

Crock Pot Chana Masala



So I recently riddled my fans on [Facebook](#) about whether they would want a crock pot chicken marsala or crock pot chana masala recipe... and of course, you guys asked for both! So as promised, I have created both recipes and I'm sharing them with you this week. First up, is chana masala (even though I made the other recipe first!), but since that is the smell filling

my house, it is the first to write up and share. It's like the amazing fumes are traveling through my body and out my fingertips as I type.

You might recognize this dish from your local Indian buffet. With just a few ingredients, but plenty of seasonings and flavor, it's a great side dish. Served with rice and naan bread, it makes a fantastic dinner. I think it's a great introduction to Indian food too because it's not too potent or unfamiliar in flavor. I would still consider myself a novice with cooking Indian food and I much prefer to go out and eat someone else's delicious recipes than my own, but sometimes it's nice to try something new and customize it yourself.

(I really like the [Simply Organic herbs](#) from Amazon. I think they are affordable and a quality product. I've linked each ingredient so you can buy them if you'd like to use what I use, too. I do not work with them directly, but I do use them consistently.)

So here's my go at crock pot chana masala. I hope you are inspired to try cooking something new, too!

Crock Pot Chana Masala

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 6 hours

Serves: 8-10 people

1 28 oz. can chick peas, drained

1 28 oz. can diced tomatoes, NOT DRAINED

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 yellow onion, diced (= about 1/2 cup)

1/2 t. [ground coriander](#)

1/2 t. [cumin powder](#)

1/2 t. [turmeric powder](#)

1 t. [garam masala powder](#)

1 t. minced fresh ginger

1 T. fresh cilantro leaves, sliced

1 lime, cut into wedges

Put all ingredients in crock pot and mix together. Cook on low for 6 hours. Serve with a lime wedge to squeeze for flavor, a side of basmati rice and naan bread for a complete meal.

[Crock Pot Cream of Mushroom](#)

[Soup \(#2\)](#)



Get ready for fall flavors with this easy to make, robust mushroom soup!

On the cusp of summer turning into fall, I'm already getting excited about the next season of recipes. I'm not a pumpkin spice anything, but I love pulling in the flavors of butternut squash, roasted root vegetables, and hearty seasonings.

Last night, I made a cream of mushroom soup just as a way of using up leftover vegetables that were starting to age in the refrigerator. I figured I would freeze some or share with friends, but it was certainly better than throwing things out. Turns out— this soup was a nice variety to my normal [Crock Pot Cream of Mushroom Soup](#)! With just a little change up of flavors and ratios, this soup was a little more hearty and robust.

As I wrote in the first mushroom soup recipe, this doesn't need to be an exact recipe with precise measurements. Also— using a [hand blender](#) does give this soup a lovely smooth consistency. Try it and enjoy this soup as a transition to

fall!

Crock Pot Cream of Mushroom Soup

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 6 hours

Serves: 8-10 people

1 lb fresh mushrooms (button, portobello or shiitake or a combination!)

4 stalks celery, cleaned and diced

1 large parsnip, peeled and diced

1/2 c. [caramelized onions](#)

3 cloves garlic

4 c. broth (chicken or vegetable)

1/2 teaspoon EACH: celery seed, salt, dried dill weed, black pepper

1 t. dried parsley

2 c. cold milk

2 T. corn starch

Put all ingredients EXCEPT milk and corn starch into crock pot and stir. Cook on high for 5 hours. Puree with hand blender. Dissolve corn starch into cold milk and add to crock pot and stir. Heat 1 additional hour on high and then serve.

Crock Pot Peach and Cherry Cobbler



This dessert tastes like summer feels.

Summer produce is like nature's candy. I don't mean that in some hippy dippy way or that candy is in any way a bad food group, I just mean that fruits and veggies right now are so delicious when the sun and the rain and the dirt are all working together to create pure awesomeness. Ok, so I'm a little hippy dippy about it.

