

Crock Pot Beet Borscht

Dre's got nothing on me—my beets are fresh! Ha! Get it? See what I did there.



Beet borscht tastes great with a few boiled potatoes and a scoop of cold sour cream.

There is nothing that makes me think of the my family history more than a steaming hot bowl of neon pink soup. No, this isn't a serving of chemical warfare, it's a fresh and sweet, soothing bowl of beet borscht. My grandma still makes this and at most Jewish Deli's you can usually find it on the menu right next to corned beef, chopped liver and matzah balls. What can I say? My roots are authentic and so is my cuisine. Except grandma never made this dish in the crock pot!

Now if this was truly home cooking, I would use fresh beets, but I've found that the canned version works just as well and the pink juice adds a certain flavor feature as well. Grandma taught me to cut sliced beets into strips instead of buying the canned variety of matchsticks. Somehow the matchstick ones are too mushy. (According to grandma, of course.)

Authentically, I would hand slice some cabbage, but I love the fine style of angel hair cabbage that I can purchase at my

grocery store. It cooks up quicker and doesn't contrast the texture of the beets as much.



Keep a few of these items on hand in your pantry and you can have beet borscht anytime you want!

If you make this dish with fresh beets, just clean, peel and shred them before throwing them in the crock pot. The taste is very similar to this recipe, but the beautiful pink broth cannot be matched! It truly is extraordinary. But that pink color will most likely stain your cutting board. And your fingers. And your countertops, before you even realize the glow has been dripping!

This soup can be made vegetarian or meat-based. In fact, try cooking down beef bones or chicken bones to make your broth instead of using store bought. I know, I know... this meal is so "processed", but hey, it's a weeknight, and sometimes even the Crock Pot Queen needs a a quick meal to fix.

Give this a try and keep an open mind. Put on those Dre headphones and drop the beat. But not the beet. It will probably stain.

Crock Pot Beet Borscht

Serves 8

2 15 oz. cans of sliced beets (do not drain)

1/2 sweet onion, sliced thin

1 package finely sliced cabbage (approx. 6 cups)

2 bay leaves

2 cloves of garlic, chopped

1 32 oz. box vegetarian stock

8 redskin potatoes

8 T. sour cream

Slice the onion and put in the crock pot with the cabbage, bay leaves, and garlic cloves. Drain the cans of beets into the crock pot and then cut the sliced beets into strips. Add stock and cook on high for 3-4 hours. Clean and quarter the potatoes and bowl separately. To each serving of soup, add a few chunks of boiled potatoes and a dollop of sour cream. Borscht is also refreshingly delicious served cold.

Crock Pot Corned Beef and Cabbage



If you have survived your St. Patty's Day green beer hangover and still haven't had enough Irish fun, then go to the grocery store and get another corned beef and another head of cabbage– this recipe is SO EASY and is a total crowd pleaser. Honestly– you can't mess this up and it tastes so good. Try it with different beer... both IN the pot and IN your belly. The variety of beers will alter the flavor of the meat and the cabbage, so try it

light or dark, bitter or brown, cheap or expensive–beer and beef, what a great combination!

1 corned beef (I don't care what size, as long as it fits in your crock pot)

1 head of cabbage

2 bottles of beer

water

Put the corned beef in the crock pot and throw out the extra packet of seasonings. Pour in the bottles of beer and then add enough water to reach the top of the meat. Cook on high for three hours. Add cabbage and make sure it is immersed in the liquid. Cook on high for one hour more. Remove meat to a cutting board and let it rest for a few minutes. Slice it thin and remove the top inch of fat. Serve with the beer-and-beef-infused cabbage and a cold beer.

Crock Pot Cabbage and Onions



My family has requested perogies for dinner tonight and as much as I'd like to try to make them homemade, that just isn't going to happen. So I figured if our main dish at dinner is from a frozen blue box, then our side dishes should be fresh and flavorful.

Perogies are an amazing Polish entree that can have a variety of fillings inside. I remember a booth at the West Side Market in Cleveland, Ohio, that offered dozens of options— meat-filled, cheese, fruit, dessert, the list just kept on going. I'm making a sauteed cabbage and onion recipe in the crock pot today and the taste will really go nicely with my smooth, simple potato and noodle pockets. But someday, I'd love to go back to that booth in Cleveland and stock up on some crazy combinations instead.

