

# 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.

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## Crock Pot Vegetarian Lasagna

I love lasagna! Anytime you can combine everything into one dish and it hits pretty much every food group, then I'm a happy girl. But oven-baked lasagna takes way too much work... all the boiling and layering and smoothing and baking and spilling, then oven cleaning... I would rather just order lasagna from a nice little Italian restaurant than go through this whole charade.



This one-pot dinner is a great meat-free option that leaves you full and satisfied.

So after doing a little research, I've figured out that crock pot lasagna is very doable. Not only can you assemble it in the pot, but I am convinced that most of the cooking should take place in the pot, too. This dish is easy to cook, doesn't take more than an afternoon to finish and you can even freeze the leftovers for another night. That is, if there are any leftovers!

I hope you enjoy this take on one of my favorites. Enjoy!

1 12 oz. box of lasagna noodles, uncooked

1 15 oz. container ricotta cheese

2 c. shredded mozzarella cheese

1 24 oz. container chunky spaghetti sauce

2 zucchinis, sliced thick

2 c. fresh spinach leaves

1/2 c. fresh basil leaves

1 egg

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 t. black pepper

1 t. dried oregano

3/4 c. water

1/2 c. parmesan cheese

*This recipe is best made in an oval-shaped crock pot; a round*

*one will work, it just creates a very tall lasagna.*

In a separate bowl, combine ricotta cheese, egg, garlic and seasonings. Pour 1 c. of spaghetti sauce into the pot and stir it around so it coats the bottom of the crock pot. Fill the sauce jar up with 1 c. water and shake it around— this watered down sauce helps the noodles soften more when cooking. Place first layer of 3-4 noodles in crock pot. Cover noodles with 1/2 of ricotta mixture. Lay zucchini slices on next, followed by another layer of 3-4 lasagna noodles. Add 1 c. spaghetti sauce and cover noodles with 1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese, spinach leaves, basil leaves and then the remaining ricotta mixture. Add final layer of noodles. Cover with remaining sauce and then sprinkle with mozzarella cheese and parmesan cheese. Cook on low for 3 hours.

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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 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.

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## Crock Pot Chicken Cordon Bleu

After three days of amazing holiday weekend barbecues, I am ready for something without sauce, sides of beans or cool whip desserts. I have had the pleasure of attending festivities at friends' homes so I actually haven't had to do much cooking! My crock pot has been sitting pretty for a few days now and I



will neglect it no longer– it's time for a new recipe. I've had some requests for more chicken recipes, so today I am presenting you with a classic favorite, plus an alternative way to do it.



Chicken Cordon Bleu is a popular dish, but I think it's more American than French cuisine. Stuffed meat isn't that new of a concept and there is nothing actually blue in this dish. From what I understand, Cordon Bleu actually means "blue ribbon" in French and is an award given to culinary masterpieces. Here in

the states, I advocate for using deli ham and swiss cheese in your chicken, but if you'd like to make it more exotic, feel free to try prosciutto and gruyere cheese for more bite.

You need to start by venting your frustrations on a piece of meat. Place each boneless/skinless chicken breast in a zipped plastic bag and go to town on it. Use a rolling pin, a mallet, a can of soup... anything that will apply weighted pressure. You want the meat to be tenderized and spread thinner.

If you'd like to make this dairy-free/kosher/healthier, try using different filling in your meat. I suggest trying a combination of fresh spinach, sliced mushrooms and roasted garlic instead of ham and swiss in your chicken rolls. You can use all the same directions, just substitute your inner components. Feel free to experiment and find out what earns the "blue ribbon" in your kitchen. Enjoy!

4 boneless/skinless chicken breasts

1/4 lb. deli ham, sliced thin

1/4 lb. swiss cheese, sliced thin

4 t. dijon mustard

1 t. celery seed

1 T. dried parsley flakes

salt and pepper

1 c. white wine

Beat chicken into flat, thin pieces. Lay flat and smear with mustard. Layer one piece of cheese and one piece of ham, then start at end and begin rolling chicken. Place each roll seam side down in the crock pot. Sprinkle seasonings on chicken rolls, then pour wine into crock pot, but do not rinse the seasonings back off. Cook on low for 4 hours. Remove rolls from pot and let cool for a few minutes so that juices can settle. Serve hot.

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## Crock Pot Vegetarian Lentil Soup

There used to be this great Greek restaurant that I frequented that served lentil soup in a styrofoam cup. It was always hot and fresh and the lentils were soft without being mushy. I would frame my entire meal around saving room and money for the soup. This recipe mirrors the flavors and warmth of the soup but without a disposable cup. Unlike my vegetarian vegetable soup which is savory and chunky, this lentil soup is hearty and robust with even more amazing health benefits. Lentils are high in protein, iron, amino acids and when you add in the lycopine in the tomatoes and then all the vitamins, folic acid and antioxidants in the spinach... this soup is like

a power boost for your whole system. Oh yeah, and it tastes amazing too.

Feel free to serve it in a real bowl and maybe with some crusty bread instead of saltines.

2 cups lentils

8 cups vegetable broth

1 onion, diced

3 stalks celery, diced

2 carrots, chopped

6 oz. fresh spinach, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 t. salt

1/2 t. pepper

1 t. oregano

1 t. cumin

2 bay leaves

1/4 t. cayenne pepper

1 14 oz. can diced tomatoes

1 T. red wine vinegar

Put everything in the crockpot and cook on low for 8 hours, but add the vegetable broth LAST. Most likely, you won't have room to pour all the liquid in yet. Once the vegetables have all cooked down, then add the rest of the liquid. My 5-qt crock pot is filled to the rim by the time everything is included.

This soup also freezes really well, so save half the pot for a meal another time.