is just too much. Consider this my recipe for “inside out stuffed peppers”. I’ve figured out a way to get that same great result with even less time. It might not have the same presentation as beautifully stuffed bells, but if you are looking for ease and a great meal, this is a good sloppy way to serve a favorite dish. Enjoy!

1 lb. ground turkey or chicken

2 T. dried parsley

1/2 c. uncooked rice

1 t. salt

1/2 t. ground pepper

1/2 t. red pepper flakes

1 t. worchestershire sauce

1 16 oz. bag frozen chopped peppers

1 medium onion, sliced

2 c. spaghetti sauce

Mix together first seven ingredients. Put frozen peppers and onions in bottom of crock pot. Form 12-14 meatballs from the mixture and arrange in a single layer in the crock pot. Pour spaghetti sauce on top evenly. Cook on high for 3-4 hours.

Vinaigrette Salad

***"To make a good salad is to be a brilliant diplomatist –
the problem is entirely the same in both cases.***

To know exactly how much oil one must put with one's vinegar."

Oscar Wilde 1856-1900, British Author

Dinner was not a crock last night. We grilled out brats and had cold side dishes, drank chilled wine and enjoyed time with friends. Sometimes I really enjoy the contrast of a hot main dish and the refreshment of cold accompaniments. I made a



vinaigrette salad last night that everyone seemed to really enjoy, so I thought I'd share the recipe with you too. Tomorrow I'll use the crock pot, but this was a nice change.

Making a vinaigrette salad takes only a few ingredients, but just the right balance (as Oscar Wilde said in the quote listed above). You want chemistry and harmony and simplicity in the perfect mix. Depending on the potency of your ingredients, you may want to divide the dressing measurements in half and add a bit at a time until you get a good balance. Remember that when the vegetables marinate, they will absorb some oil and vinegar and release some water, so you might want to drain the salad a little bit before serving. Enjoy!

1 English cucumber, peeled and cut into chunks
2 c. cherry or grape tomatoes, cut in half
1/2 medium sweet onion, cut into chunks
1 15 oz. can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
1 15 oz. can green beans, drained and rinsed
3 T. fresh parsley, chopped
1/4 c. extra light olive oil
3 T. red wine vinegar
1/2 t. salt
1 t. coarsely ground pepper

Mix all vegetable together, then drizzle with oil, vinegar and seasonings. Toss salad together and then add parsley and mix one more time. Refrigerate at least an hour and then drain, if needed, before serving.