

# Crock Pot Chicken Tortilla Soup

The morning is half over and my whole family is still wearing pajamas. Yay for snow days! But since it's dreadful and cold outside, I need something hot and satisfying to fill our bellies. I decided that we should head south of the border tonight and enjoy some Mexican fare, so today I am sharing my recipe for chicken tortilla soup. This recipe is simple and easy (and note— it freezes well, too!) and you can definitely vary the spiciness of the dish, depending how much heat your mouth can withstand.

I am sharing my basic recipe for this soup, but feel free to add any of the following to the pot for additional spice. I would recommend only picking one or two of these things as each one packs a punch:

1/2 t. cayenne pepper OR

1 chopped jalapeno pepper OR

1 t. Tabasco sauce

You can also decorate your chicken tortilla soup in a variety of ways. Try sprinkling some fresh, chopped cilantro on top, or a few slices of avocado. If the spice is more than you anticipated, cut it with some shredded monterey jack cheese or a dollop of sour cream. Most restaurants serve this soup with tortilla strips— you can crumble regular tortilla chips on top for the same effect. Or just like an old scantron test, you can select E. All of the Above (that's the correct answer!!)

We might be skating on the lawn and building a snowman on the porch, but at dinner tonight, we'll all be saying "Ole!"

1 28 oz. can petite diced tomatoes

2 10 oz. cans diced tomatoes with green chiles  
1 15 oz. can sweet corn, no salt added (drained)  
1 lb. frozen chicken breasts or tenders  
1/2 medium onion, chopped  
2-3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 T. chopped fresh cilantro  
1 bay leaf  
1 t. chili powder  
1 t. cumin  
1/2 t. black pepper  
1/2 t. salt

Put all ingredients in crock pot and stir so that the spices mingle with all of the solid foods. Cook on low for 6 hours. Remove chicken, shred it and then put back in crock pot for one hour. Serve with any of the additional spices or toppings outlined above.

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## Crock Pot Vegetable Soup For Men



I am fortunate to have a husband that loves my cooking and loves to eat. He tries everything I make and is very agreeable about most of it. But today, I had the privilege of watching my husband cook his first crock pot meal. And it turned out great!

Today's soup includes a lot of produce, but unlike my normal vegetarian vegetable soup which has small bits of lots of vegetables, my hubby's recipe includes chunkier cuts of vegetables and not as much variety. The real kicker of this soup is the topping– add a few jalapeno peppers and you've got a treat to eat without any meat! ☐

I definitely encourage you to offer the crock pot up for family cooking adventures. It's great to take with you on road trips to save money instead of eating out. It's a great way to teach kids about cooking because there's less risk of burning food or fingers. It's also a great way to add healthier meals into your busy lives.

So kudos to my husband for coming up with this great recipe. Maybe he'll do the dishes, too. Enjoy!

2 28 oz cans diced tomatoes

1 15 oz. can sweet kernel corn, drained

1 zucchini, chopped

4 stalks celery, cleaned and chopped

1 medium onion, diced

2 medium potatoes, skins left on and diced

2-3 cloves garlic, chopped

1 t. celery seed

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

1 T. dried parsley

TOPPING: jar of jalapeno pepper slices

Add all ingredients (except jalapeno slices) to pot and stir. Cook on high for 4 hours. When serving, add a few chilled jalapeno pepper slices straight from the jar, to each bowl. If your man likes it hotter, try a few shakes of Tabasco sauce, too!

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## Crock Pot Vegetarian Fiesta

After a great weekend away, it's nice to be back home to cook. But surprise!! Company for dinner tonight. I haven't had a chance to go to the grocery store yet, so I need to whip up something for dinner that is tasty and unique without needing a separate shopping list.

Here's one of my secrets- I always have tortillas in the refrigerator as a quick fix (think... chicken quesadillas, deli wraps, flatbread pizzas) and I also keep random cans of food in the pantry. Voila! Dinner is served. Seriously, it's just that easy. Try stocking your kitchen with some of these easy ingredients and next time you have last minute guests, you'll have a great meal to serve. Enjoy!

