

Crock Pot Chicken Marsala



I feel like I should just start this post the same way as my last... "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."

I thought it was fascinating to hear how many of you liked chicken marsala, but that it took too much work to make. That sounded like a great challenge! Nothing delicious needs to be over-complicated. But crock pot chicken can have varying results— consider that my warning— especially with breast meat. I know my crock pots well enough that we have a relationship, I know how much time it takes to get up to temperature, and when they are just too hot to mess with.

I opted to use thin-sliced boneless, skinless chicken breasts for this dish and to cook for a shorter amount of time in order to retain the moisture in the meat. Chicken must be cooked through, so if you are not already aware of how moody your crock can be, you might want to be home when you cook this dish for the first time to ensure that it doesn't dry out. Like any relationship, it takes a while to figure out. But it's worth it.

Also, I recommend using a slicer [LIKE THIS](#) to save time with the prep work. Yes, a simple knife could take care of slicing the mushrooms, but I really like how this device makes everything a consistent size. You can also use it for eggs (duh!), strawberries, kiwis, and soft cheese.



Crock Pot Chicken Marsala

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 4-6 hours

1.5 lbs thin-sliced boneless, skinless chicken breast

4 T. salted butter, cubed

8 oz. baby portabella mushrooms, cleaned and sliced

2 cloves garlic, minced

8 oz. marsala cooking wine

1/2 c. cold water

3 T. corn starch

Place chicken breasts in the crock pot and dot with chunks of the cold butter. Put mushrooms in next and spread across the chicken. Sprinkle with the garlic. Slowly pour in the cooking wine on top of everything, but not so fast as to wash all the mushrooms and garlic off of the chicken. Cook on low for 4-6 hours then remove the chicken from the pot using a slotted spoon. In a separate bowl, dissolve the corn starch in the water and then add it to the liquid in the pot and stir. Add the chicken back to the pot and cook an additional hour. Serve over wide egg noodles.

Crock Pot Chana Masala



So I recently riddled my fans on [Facebook](#) about whether they would want a crock pot chicken masala 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 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 Winter Vegetable Soup



Crock Pot Winter Vegetable Soup is the comfort of home served in a cup.

You'll often hear me say that food isn't just about sustenance, but also satisfaction. Entertainment. Emotion. Nutritionists focus on the content of food. Dietician focus on the balance of food. But when I sit down to eat– or more importantly– serve a meal to family and friends, it's about the experience and the memories we create around the table. Your food will be through your system in less than 24 hours, but the feeling you had when eating it will last a lifetime.

That's how I feel about this soup. It's based on a recipe my mom used to make when I was a kid. We ate dinner as a family, almost every night. It's just what we did. And we didn't do it in front of a television or on the run, but it was quick and easy meals and meant to create an atmosphere for conversation.

Mom's meals were much like this one– a basic recipe with few

ingredients that when combined received minimal complaints! We called it winter vegetable soup because nothing really is fresh during an Ohio winter. She could keep all of these items on hand and whip this meal up in about half an hour. I prefer to cook it low and slow, of course, and add a few more seasonings. But overall, it's the comfort of home in a cup.

Crock Pot Winter Vegetable Soup

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 5 hours

Serves: 8

2 12 oz. packages frozen vegetables- broccoli, cauliflower and carrot combination

1 32 oz. box of vegetable broth

3 T. butter

1 t. minced garlic

1/2 cup [crock pot caramelized onions](#) (or substitute 1/2 sweet onion, diced)

1/2 t. each: dill weed, celery seed, basil, parsley, salt, black pepper (ALL DRIED SEASONINGS)

1/4 c. corn starch

3 cups cold milk (2% or whole is preferred)

Pour frozen vegetables into crock pot, followed by broth, butter, garlic, onions and seasonings. DO NOT ADD CORN STARCH OR MILK YET. Cook on high for four hours. In a separate bowl, dissolve corn starch into COLD milk and then add to crock pot. Cook on high for another hour. Soup will have thickened. Add salt and pepper to taste preference.

