

Crock Pot Meatloaf



This family favorite is now even easier to make!

This recipe requires no lead up. You know it, you like it, you probably have had it a million times with just as many little variations. Let's go simple and make a flavorful loaf for dinner that will please the whole family. Meatloaf also reheats and freezes well, so if you happen to have leftovers (yeah right!) go ahead and have a meatloaf sandwich for lunch tomorrow.

One note: You can make this with a mix of meats, if you prefer. Try half beef, half turkey or a mix of beef and bison. The directions stay the same, but the flavor and texture will change slightly.

Crock Pot Meatloaf

(serves 4-6)

1 pound 90/10 ground beef

1 egg

2 T. minced sweet onion

1/2 c. panko bread crumbs

1 T. brown sugar

1 T. ketchup (one good squirt!)

1/2 t. dried dill

1 t. fresh thyme leaves



Mix all ingredients together and form into a loaf shape. Put in crock pot or on trivet insert if you have one available. Cook on low for 4 hours.

(If you need a trivet for your crock pot, try this one: <http://amzn.to/1Iopz4m>)

Crock Pot Cheese-Stuffed Meatballs



Already looking good!

While on vacation over the holidays, we stayed at the Happy

Pelican, a wonderful beach house on the North Carolina coast. I love the delight of staying somewhere with a fully-stocked kitchen AND a beautiful view. My sister-in-law and I figured out a week's worth of menus, split the to do list, and prepped easy meals to enjoy that required minimal kitchen time and maximum beach time. It was so much easier to dine all together at the house instead of trying to coordinate eating out!



Cheese-Stuffed Meatball Sub, broiled to perfection!

But with eight healthy appetites to satisfy, we needed to cook mass quantity. By the end of the week, we were down to hamburger meat, string cheese and a few wrinkly vegetables. Easy enough! Just what I needed for these cheese-stuffed meatballs. It takes a little more handy work than our normal crock pot meals, but it was delicious! The kids loved the meatballs and the adults enjoyed meatball subs broiled to a crusty perfection.



Forget the bun and just enjoy the cheese-stuffed meatballs!

If you go on vacation and the house isn't well-equipped with small kitchen appliances, I highly suggest bringing your crock pot along. Enjoy!

Crock Pot Cheese-Stuffed Meatballs

Serves 8-10

2 lbs ground beef

2 eggs

1 c. panko bread crumbs

1/2 c. shredded parmesan

1 c. shredded carrots

2 T. Fresh parsley, chopped

1/2 sweet onion, diced

1 32 oz. jar spaghetti sauce

6 individually-wrapped string cheese

4 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

8 hoagie buns

Unwrap the string cheese and cut each log into 5 pieces (30 pieces total). Set the cheese aside. You are going to make approx. 30 meatballs. Mix together the meat, carrots, onion, eggs, parsley, parmesan, and panko. The mixture should not be liquidy. If it is, add a little more bread crumbs. Eggs are not always the same size (did you know that?!). Take about a golf-ball sized portion and roll into a ball. Flatten it between your palms. Place a cut piece of string cheese in the middle of the patty and then carefully form the ball back around the cheese. You want the cheese to be completely surrounded by the meatball mixture. Place it in the crock pot and repeat 29 more times, approximately, or until the meat mixture is gone.

Wash your hands. Don't be gross.

Pour the jar of spaghetti sauce across all of the meatballs and then cook on high for 3-4 hours or on low for 6 hours. Your sauce will be a little more watery when it's done because of all of the juices escaping the meat and veggies. These meatballs are now ready to serve.

If you want to make meatball subs, put 3-4 meatballs in each hoagie bun, cover with some shredded cheese and place on a cookie sheet. Broil in the oven until the cheese is melted and starting to brown, but not burnt. That would be gross.

Cooked meatballs will fill refrigerate well and freeze well,

but be careful reheating as the cheese may ooze out. It will all still taste delicious, it just might not be as pretty.

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.