I bought a couple pounds of peaches and a bag full of sweet cherries on my last grocery trip. Usually we just eat these things straight out of the refrigerator. My kids love having cherries for dessert so I bought [this cherry pitter](#) and they eat them as fast as I can pop them through! It's a necessary tool for this season; you won't regret buying one for yourself (although you may wonder why no one ever told you about this before! Sorry.)

But, since we were having company over for dinner this

weekend, I decided that I would fancy it up and crock pot us a cobbler to enjoy. And as leverage for the delicious vanilla caramel swirl ice cream I had bought as well.

Most cobbler recipes include oatmeal in the topping. Makes sense– it stands up well in the crock pot, gets soft, but not mushy, and you usually have it in the pantry. Except this time, I didn't. And I didn't want to go on a grocery store run just for oats.

So, I opened the pantry and just started creating. While you could do this in an oval crock pot, I really liked doing it in my [casserole crock pot](#) because it made perfect squares for serving, plus it wasn't too deep or too crispy on the sides. Literally, the [casserole crock pot](#) was the perfect choice.

Turns out– corn flakes make a great cobbler topping, too! I will totally make this recipe again. It's just the start of blueberry season here locally and I'm thinking about going to do some local picking and then making cobbler again. Mmmmm can you picture the dark purple color as those berries begin to burst in the cobbler and the sweet smell of the caramelizing flavor?! Yeah, me too. Go get some local produce and make a batch for yourself today!

Crock Pot Peach and Cherry Cobbler

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 4 hours

Serves: 8-10 people

2 lbs cherries, pitted

6 peaches, about 2 lbs

1/4 c. corn starch

1/2 c. sugar

1/2 c. flour

1/2 t. salt

2 c. corn flakes, crushed

1 stick butter (cold or frozen)



Here's a step by step look at how to make Crock Pot Peach and Cherry Cobbler.

Put cherries and peaches in crock pot, add corn starch and stir until fruit is coated. In a separate bowl, mix the rest of the dry ingredients and then sprinkle it over the fruit. Slice the stick of butter horizontally (long thin slices) as thin as possible. It's easiest to cut the butter when it is cold. Place butter over crumbled topping and cover as much surface area as possible.

Cook on high for two hours and then low for two hours. This helps the fruit— especially the cherries— cook all the way through. Serve with a huge scoop of your favorite ice cream or greek yogurt.

Crock Pot Miso Soup



Restaurant quality soup,
only easier, cheaper and
more delicious!

Why go out to eat when you can stay in?! This week I'm working on Asian inspired dishes that are easy to make and taste like take-out- only healthier! Today's soup is super easy. So much so, that you should never actually order it in a restaurant, it's so much better to make at home. I add a couple more vegetables to my miso soup so that it's a more filling appetizer or the start of a great main dish. You can add thin egg noodles, vermicelli noodles, or rice to this soup to make it a complete meal in itself. Don't let the tofu fool you; this isn't a crunchy, earthy food, it's the same thing you order in a restaurant, only better for you! Enjoy. ☐

Crock Pot Miso Soup

Serves 6-8

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 6 hours

6 c. water

4 T. white miso paste

1 zucchini, cut horizontally and then sliced into half moons
2 cloves garlic
1 12 oz package, extra firm tofu, drained and cut into small cubes
1/2 c. green onions (about 3 inches of the white/green parts), sliced into rings
1 100g package of enoki mushrooms, cut off the base

Put water and miso paste into crock pot and stir until dissolved. Add zucchini, garlic, and tofu. Cook on low for 6 hours. Add green onions and enoki mushrooms about 20 minutes before cook time is complete. Serve immediately.

Crock Pot Vegetarian Refried Beans



With just a few ingredients, you can add a rich side dish to Taco Tuesday- on any day

of the week!

In our house, every Tuesday is TACO TUESDAY! The kids have become so accustomed to it, that sometimes I like to mess with them and make tacos on the “wrong” day of the week. If we eat something different on a Tuesday, they are a little disappointed... but if we eat tacos on any night other than Tuesday, it’s almost unacceptable. I’ll say “it’s Taco Tuesday on Wednesday!” and they respond, “we can’t eat tacos on Wednesdays!” “But why??” I ask. “Because we’d have to call it Waco Wednesday!” they would shout with despair.