Crock Pot Short Ribs



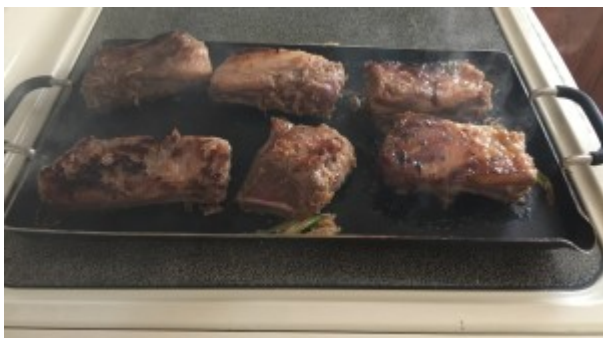
OK fans, THIS should be your new favorite holiday dish. I don't care what you celebrate, we all celebrate deliciousness. There's a little prep work involved, but it is worth every juicy morsel. I am making this dish for the upcoming Jewish New Year... and perhaps Halloween. Thanksgiving. Christmas. And an early happy Valentine's Day to me.

Since the beef is the focal point of the entire meal, I wanted to make sure I had quality beef and plenty of it. I bought six short ribs equally just over three pounds. That sounds like a lot, but you have to take into account the bones. We each ate two ribs at dinner. You can adjust the serving size as needed. I served my meat with green beans tonight and that's eat. I mean, it. I'm still thinking about eating those short ribs!

Marinating the meat is essential to get the flavors going and the apples to break down and tenderize the beef. I soaked mine for 24 hours– you could do as little as 6-8 hours, but I wouldn't go much more than a full day.



I first tried to fit everything into a gallon size bag, but that was a futile effort. You could use a bowl or storage container. I like to keep these [HUGE bags](#) on hand exactly for this type of need. Whatever you use needs to fit back into the refrigerator, don't forget that detail!



Crock Pot Short Ribs is one of the only recipes where I braise the meat before I put it into the crockpot. The flash of heat helps caramelize the flavors quickly and seal in the juices. It's worth the extra step, trust

me! It's also necessary in my house to open the windows or disarm the smoke detector when braising. Something about that quick heat and sugar causes some excess "fog" in the air—that's what my kids call it, cooking "fog"!



When you are braising the meat, make sure you save the juices and marinate from the bag or container– that goodness goes straight into the crock pot. Do not dump it out! Once the meat is done braising, you just gently place the meat on top of the sauciness and let it

continue its cooking all together.

Yes, there are more steps to this dish, but the end result is soft and juicy and smiles all around. And isn't that the point of holiday meals?!

Happy everything to you. I hope you enjoy this dish and everything you celebrate throughout the year.

Crock Pot Short Ribs

Serves 3 (Double or triple the recipe as needed!)

3 lbs beef short ribs, bone IN

1 c. shredded sweet onion

2 medium gala apples, shredded (skin on)

1 inch fresh ginger, peeled and then shredded

8 cloves garlic, whole

5 stalks green onion, cut the greens only into 2 inch strips

1/2 c. soy sauce

1/4 c. Mirin or rice wine

3 T. sesame oil

3 T. honey

1/4 c. sugar

Begin by shredding onions, apples and ginger and put into [large bag](#) or bowl. Add garlic cloves and green onions. Add remaining ingredients (except ribs) and combine well. Add beef short ribs and massage marinate onto all sides of meat. Cover bowl tightly or seal bag and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. When you are ready to proceed, remove ribs from marinate



and put everything else into the crock pot. Heat pan on high and then braise all sides of short ribs quickly, but do not cook through. Add ribs to mixture already in crock pot, cover and cook on high for 3-4 hours or low for 4-6 hours.

The meat will pull away from bones when it is soft and ready. Serve bone-in with extra juice. The whole cloves of garlic will taste amazing- do not throw them out- spread them on bread or eat like candy!

