

# Crock Pot Southern Style Greens



Living in the South, I have learned that I can no longer assume that my vegetables are vegetarian. It seems like every restaurant I go to uses delicious savory meats like bacon, sausage or ham to season our side dishes. I always like bacon on a side salad without any complaints, so I'm definitely open to experimenting. Plus— what a great way to get my boys to eat new vegetables! Adding a little bit of a familiar flavor to a foreign one definitely eases the introduction.

This week, I decided to try kale. I've always heard the redeeming qualities of this blueish-greenish rough leafy vegetable, but had never tried to cook it. The simplest instruction I could find included removing the hard center vein and then slicing, sauteing and serving with garlic and olive oil. That seemed easy enough, but I really wanted to see how I could prepare kale in the crock pot instead.

I've heard about soups containing kale, usually with a white bean and some sort of sausage or just a vegetable medley that included kale instead of something like cabbage. But in this beautiful summer heat, I didn't really want to sit down to a hot bowl of broth.

So, I decided to prepare a soft, tasty side dish with my kale, using the Southern inspiration of including meat in my vegetables. I found out that the steam of the crock pot really breaks down the toughness of the kale without removing any of

its natural sweetness. While I intended for this dish to be an accompaniment, I actually think it would be great served like a stir fry over rice or noodles without the need for any additional sauce. Enjoy!

1 large bunch of kale. hard center vein removed, leaves sliced into strips

6 strips of bacon, cooked and crumbled

1/4 c. water

1/2 medium onion, sliced thin

3-4 cloves of garlic, minced

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

1/2 t. red pepper flakes

Put all ingredients in crock pot and mix together. Cook on low for 3-4 hours.