Oh trust me, that scenario is totally legit. It happens. Scripted or not, that’s how it plays out every freaking time.

But this week is an exception, because it’s Cinco de Mayo on a Thursday. That’s an unwritten acceptable negotiation and my hellions are ok with moving the taco consumption in order to celebrate another nation’s announcement of victory in war. (Not to be confused with Mexico’s Independence Day, that’s September 16– which is also not a Tuesday this year.)

My mini-me’s could practically prepare taco night by themselves– hard shells and tortillas. Sour cream. Shredded cheese. Lettuce, tomato, onions, and olives. Jalapeños and [this ridiculous taco sauce](#) for mommy. Homemade tomatillo salsa verde, too. And then ground beef or chicken. By the book, typical American-style taco night. Extra napkins, of course.



The perfect side dish
for your next fiesta!

But since tomorrow is a celebration, I wanted to introduce a new dish into taco night. Growing up, a trip to Taco Bell always included way too many tacos and a side of pintos and cheese. What's that, you ask? A bowl of refried pinto beans and a handful of soft, shredded cheddar cheese. They put a lid on it and by the time you filled your fountain drink and sat down to scarf, the cheese would be gooey and melted perfectly. Ok, it was crap quality, but the taste was so good!

So here's my attempt at recreating a mouth-watering memory and introducing it to my family. Let's all celebrate our little victories— not just the big war-type ones. Sometimes sitting down to eat as a family is a victory in itself. Ole!

Crock Pot Vegetarian Refried Beans

Serves: 8-12

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 8-10 hours

1 lb. dried pinto beans

1 c. [crock pot caramelized onions](#)

3 cloves garlic, peeled

2 t. cumin

2 t. salt

6 c. water

Put all ingredients in crock pot and give it a stir. The water level should cover everything. Cook on high 8-10 hours or low 12 hours. Remove excess water that isn't absorbed, not do not discard. Puree everything in the crock pot using [an immersion blender](#). Add reserved water 1 tablespoon at a time until desired smooth consistency is reached. Serve immediately with toppings like shredded cheddar cheese, sour cream, jalapeños, bacon bits, or use inside of a taco or burrito.

Crock Pot Mushroom-Spinach Soup with Middle Eastern Spices



So it's Saturday and I've got a date with this really fungi... haha, get it?! I'm making a mushroom soup!

This version is an adaptation of [a recipe from the New York Times](#), it is not my original creation. But I saw the recipe online and thought... this looks delicious, but has WAY TOO MANY steps. Let's make it easy and throw it all in the [crock pot](#) instead. And guess what. Yup. It works just perfectly without the extra hassle and dirty dishes.

There are so many wonderful varieties of mushrooms, you can change up the the recipe a million different times for different texture and flavor results. Play around with it. I have increased the quantity of seasonings after reading reviews saying that it needed a little more umphh. I don't think that's a technical culinary term, but neither is WOW or YUM and those are the things I'm going for here! I've added links for you to my [favorite brand of seasonings](#), just in case you don't already have these items on hand.

Try this soup with a dollop of plain greek yogurt and some naan or pita bread. Enjoy!

Crock Pot Mushroom-Spinach Soup with Middle Eastern Spices

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 7 hours

Serves: 8 people

~1-1.5 lbs fresh mushrooms- cleaned and diced=about 5-6 cups

(try button, cremini, portobello, Baby Bella, etc)

1/4 lb shallot (one) finely diced

2 T. tomato paste

3 T. salted butter

2 t. dried [thyme](#)

1 1/2 t. [coriander](#)

2 t. [cinnamon](#)

2 t. [cumin](#)

1 t. salt

1/2 t. freshly cracked black pepper

5 cups water

5 ounces fresh baby spinach

1 lime

plain greek yogurt (optional)

Dice mushrooms and shallots and stir together in [crock pot](#). Add seasonings, tomato paste, and butter. Pour water in, but do not stir. Cook on low for 6 hours- you may lift the lid and give it a stir after the butter appears to be completely melted.