Summer Series, Day Six: Seafood Paella



This one pot dish is literally named for being made in a pot. It's the original one-dish cuisine.

This, my friends. This is the quintessential dinner that melds together land and sea and balances the forces of nature to create an amazing meal that would make even mermaids and pirates cheer. With more protein than a Brazilian meat festival, this one pot recipe will make you lift your anchors and set full speed ahead toward the coast. And you'll thank me for it. I thanked me for it- I've never made this dish before, but with so much fresh seafood available here in the Outer Banks, it was a challenge I was eager to attempt and declare victory for all.

There are a few more steps than normal because of the complexity of textures in paella (pronounced PIE-Ay-uhhhh) so bear with me and I'll try to break it down step by step so you can recreate this on your next seaside adventure.

First, gather all of your ingredients. It's helpful to know what goes in at what point so you can simplify your timing.



1. Brown your boneless, skinless chicken thighs over medium-high heat to get a quick sear on the outside. The chicken will have plenty of time to finish cooking the whole way through when it's in the crock pot, but you want to seal in the flavor. After removing from heat, chop chicken into bite-size pieces.



2. Using the same skillet, brown the sliced andouille sausage quickly on both sides and remove from heat.



3. Put brown rice, seasonings, and fresh vegetables in the crock pot. Add broth and give it all a good stir. The turmeric and smoked paprika will flavor the entire dish but begins with this first step. Add bite-size pieces of chicken and cooked andouille sausage. Cook on low for six hours or until all liquid is absorbed.



4. After time is up, it's ok to remove the crock pot lid at this point and give everything a really good stir. Try to keep rice from sticking to the bottom of the crock pot.



5. Add seafoods– shrimp, sea scallops and clams. Be sure to properly clean your seafood before adding to the pot. A sandy clam does not add flavor! If you are peeling and deveining your own shrimp, you need [THIS TOOL](#). Seriously, just get one for yourself at the start of this trip. (You'll use it for the Crock Pot Low Country Boil as well.)

Cook on high for up to one hour– shrimp should be pink and clams should have all opened. You do not want to overcook seafood so try to be nearby for this last step.

And that's it! You have just mastered the Old World, cultivated classic of a seafood paella (technically a mixed paella because of the chicken, but let's focus on the gifts from the sea and the amazing local seafood markets located in the Outer Banks.)

Thank you to the owners of the [Ooh La La beach house](#) here in

Avon. This dish used many of the tools and cooking accessories and your stocked kitchen did not disappoint. I had everything I needed to prep, clean and cook all of my ingredients for this meal. This kitchen set-up made everything easy, including a spacious dishwasher to handle my mess!

Crock Pot Seafood Paella

Serves 6

1.5 cups brown rice

3 chicken thighs

7-8 oz andouille sausage

1 red bell pepper, sliced

2 stalks celery, sliced

1/2 onion, sliced

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 t. turmeric

1 t. smoked paprika

2 cups white wine

2 cups chicken broth

1 lb jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined

1/2 lb bay scallops

1 dozen clams, in shells

Brown your boneless, skinless chicken thighs over medium-high heat to get a quick sear on the outside. The chicken will have plenty of time to finish cooking the whole way through when it's in the crock pot, but you want to seal in the flavor. After removing from heat, chop chicken into bite-size pieces. Using the same skillet, brown the sliced andouille sausage quickly on both sides and remove from heat. Put brown rice, seasonings, and fresh vegetables in the crock pot. Add broth and give it all a good stir. The turmeric and smoked paprika will flavor the entire dish but begins with this first step. Add bite-size pieces of chicken and cooked andouille sausage. Cook on low for six hours or until all liquid is absorbed. After time is up, it's ok to remove the crock pot lid at this point and give everything a really good stir. Try to keep rice from sticking to the bottom of the crock pot. Add seafoods— shrimp, sea scallops and clams. Be sure to properly

clean your seafood before adding to the pot. Cook on high for up to one hour– shrimp should be pink and clams should have all opened.