2 15 oz. cans of black beans, drained and rinsed

2 10 oz. cans of diced tomatoes with green chiles

1 15 oz. can corn kernels, drained

1 10 oz. can of enchilada sauce

1 lb. bag of frozen mixed pepper strips

1 t. cumin

1 t. dried oregano

1/2 t. black pepper

Pour all canned ingredients and seasonings into crock pot and stir together. Add frozen peppers and stir again. Cook on low for 3-4 hours. Use this as a filling for soft tortillas, serve it on white rice as an entree or on top of shredded lettuce as a salad.

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## Crock Pot Tortellini Soup



The title of this recipe is a lie. This isn't a soup. But it's not a stew and it's not just a pasta main course, so I don't know what else to call it. Technically, it does have broth in it, so therefore I qualify it as a soup. And since it's my blog, I get the right to label it however I want to! But this is my disclaimer— there is nothing light weight or soupy about this dish. It is delicious and easy and full of flavor and

takes just a few ingredients and a few minutes to make a whole meal. BUT– all of those details are way too much to put in the title, so I just call it tortellini soup. Enjoy!

1 28 oz. can of diced tomatoes (do not drain)

1 brick of frozen chopped spinach (no need to thaw, just dump it in frozen)

3 cloves garlic, minced

2 cups chicken broth

1/2 small onion, chopped

2 12-oz. packages of frozen cheese tortellini

Parmesan cheese

Put all ingredients EXCEPT tortellini in the crock pot. Cook on high for 3 hours. Add frozen tortellini to the pot, stir it around and cook on high for one more hour. Top with a little Parmesan cheese when served.

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## Crock Pot Chicken Cacciatore



Happy birthday to my husband. He is an amazing man, father, lover and friend. And he loves my cooking. So for tonight, I wanted to make him a nice dinner. But of course, I still have the kids to take care of today, a house to clean before company and a dog that is begging to go out, so my options for fine dining were a little limited. I decided to start a crock pot of food at lunchtime instead of at breakfast—our dinner will be done right as the kids are going to bed... so we can eat a meal as adults and maybe even partake in a glass of wine.

I had totally planned on doing chicken fajitas for dinner tonight or some sort of hearty “man” food, but my hubby went out with his coworkers for lunch at a Mexican restaurant, so I needed to reroute my dinner plans. Since I already had the chicken, I decided to make chicken cacciatore (pronounced catch-ahh-toe-ree) instead. It’s robust and filling, but an easy one pot meal.

Cacciatore is usually served over a thin pasta like angel hair, but it can also be served over rice, if you prefer. I like to top mine with grated Parmesan cheese instead of putting the cheese in when it’s cooking. You can also add other vegetables if you’d like—many cacciatore recipes add mushrooms and/or fresh basil leaves.

You don’t need a celebration to dine on this great chicken dish. Enjoy!

4 frozen boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1 small onion, sliced thin

1 green pepper, sliced thin

1/2 red pepper, sliced thin  
1/2 yellow pepper, sliced thin  
1 medium zucchini, sliced thin  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1 28 oz. can petite diced tomatoes  
1 c. spaghetti sauce  
1 T. parsley flakes  
1 t. basil flakes  
1 t. oregano flakes  
1/2 t. celery seed  
1/2 t. black pepper  
1/2 t. salt

Combine vegetables in crock pot, top with all seasonings and stir together. Pour in tomatoes and sauce and stir again. Place frozen chicken breasts on top of mixture. Cook on high for 4-6 hours. Serve over thin pasta or rice.

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## Crock Pot Creamy Tomato Soup

I understand that the red label of canned tomato soup is probably very patriotic and that eating grilled cheese and tomato soup is one of our commandments or laws or requirements as Americans. I support that, I do. But— I don't think my grilled cheese sandwich deserves to bathe in a mixture of



weird canned goop and water. It needs more than that. So today I made homemade creamy tomato soup.

I think the key difference here is the spices and the heavy cream, you just can't get those flavors in a can. Another detail that is critical to this recipe is the use of an immersion hand blender. Thirty seconds of power will take this soup from delicious to heavenly. If you don't have an immersion hand blender, then you can cool your soup off and then put it into a blender to puree, then return it to the crock pot, add the heavy cream and heat it back up. That way is more work but will deliver the same smooth result.

