

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 Tom Kha Soup

A few years ago, I published [this watered down version](#) of my favorite Thai soup. I was just learning to experiment with Thai cooking and didn't have access to the necessary ingredients for this recipe, so I made it with the closest things I could find.

That recipe was FINE. It satisfied my craving for this delicious chicken and coconut milk soup, but I recently

decided that I wanted to up the ante and do it correctly, with the legit ingredients. I accepted my own challenge and I'm thrilled with the results. The old version tasted good, no doubt. But this recipe tastes AUTHENTIC.



Thai basil is not the same as regular basil- make sure you grab

the correct
ingredient!

I can't really explain what makes this soup so good, other than it's ingredients I don't usually cook with at home. Please use fresh herbs, it makes all the difference. You can find fresh lemongrass and Thai basil at some grocery stores and at many international grocery markets. Thai basil is not the same as regular basil- make sure you grab the correct ingredient!

I am blessed to have an amazing neighbor that is gifted with a green thumb; she shares fresh herbs with me and I, in turn, share the foods with her. It's a great exchange and I am grateful for her friendship. I am envious of her ability and patience to garden and someday, I'll be motivated to do more than just putting fresh herbs into mason jars on my bay window!

Try this recipe and see how it compares to your favorite local Thai restaurant. You might figure out that eating at home is just as good, if not fresher and better!

Crock Pot Tom Kha Soup

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 5 hours

Serves: 4

2 c. vegetable or chicken broth

1 13.5 oz can [coconut milk](#)

1 12" stalk fresh lemongrass, greens removed; bruise the stalk and then cut into 3" sections

1 2" fresh ginger root, peeled and slice into 6 quarter-sized slices

1/2 lb fresh oyster mushrooms, cleaned and quartered

1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into bite-sized chunks

1 T. [fish sauce](#)

1 t. sugar

1 T. fresh lime juice

1 t. [Thai chili paste](#)

1/4 c. fresh kaffir lime leaves

1/4 c. fresh Thai basil leaves

1/4 chopped fresh cilantro leaves

1 lime, cut into wedges

Put all ingredients except cilantro and lime wedges into crock pot and stir. Cook on low for 5 hours. Before serving, remove all kaffir lime leaves, Thai basil leaves, and lemongrass stalks (optional to remove ginger slices, too). When serving, add chopped fresh cilantro leaves and lime wedge on top. Serve with bowl of white rice.

[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 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 adaption 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

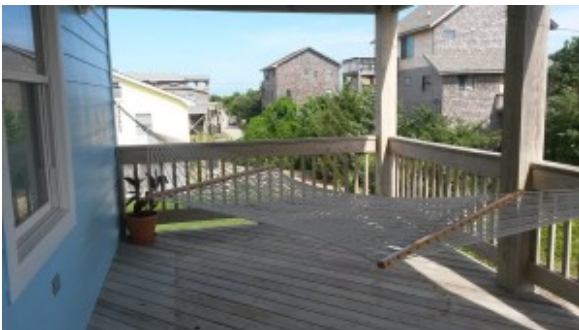
plain greek yogurt (optional)

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.

Summer Series, Day Two: Crock Pot Steamed Summer Vegetables



Roll out of bed and out onto the hammock as the sun rises and crests over the ocean and dunes.

The sun was beaming in the window when I finally opened my eyes this morning. I had to look around for a minute and remember there wasn't school or camp or work or anything to rush off to this morning. Today's to do list included the pool and the beach. I was pretty sure I could accomplish those tasks so I rolled back off to sleep as the sun soared into the

sky and the light in the room subdued. Granted, it was only another hour or so before my kids were knocking at the door and ready for breakfast, but I awoke again with a great calm and a readiness for an adventure.

One thing doesn't change no matter where I sleep— my desperate need for coffee in the morning. Lucky for me, [Ooh La La's](#) kitchen was totally equipped. Every appliance (COFFEE POT AND KEURIG!) needed was readily available and the cabinets were full of the comforts of home— not just dishes and cups, but tupperware, travel mugs, grill tools, fruit baskets. I was completely at home even though I was still uncaffeinated!