This side dish would go great with almost any meat. The salt helps the cabbage break down and the wine and sugar really add to the natural sweetness of the onion. If you'd like a different color for presentation, try swapping julienned carrots for the red cabbage instead. I like the red cabbage because it gives the onions a really nice translucent purple color. Enjoy!

1 small head cabbage, sliced thin

1 medium sweet onion, sliced thin

1 c. shredded red cabbage

1/2 c. white wine

1 t. salt

1 t. celery seed

1 T. sugar

Put everything in the crock pot and stir together. Cook on low for 4 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 Orange Tofu



I think it's a wonderful community celebration when a baby is born. Friends and family gather to welcome the sweet little child and help the new parents with meals and errands and extra hands for diaper changes. Tonight, it's my turn

to bring dinner to some friends and I'm pretty sure that they already assume it's going to be something from the crock pot. The debate begins about what to make— it doesn't have to be for an occasion, let's admit that this debate happens practically every day, right?!

Let's see— vegetarian or dairy is requested and the meal needs to feed two adults and a 2-year-old, too. I'm guessing that pasta dishes and soups have already been dropped off or stocked in the freezer, so I decided to do an Asian tofu dish and serve it with rice. Tofu is a unique protein, but it cooks up nicely and can suck up a whole bunch of flavor from whatever it accompanies. There are different consistencies of tofu sold, but I suggest using an extra firm one, it's easiest to work with as a substitute for meat.

If you are scared of squishy food, you could make this dish with chicken instead. But give it a try— you might actually like tofu! The toughest thing about cooking it, is that sometimes it can really stick to the pan. Let it cook on each side without moving it around in the pan and then flip it quickly with a thin spatula. Enjoy!

1 brick of tofu, drained

3 T. olive oil

1/2 c. orange juice

1/4 c. honey

1/4 c. soy sauce

2 cloves of garlic, minced

1/2 medium onion, sliced thin

2 t. rice vinegar

1/2 t. paprika

12 oz. of any green vegetable (broccoli florets, snow peas, shredded cabbage, green beans or peas)

First you need to prep your tofu, it usually has an excessive amount of water in it that you want to drain off before cooking. Put a paper towel on a plate and then center the tofu on it. Add another paper towel up on top of the tofu and then put another plate on top. It looks like you've made a plate sandwich with the tofu in the middle. Add something heavy on top (can of food, metal pan, small child) and let sit for at least an hour. The paper towels will fill with water and the tofu will still have it's shape. Then cut tofu into 2-bite sized cubes.

Heat oil in a pan on medium heat. Brown tofu for 5-6 minutes on each side. Add the green vegetable, garlic and onion to the crock pot in that order, then put tofu on top. Mix the remaining ingredients in a separate bowl and then pour on top of everything in the crock pot. Cook on high for 3-4 hours and then serve with white rice.

Crock Pot Escalloped Cabbage Casserole

My husband's family use to have this amazing tradition; every Wednesday night we would all go to his grandmother's house for dinner. Gaga's recipes usually start with butter or oil and a little salt and pepper and from there, it could be chicken or beef or vegetables or any number of simply wonderful simple dishes. But one of my favorites is Gaga's cabbage casserole.

Every time Gaga made this, I knew that the kitchen would be

uncomfortably warm from the oven being on and that it would taste so good that there would rarely be leftovers. This dish doesn't even taste like cabbage, it tastes like fluffy goodness that you can say is actually good for you. Save yourself the perspiration and make this dish in your crock pot instead. If you want to finish the casserole off, remove the crock and place it under the broiler for a couple minutes, just so the top layer crisps.

This dish is simple and the salt and pepper really give it most of its flavor, so it's great to make as a complement to pretty much any meat. It's not a main dish, but it will probably be a favorite! I wouldn't recommend freezing this casserole, but refrigerating it and reheating it is fine.

1/2 head cabbage

1 sleeve of saltine crackers (if you want it to taste more buttery, use a Ritz style cracker instead)

milk

3 T. olive oil

salt and pepper

Shred the cabbage, the smaller the pieces, the better. Put the crackers in a zipper bag and smash them till they are itty bitty, but not powder. Layer the cabbage and then the cracker crumbs in the crock pot; in between layers drizzle about 1 T. of olive oil and a pinch each of salt and pepper. When all of the cabbage, crackers, seasonings and oil have been layered, pour milk into the crock pot until it almost reaches the top layer, but not quite. It usually takes about 4 cups of milk. Cook on high for 3 hours. There shouldn't be much liquid left when the casserole is done— the crackers absorb most of it, but make sure that your cabbage is soft, it shouldn't be crunchy at all.