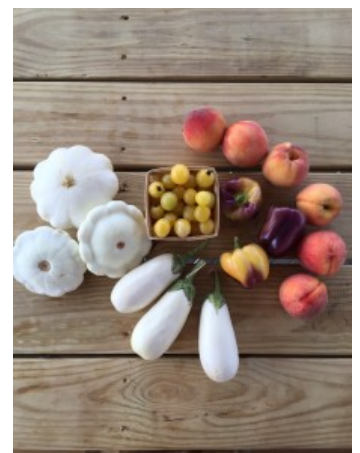
Summer Series, Day Five: Crock Pot White Ratatouille



I'm seriously considering moving to the beach. Sunshine, seafood, salty air... it's all good for my soul. As long as I have a good internet connection, I might just be willing to carry my crock pots up and down the east coast and showcase local flavor and attractions. **Ok, I'm putting it out there– where should I go next and who can hook a girl and her crock pots up?! I'll feed you!**

I used the rest of my finds from this week's farmer's market to make ratatouille for dinner tonight. I love the fact that I used the same kinds of ingredients, but in a new way to make a totally different presentation!

I have never seen pure white patapan squash or white eggplant before in this region, but I was delighted to experiment with these adaptations to the standard variety. I also used yellow cherry tomatoes instead of canned diced red ones. Such a delightful dish to cook low and slow while we played all day.



While we normally do adventures as a family, today we decided to go in two directions— literally. My husband took our oldest to the beach to tiptoe in the shark-infested waters and fly a kite in the salty breeze. I took our youngest on a bike ride down the main road of the island. I'm so glad I bought [a bike rack for my car](#) so we could all bring our bikes to the beach. It's so much easier than trying to rent them upon arrival! The sidewalks in Avon are flat and easy and the breeze felt fantastic even though it was a scorching day. We all enjoyed the sunshine and a bit of solitude. There is something about experiencing the wind on your face and the sun on your back, just taking a deep breath and exhaling gratitude. I'm not kidding when I tell you that staying [here](#) in the Outer Banks has really been cathartic for all of us.

But back to the food, of course! By the time we hit the beach, the bikes, came back to swim in the pool [at the house](#), and got cleaned up... dinner was ready and no work was needed. Another amazing day is complete and it's time to chill on the porch with a few cold drinks and listen to the birds and cicadas chirping in harmony.

Crock Pot Ratatouille

Serves 4-6

3-4 large white patapan squash, softball sized (about 1-1.5 lbs)

3 small white eggplant, 5-6 inches in length (about 1 lb or less)

1 sweet onion, diced

1 yellow pepper, diced

1 pint yellow cherry tomatoes

2 cloves garlic, minced

4 leaves fresh basil, chopped

1 c. broth (chicken or vegetable)

Mix all ingredients in crock pot and cook on low for 6-8 hours. Serve with rice, noodles or fresh bread and butter. If you can't find patapan squash, you can substitute yellow squash.

Crock Pot Cream of Mushroom Soup



Try different varieties of mushrooms in your soup to enhance the flavor!

Did you have a great weekend? Yeah, I met a real fungi.

Haha, fungi humor still cracks me up. Get it? Get it? Funguy?! Bwahhh ha ha ha. This recipe calls for at least three

different kinds of mushrooms because I love the variety of texture. If you don't like mushrooms, don't make this recipe, make a different soup like [Crock Pot Creamy Tomato Soup](#) or [Crock Pot Cream of Celery and Leek Soup](#). This mushroom soup is earthy and pungent in all the right ways.

You can get mushrooms all year round, but I suggest you try different varieties each time you make this. For example... your standard button mushroom is a great basic, but play around with oysters, enochi, portabello, or bunapi. No, those are not made up words, they are varieties of mushrooms!

This recipe requires very little measuring, which might make some of you uncomfortable. But, rest assured, that you would have to work so very hard to mess this up. Don't over season the soup— it's better to add a little salt and pepper at the end instead of at the beginning.