After an easy breakfast, I skipped off to the grocery store, categorized list in hand. Oh, you missed that in the last post? HERE YOU GO. But whoa— I must warn you... the grocery store was full of crazy people without a plan. It was like playing Supermarket Sweep but with a Hunger Games approach. Despite my greatest organization, it still took longer than anticipated to get through the store, but the good news is that everything I needed was in stock. Since I brought all of my basics and non-perishables with me, I didn't really need the aisles, just a lap around the perimeter of the store.



Crock Pot Steamed Summer Vegetables are a great way to create a healthy and seasonal side dish.

While I know that I'll be at the local Farmer's Market on Tuesday, I still needed some produce today. We were planning on a BBQ tonight with hamburgers and hot dogs, so I decided that I would steam some veggies in the crock pot as my side. The good news was that the store also had great little packages of fresh herbs and I totally stocked up.

The groceries and prep work for dinner tonight took just over an hour and then it was off to the pool! [The house seriously has it's own swimming pool](#). I want to live here. Like, not just this week, but from here on out. The pool is just big enough for all the kids and grown ups to get in and play. The youngest played on the stairs mostly and the oldest kept trying to see if his cannonball could splash over the fence. Oh wait- you thought I meant my oldest kid? Nope, that was my husband trying to tsunami the pool!



Sand dunes in the Outer Banks help protect these narrow islands from harsh weather.

After the pool and a light lunch we crossed over the sand dunes to the beach. There is something about the waves that is so cathartic. I feel such peace at the waves, listening to

them crash and then pull everything negative away. There is something that reaches my soul when I stand at the waves and realize I have to relinquish all control. I can't make them stop. I can't make them crash. I can't protect my sand castle or demand that the water fill the mote. I can just breathe and trust that none of it is my handiwork and that the water will continue to rise and fall and I don't have to do anything. Much like dinner tonight— there is nothing left to do but breathe and enjoy.

Crock Pot Steamed Summer Vegetables

Serves 6-8

4 zucchini, quartered lengthwise

1 lb asparagus, rinsed and woody ends removed

1 package button mushrooms (doesn't matter what size package, they are mushrooms, they'll fit!)

6-8 twigs of fresh thyme

3-4 twigs of fresh rosemary

1 c. water



Layer vegetables and fresh herbs in the crock pot so the flavors are infused throughout the dish.

Layer vegetables and herbs in the crockpot– I put in zucchini first, then 2-3 sprigs thyme; add asparagus and a couple sprigs of rosemary; then the mushrooms and the remaining seasonings. Pour in the cup of water around the edges so that the water covers the bottom of the crock pot. The vegetables will release enough additional liquid to continue the cooking process. Cook on low for 4 hours, then serve. You can remove the herbs or use them as garnish.

Crock Pot Sausage-Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms



These 5-ingredient stuffed caps are a delicious main or side dish!

Two tips with today's amazing recipe.....

1. Find a ground sausage that you like. It can be a prepped tube from the grocery store or a visit to a special deli or anything in between. But when you find it, it becomes a mainstay in your home for breakfast, lunch or dinner. No endorsement here, but my personal favorite is the country pork sausage from The Fresh Market. I also like that they shape it into the face of a pig each day and that makes me smile. But I really like the combinations of spices that gives it a little kick and a lot of taste.

2. Learn how to clean a mushroom. Because it is a sad sad day when you didn't REALLY get all the dirt out of it and then after 4-6 hours your dinner actually tastes more like mud than anything else. That's disgusting.

[How to Clean a Mushroom Cap](#) *Here's my step by step process to clean a portobello mushroom properly. Sorry for the footage- I had the phone propped on my paper towel holder, but I promise to start uploading better videos soon!*



The BEFORE mushrooms are on the left and the AFTER ones are beautiful on the right.

Now that your mushrooms are prepped, you just need to mix together the ingredients, much like making a meatloaf. This dish will taste much more complex than the basic ingredients because of all the seasonings in the sausage— so remember to pick a good one.