Enjoy this with pretty much anything. Gaga would be proud if you made this on a Wednesday night at your house, too.

Crock Pot Corned beef and cabbage

(yes, this is a day early, but it's to motivate you to go out tonight and buy your supplies so you can make this amazing meal tomorrow)

Happy St. Patrick's Day! Many of us will pretend to have some Irish heritage this week and join in celebrations across the country. Whether you attend a parade or just go to work with a "Kiss me, I'm Irish!" button, you can have a festive tradition meal ready by the time you come home.

I did a little research online and found out that "corned beef and cabbage is the traditional meal enjoyed by many on St. Patrick's Day, but only half of it is truly Irish. Cabbage has long been a staple of the Irish diet, but it was traditionally served with Irish bacon, not corned beef. The corned beef was substituted for bacon by Irish immigrants to the Americas around the turn of the century who could not afford the real thing. They learned about the cheaper alternative from their Jewish neighbors." (from www.religionfacts.com)

However it became traditional, this is one of my favorite spring meals. Also, if you have leftover corned beef, try making corned beef hash and poached eggs this weekend for a second great meal from this easy crock pot recipe.

1 2-3 lb. corned beef

1/2 head cabbage, wedged
1 onion, wedged
4 red potatoes, quartered
1 c. baby carrots
2 bay leaves
1/2 t. celery seed
salt and pepper

Place potatoes, carrots and onion in bottom of crock pot. If you have a trivet, you can use that to make it easier to lift the corned beef out when it is done cooking. Sprinkle seasonings on meat. Lay corned beef on veggies. Add about 1/2 c. water. Cook on high for 4-6 hours. Add cabbage on top of meat and cook for another hour.

Enjoy your festivities (responsibly please)! ☐

Crock Pot Vegetarian Vegetable Soup

I love these days that are halfway between winter and spring.

I'm pretty sure by mid-afternoon I'm going to be suffocating in whatever I decided to wear because I was in fear of getting cold when I got dressed in the morning. Yeah, I think it's one of those days. Any day that starts with a gray sky is perfect for a crockpot soup. It means dinner will be fresh and filling, but you didn't have to turn the oven on in the late afternoon and warm up the whole house to 350 degrees.

You can definitely add variety to this soup depending on what vegetables you like. The cabbage adds some sweetness to the soup and depth to the flavor, so if you aren't a huge fan, then cut it down to 1/4 head of cabbage, but I wouldn't remove it completely. If you are a fan of gumbo, try adding some fresh or frozen okra halfway through cooking so it doesn't get too gooey by the end of the day.

If you prefer things with a little intensity, use spicy v8 instead and 1/2 t. of cayenne pepper for the whole pot or top your individual bowl off with a few shakes of Tabasco.

1/2 small head of cabbage, chopped
1/2 sweet onion
2-3 red potatoes, peeled and diced
1 bag frozen mixed vegetables
2 stalks celery, chopped
2 cans petite diced tomatoes, no salt added
1 c. V8 juice
1 c. water
salt, pepper
2-3 bay leaves

Put everything in the crockpot on low for 8-10 hours or on high for 5-6 hours.

Remove bay leaves before serving.

Crock Pot Cabbage Rolls

This is already in the pot for dinner tonight! It helps to cook the cabbage the night before so you don't scald your hands trying to peel off the perfect leaves.

1 head cabbage
1 lb ground meat (I'm pretty sure anything will work, I've used beef and turkey)
1/4 cup brown rice, uncooked
1 egg, beaten
1 onion, diced
1/2 t. salt
1/2 t. pepper
1/3 cup cider vinegar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 can tomato soup
1/2 cup Catalina dressing

1. Put cabbage in boiling water. Simmer for 5-10 minutes. Let cool completely before handling.
2. Mix meat, rice, egg, onion, salt and pepper.
3. In another bowl mix vinegar, sugar, soup and dressing.
4. Remove 12 large cabbage leaves from head and then chop remaining cabbage and put it in bottom of crock pot.
5. Put 2-4 T. of meat mixture in center of cabbage leave. Roll up, envelope style and place in crock pot, seam side down. (you can use toothpicks to hold the rolls together if you need to)
6. Pour tomato mixture over all of it.
7. Cover and cook on low for 8-10 hours.

(recipe is adapted from one on www.recipezaar.com)