I like my mushroom soup to be smooth and creamy so I use [a hand blender](#). If you like a more chunky soup, then try pulling 2 cups of the soup out and pureeing that, then add it back in. The soup will still feel smooth, but will retain the majority of chunks for bigger texture.

Try adding in other veggies for a more full flavor, if the mushroom intensity is too much for you. You can add chopped celery, green onions, chopped carrots, a can of green chiles or even some corn to adapt the flavor. I am making a simple version of this soup, but feel free to add more fun to your fungi as you experiment.

Crock Pot Cream of Mushroom Soup

Serves 6-8

4 cups mushrooms, cleaned, stems discarded, and caps cut into bite-sized pieces

32 oz. vegetable broth

2 cloves garlic, minced

4 sprigs fresh thyme (just the leaves)

1/4 sweet onion

2 cups milk

2 T. corn starch

Add all of the ingredients into the crock pot EXCEPT the milk and corn starch. Cook on low for 3-4 hours. With one hour left to cook, dissolve corn starch in the milk and then stir into the soup. Puree the soup using [a hand blender](#) until texture is smooth. The soup should thicken in the last hour and then a bit more once served. Add salt and pepper as needed once cooking is complete.

Crock Pot Arugula Lentil Salad



Spring is here! Time for salads and fun.

Spring is here! No really, I mean it. OK, so the northeast might still have snow and the south is already sweating, but hey— it's April— and no one can deny that. We had friends over on Saturday night and all I wanted was an easy dinner of finger foods, fun, and friends. Let's be honest— the first supplies I bought for dinner were the cold liquor and the marshmallows for smores. I started with an antipasto platter of olives, cheese, summer sausage, and stuffed grape leaves, because that pretty much took five minutes to make. But I wanted a light salad that would be filling and knew that I needed to sneak some protein in there.

So I decided to try lentils in the crock pot as a perfect spring salad topping. I've never made them before, so I did a little reading online. I learned that vegetarians love lentils (no surprise) but that I should never-ever-de-ever put salt in the water when I am cooking them (good to know!). I also read that you don't want lentils to get mushy, so I committed to cooking them on high instead of low.



Lentils are easy to cook and can be used in so many ways!

Lentils turned out to be ridiculously easy in the crock pot. First off, follow the directions about sifting through the lentils for stones or dirt or whatever hippies don't actually like to eat in their plant-based superfoods. Then, use a ratio of about one cup lentils to three cups water. You will have lots of excess water in the crockpot when the lentils are done, but you can easily use a slotted spoon to scoop the lentils out when they are done swimming.

I watched the crock pot a little more closely than I normally do because I really didn't want the lentils to be overdone. I had set it for 4 hours on high, but at about 3 hours, they were done. Next time, I'll know to set it for 3 hours and I can go about my business. This is what having a relationship with your crock pot is all about, but sometimes the trust has to be earned.

That's it— perfect protein-packed superfood ready to top my spring salad.

So I started with arugula. Added the strained lentils. Topped it with a little bit of sweet pepper relish (you could use regular fresh red peppers if you prefer. For the dressing, I mixed together some fig balsamic vinegar with some herb-infused olive oil. If you have an olive oil store near you, it is totally worth getting these fun flavors and using them to

make really easy dressings. Enjoy spring, people! Enjoy a fresh salad, a refreshing adult beverage, and some toasted marshmallows for dessert.

Crock Pot Arugula Lentil Salad

serves 6-8 as sides

2 c. dried lentils

4 cloves garlic, peeled

6 c. water

5 oz. baby arugula, rinsed and chilled

3 T. sweet

pepper relish or 1/2 red pepper, diced

dressing to taste

Put lentils, garlic and water in the crock pot for 3 hrs on high. Use a slotted spoon to remove all lentils. Top arugula with lentils, red pepper, and toss with dressing. Enjoy!