Crock Pot Sausage-Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms

Serves 2-3

4-6 portobello mushroom caps, properly cleaned of skin and “gills”

1/2 c. shredded gruyere cheese

1/2 c. shredded white cheddar cheese

1/2 cup panko bread crumbs

1 egg

Prep and wash mushrooms and then put in crockpot with the smooth side down and the underside facing UP. Mix the remaining ingredients in a separate bowl and then form into patties, much like a hamburger.



Place each patty into each mushroom cap and smush just a little so that the two things join together. Do not push so hard that you break the mushroom cap, but if you just did- it's ok. A broken mushroom tastes just the same.



Cook on high for 3-4 hours. The filling will cook through and brown just a little on top.

Crock Pot Vegetarian Beef Stir Fry



Feed the meat-eaters in your family something new and tasty!

Ever wonder how to feed vegetarians but still make something that your family will eat? My boys are meat-eaters. I praise them for their love of fruits and veggies, too, but without meat, they would not survive. We are not a quinoa-black bean-lentil-tofu-kale-any other alternate to real protein eating crew. We're just not. I don't care how you make it, if it doesn't look like meat, my boys won't touch it.



But, wait! What is this?! Beefless tips?! I was amused, possibly bewildered, and very intrigued. Let's try it in the crock pot! From what I could tell from the package, the end result would be very similar in consistency to meat. Since it didn't actually need to be

cooked through, this product worked great without taking a lot of time (DISCLAIMER: I do not work for Gardein Company, I just liked this product and wanted to share it with you.)

If this coming weekend is bringing guests of all shapes and

sizes, and maybe even weird dietary restrictions or preferences, try this vegetarian dish and see if it's a crowd-pleaser for you, too!

Crock Pot Vegetarian Beef Stir Fry

Serves 6 people

4 cups kale, washed, stalks removed

8 oz sliced baby portabello mushrooms

1 bag Gardein Homestyle Beefless Tips

6 oz. can sliced water chestnuts

1/2 c. Soy Vey Veri Veri Teriyaki Sauce



Layer all of the ingredients in the order listed in the recipe. Hit start. It's just that easy!

Put all ingredients in crock pot in order and then pour Teriyaki sauce over everything. Cook on low for 3-4 hours. Serve over brown rice.

Crock Pot Asian Mushrooms



With a change of sauce and topping, these mushrooms went from the ground to being great!

Well fans, I told you I made variations to two of my recipes and I finally have a minute to share. The first variation was for [crock pot asian meatballs](#) and this was the side dish I made to go with it! I've been trying to do some Asian-inspired dinners that don't involve me picking up the phone and ordering fried, fried, sauced and steamed. I also wanted this dish to still be kid-friendly for picky eaters. So I took my favorite [crock pot sassy meatballs](#) and changed it's regional origin and then took my [crock pot garlic mushrooms](#) and added a different sauce and topping!

I learned from a Korean friend of mine that I can make a very basic sauce out of three ingredients, put it on almost anything, and it will taste awesome. And indeed, she was right! I'm also convinced that mushrooms can taste good covered in just about anything.

So I pretty much made these mushrooms according to the original recipe but without all of the seasonings. Add the sauce and sprinkles and be good to go!

Crock Pot Asian Mushrooms

serves 8 as sides

2 lbs white mushrooms, cleaned, stems removed, and quartered

1/4 lb. butter (one stick)

2 T. minced garlic

1 t. onion powder

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

Sauce:

1 T. sesame oil

1 T. soy sauce

1 clove minced garlic

Topping:

1 T. roasted sesame seeds

Put mushrooms in crock pot first, then all of the seasonings and garlic. Put the stick of butter on top as the last step and then put the lid on. No mixing is necessary. Do not add sauce yet. Cook on low for 5-6 hours. Combine the three sauce ingredients in a separate bowl. Remove the mushrooms using a slotted spoon and then toss in the sauce just before serving. If you wish, you can decorate the mushrooms with the roasted sesame seeds just before serving.

Crock Pot Garlic Mushrooms



It's quite possible that these little fungi will become your new favorite side dish. Consider yourself warned.

Snow Day #7. I've been using my crock pot for [breakfast](#), for [lunch](#), and for [dinner](#). Somehow the invasion of snow has worked up some serious appetites after playing outside. To feed my little monsters, I planned on making pasta last night (no, not in a crock pot... just the normal boil water and add pasta) but I wanted a nice side dish to go with it. I bought a huge container of mushrooms last week, but then forgot what I was going to make, so I decided that they would make the perfect side dish for our pasta dinner.