Your soup should have an equal counterpart– a perfect grilled cheese sandwich. But you have to define that for yourself. For me, it's swirled pumpernickel/rye bread with swiss and havarti cheeses. For my kids, it's American cheese on whole wheat. For my husband, it's italian bread with sharp cheddar and colby jack. I am willing to entertain everyone's favorites, since the soup is so easy to make. Another trick for your sandwich is to change up from using butter or margarine on the outside of your bread– try using a light smear of mayonnaise instead and get a sweeter, crisper result. Or you can quickly dip the sandwich in a couple beaten eggs and turn your grilled cheese into a monte cristo instead. Discover whatever combination tickles your taste buds and then let it swell with the sweetness of the soup. Enjoy!

2 14 oz. cans of diced tomatoes

1 small onion, diced

2-3 cloves of garlic, chopped

1 bay leaf

1 t. of each seasoning: salt, black pepper, rosemary, oregano and celery seed

1 T. sugar

8 oz. heavy cream

Combine all ingredients except heavy cream in the crock pot. Cook on low for 4 hours. Remove bay leaf. Use immersion hand blender and puree until smooth. Add heavy cream, stir and heat for one more hour. Serve with your favorite grilled cheese sandwich, of course!

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## Crock Pot Vegetable Curry

One of my favorite things about Indian food is that you can have such a variety of purely vegetarian dishes. With the right balance of ingredients, you can have a healthy, protein- and vitamin-rich meal with an array of flavors and nothing in it will have ever had a face.

There is also a misconception about crock pots that I'd like to ruin. Many people think the crock pot is just for cooking the hell out of a piece of meat or else making soup, but indeed there are so many other great dishes that we can make in a matter of minutes! So for the skeptics out there, I invite you to try this vegetable curry. It's hot and spicy, almost sexy, and definitely enjoyable. Experiment today with this cultural culinary specialty.

1 can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed

1 14 oz. can diced tomatoes

1 16 oz. bag of frozen cauliflower

2 c. baby carrots

1 small onion, diced

3-4 cloves of garlic, chopped

2 potatoes, diced

1 T. curry

1 t. red pepper flakes

1/4 t. cinnamon

1/2 c. vegetable juice

1 14 oz. can of lite coconut milk

Put everything in the crock pot except the coconut milk. Stir once through and then pour coconut milk on top of everything. Cook on low for 6 hours. Serve over white rice or with naan bread.

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## Easiest Crock Pot Chili-- EVER

If you can work a can opener, you can make this chili. You still need to brown the meat before you put it in the crock pot, but that's the only work that needs done. Open the cans, dump it in, let it fester. Done.

My brother in law taught me this recipe and I love that it is uncomplicated. I usually make this on football Sundays so that when we have people over to watch the game, everyone can have a hot meal whenever they get hungry. Plus, I love all the fun toppings that go on chili. It isn't football season yet, but

it is the start of baseball season. So, for sports fans everywhere, here is your game day strategy. Enjoy!

(I SUGGEST USING A 6 QT. CROCK POT TO MAKE THIS. IF YOU HAVE A SMALLER ONE, THEN REMOVE ONE OF THE CANS OF BEANS. ALSO, ALL CANS ARE TYPICALLY ABOUT 14-15 OUNCES.)

2 cans diced tomatoes

1/2 medium onion, chopped

1 can dark red kidney beans

1 can light red kidney beans

1 can great northern beans

1 packet of chili seasoning (FYI– it's a combination of things like onion powder, chili powder, a bit of cumin, salt and pepper, etc. but it's just easier to buy the packet instead of measuring it all out separately)

1 lb. ground beef or turkey

Brown meat completely and then put in crock pot. Dump everything else in. Give it a stir and then cook on high for 4 hours. Serve with shredded cheddar, chopped onion and sour cream. For added flavor, you can add 1 can of sweet corn kernels when you add in all the beans.

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## 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.