After 6 hours, add the spinach and squeeze about 2 T. of fresh lime juice into the crock pot, give it all a stir, and heat on low for up to one more hour... or until spinach is wilted. Serve

with a dollop of plain greek yogurt.

Crock Pot Chocolate Bread Pudding



What could be better than a recipe starting with challah and Rolos?!

This dessert was a huge hit last night at the Dinner Is A Crock Launch Party, showcasing some of my favorite recipes that I like to use in my cooking classes. We had so much fun, ate way too much, and laughed all the calories away.

I've made this dish many times before in my oven. When my son was younger, he was allergic to eggs, so it was really hard to make safe desserts for him that we actually all wanted to eat. My friend, Lisa, shared this recipe with me that originated [here](#). I took the oven version and just threw it all in my

crock pot instead. It stayed warm and gooey and perfectly warm all night. On the other hand, if I had made it in the oven and served it, it would have been cold and crunchy well before everyone had a chance to eat it. This is one definite benefit of the crock pot!

Let's be honest, the first two ingredients capture everyone's interest. Challah. Rolos. What else do you need to know?!



We served the crock pot chocolate bread pudding with both vanilla and chocolate ice cream, but chocolate definitely won last night— only a couple people wanted vanilla ice cream. Good to know for the future— I will buy more chocolate than vanilla. Although I'm tempted to get a coffee or salted caramel next time instead of

vanilla!

Crock Pot Chocolate Bread Pudding

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 3 hours

Serves 12-15

1 loaf challah, cubed (about 8 cups)

1 8 oz. bag [mini Rolos](#), each cut in half (this is easier because they are already unwrapped)

1.4 oz. package cook and serve chocolate pudding

2.5 cups lowfat milk

1 12 oz. jar [caramel topping](#)

Put challah and Rolos in the crock pot. In a separate bowl, mix milk and pudding until dissolved, then pour into crock pot and mix together until bread cubes are coating evenly. Cook on low for 2 hours. Chocolate pieces will be melted and gooey. Pour caramel topping over everything evenly and then keep on "warm setting" for an hour. Serve with ice cream.

Crock Pot Split Pea Soup (Vegetarian)



This classic soup is a smoky vegetarian delight on a cold winter's night.

I don't usually put specific tags in the titles of my posts, but I think it's really important on this one. It should really say... Crock Pot Split Pea Soup #noham but still

#tastesyumy! Haha. I made those up. So this soup is hearty and delicious and still has a great smoky flavor, but doesn't include the typical ham hock that you throw into the pot to add flavor to the broth.

This soup will also freeze and/or reheat really well. Keep this recipe tagged if you are going to bring a dinner to friends (great meal for someone ill, new baby, new home, etc.). Note to self- you might think, oh I'll just double it so I have some for me and some for someone else or later. But you are better off making two batches. You can't really fit 8 cups of broth in most crock pots and the ratio in this recipe makes it the right thickness without crowding the pot. YES- this does give you permission to buy a [new crock pot](#) so you can double the batch easier! ☐

Crock Pot Split Pea Soup

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 5-6 hours on low

Serves: 6

INGREDIENTS

1 c. dried split green peas

2 carrots, peeled and diced (about 1/2 cup)

4 parsnips, peeled and diced (about 1 cup)

2 leafy stalks celery, diced (about a cup)

1/2 sweet onion, diced

3 cloves garlic, smashed

4 c. vegetable broth

1/2 t. each: dill weed, ground celery seed, smoked paprika

1 t. dried parsley

2 bay leaves

1/4 t. salt

1/8 t. ground white pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Put all ingredients in crock pot.
2. Cook on high for 5-6 hours.
3. Remove bay leaves.
4. Use an immersion blender to puree, if desired.
5. Turn off crock pot and remove lid. Let cool and thicken in pot.

Crock Pot Baked Apples



These baked apples will make

you think very naughty thoughts.