Mushrooms are one of my favorite vegetables. They are all fine and good raw, dipped in ranch, or marinated. And they come in so many different varieties! Don't believe me? Take a trip to your favorite international grocer and see if you can even identify all of those little fungi. I like enoki in miso soup

or baby portabellos in [beef stroganoff](#), but I used regular, white mushrooms in today's recipe. They are a pretty standard item for me to buy, since they are sturdy, take a long time to spoil, and can be added in so many different ways.

This dish is really easy to make, but be warned— you can fill the crock pot with mushrooms and six hours later, you will have about a quarter of a pot of food left! So plan for more than you think you want. They also work well added to spaghetti sauce or used as a layer in vegetable lasagna. Enjoy!

Crock Pot Garlic Mushrooms (serves 8 as sides)

2 lbs white mushrooms, cleaned, stems removed, and quartered

1/4 butter (one stick)

2 T. minced garlic

1 T. dried dill

1 t. onion powder

1/2 t. paprika

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

2 sprigs fresh thyme, just the leaves

parmesan cheese

Put mushrooms in crock pot first, then all of the seasonings and garlic. Put the stick of butter on top as the last step and then put the lid on. No mixing is necessary. Do not add parmesan cheese yet. Just don't. Cook on low for 5-6 hours. Remove the mushrooms using a slotted spoon and then decorate

with grated or shredded parmesan cheese just before serving. If you wish, you can save the liquid in the crock pot for mushroom gravy.

Crock Pot Spaghetti Squash



I was walking through the produce aisle this week and excited to see all of the fall produce slowly emerging as the weather starts to cool and the crock pot starts to heat. With squash of every size and variety piled up like presents under a tree, I started loading my cart

with butternut, acorn, and spaghetti squash. But the tipping tower of treasures presents a second issue— how do you prepare and cook these ridiculous looking vegetables? As with most foods that I don't want to fret about, I make them in my crock pot!

If you haven't ever experienced spaghetti squash, you are about to be delighted. I'm pretty sure it's the best diet food ever since it's low in calorie, gluten-free, dairy-free, paleo-friendly, vegan, vegetarian, nut-free, guilt-free, and packed with nutrients and flavor. But what intrigues me most about this cavern of goodness is the bizarre pasta like consistency of the meaty threads.

Here's the prep: waaaaaash the squaaaaaash. I love that you just sounded that out. Seriously though, this thing it going

to sit in it's entirety in your crock pot all day, let's not harbor fugitives like bugs or germs. Then take a sharp knife and stab the squash 5-6 times so that the heat and moisture can seep in and out to cook the flesh. Yes, it's a vegetable, but I think you can use words like meaty and flesh to describe never-living creatures, too.

Put the 4 lb squash and 2 cups of water in your crock pot for 6 hours on low. When it's done, the squash will deflate a bit and be awkward to lift out. Watch out- it's HOT and full of juices. Let it cool a bit before you handle it. You will need to cut the spaghetti squash in half and scoop out the seeds inside (Throw the seeds away. This is not a pumpkin.)

Use a fork to shred the cooked pasta-like fresh from inside the squash. Once you have scraped it out, throw out the skins. Much like pasta, this is now a wonderful blank slate to begin preparing a delicious dish! Here are a couple ideas to choose from as far as fun flavors to add into your spaghetti squash:

- Add 1 tablespoon butter, 1 teaspoon minced garlic and 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese.
- Add 1 cup alfredo sauce, 1 lb. browned ground beef and a can of stewed mushrooms. Oh look- beef stroganoff!
- Top it with [crock pot chicken cacciatore](#) for a low-fat, low-carb hearty dinner. (Yes, this requires two crock pots.)
- Add a scoop of [crock pot caramelized onions](#) and some cubed mozzarella cheese. French onion spaghetti squash!

Trying a new vegetable dish is no longer a challenge or a disappointing dinner. Enjoy your local seasonal vegetables in these new and exciting ways.