Looking for something easy? This one is fabulous! Hot and sultry and moist. (Why do those three words sounds so naughty together?!?!) It's a baked apple, people. Calm down.

No need for a grand story or explanation. Baked apples are a great choice because the fruit is easy to find and consistent in taste all year round. I made this batch with opal apples—they are sort of the color of a golden delicious with the texture of a gala. But they cooked up really nicely and held their shape. You can try it with green apples for a more tart finish, macintosh for a sweet crisp taste or any other variety that you want to experiment with for dessert.

Crock Pot Baked Apples

Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 4 hours

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

6 apples

3/4 c. [golden raisins](#)

3/4 c. [dried pineapple chunks](#) (this brand is allergen-free, too!!)

1/2 c. steel cut oats

3 T. brown sugar

1 T. white sugar

1 t ground cinnamon

1/2 t. [ground allspice](#)

1/4 t. white pepper grounds

1/2 c. water

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash and [core the apple](#); core it twice to make a big enough opening for filling
2. Mix all of the dried fruit and dry filling ingredients together in a separate bowl.
3. Stand all of the apples up in the crock pot (oval or casserole sized works best).
4. Carefully fill all of the apples with the filling. Press the filling down into each open core and let the filling mound on top, too.
5. Pour the water into the crock pot around– not on– the apples.
6. Cook on low for 4 hours. Serve with vanilla greek yogurt or ice cream. [Crock Pot Dulce de Leche](#) is also an excellent topping!

Renovation, Week Two: THX and Floors



Here's an easy way to free up space in your oven when you are making Thanksgiving dinner.

While most of you are probably brining your turkeys, whipping your cream, or stuffing that bird, we're being a little non-traditional with our family time this holiday season. Yes— we will still eat a full Thanksgiving dinner, but no... the renovation is not complete. No kitchen? No problem!

The goal this holiday weekend is to install about 600 square feet of hardwood floors in the kitchen (and throughout the family room). Last week, in [Week One](#), we stripped everything down to the subfloors. We received great news about our cabinets being ready ahead of schedule, but we need to get the wood down first!

At this point, most people think I'm crazy for doing so much of the work ourselves, but it's been really therapeutic. Haven't you ever wanted to take a crow bar to some part of your own house?! The floors though— this was legit remodeling work. Lucky for me, my husband has a masters degree in pure awesomeness and together, with a little help from friends and family, we were able to get the job done.

But let's focus on what is important— what we are eating! Again— I have NO KITCHEN. I've got a workable sink in the basement, a stack of paper/plastic everything from Costco, and some prepped foods in the freezer.

Here's how Week Two panned out in our bellies. Thanksgiving dinner was the big challenge. I was all set to do [Crock Pot Turkey Legs](#)— it's a family favorite. But after checking three grocery stores for turkey legs with no success, I gave in a just bought cooked turkey meat. I did manage to make [Crock Pot Green Bean Casserole](#) and reheated some mashed potatoes. My boys wouldn't call it Thanksgiving dinner though if I didn't have the "secret" cranberry sauce. You know, the one that has the ridges on the sides from the shape of the can. I did find organic cranberry sauce this year that didn't have high fructose corn syrup in it, so that seemed like a win-win to me.



It's easy to keep all of these ingredients on hand for a delicious dinner anytime!

On Friday and Saturday, we worked on THX dinner leftovers. I also made [Crock Pot Chili](#)— it's the easiest recipe ever. You

might have also seen my [Crock Pot Tortellini Soup](#) on social media, that was a huge hit. I used [this recipe](#), but also added a can of white beans to add more protein. It's so easy and there was no prep work and no clean up. The ingredients for both of these meals are easy to keep on hand in the pantry and freezer and I recommend adding them to your next shopping trip.

You might not be remodeling this holiday season, but I'm guessing you too will have crazy days, impromptu gatherings and festive celebrations. You don't need a demolition to save yourself time and energy in the kitchen. Save time, cook slower. Savor the flavors and the moments.