

Crock Pot Roasted Chicken (and curried chicken salad)

It's Friday! I work hard all week waiting for today. Tonight we get to start our weekend. I can't think of a better way to welcome the weekly 2-day vacation than to have a family meal together at home. To make it more special, we are having guests this evening as well. Ok crock pot, it's time to do your thing and make dinner tonight taste like it was hard to make (but really it's only noon o'clock and it's already done).

The most challenging part of this recipe is making sure that your meat will fit in the crock pot. If you have a round and more vertical design of a crock pot, you might have to use a cornish hen instead of a chicken if you want it to fit! This recipe really works best in a 5-6 qt. crockpot that is **oval shaped**. I just thought you should know this before you start trying to shove everything in and then being disappointed when it doesn't fit. *(check out my next post about buying a new crock pot!)*

If you have leftover chicken after tonight, I'd recommend making curried chicken salad tomorrow. Add a stalk of fresh, chopped celery (not a cooked one from the pot), add a small can of diced water chestnuts, 1/2 c. quartered red grapes and then enough mayo to make it a good consistency. Then, add curry powder, a little salt and pepper— I can't tell you how much because I don't know how much chicken you have left, but remember that curry powder becomes more potent after it gets a chance to fester. Make this salad up and then put it in the fridge for a couple hours— when it turns a darker copper color (from the curry), it's ready to eat!

Well there you go, I guess it's a two recipe day. You have one

for today and one for tomorrow!

Now for to the roasted chicken recipe:

1 3-4 lb. fresh chicken, thawed, rinsed and patted dry

2 T. olive oil

2 cloves garlic, chopped

8 oz. baby carrots

3 stalks celery, cut into 2 inch chunks

1/2 med. onion, cut into chunks

dash of paprika

salt and pepper

If you have a trivet that fits in your crock pot, I'd recommend using it. It keeps your chicken just elevated from sitting in it's own juices and makes it MUCH easier to pull the chicken out when it is done (which makes for a nicer presentation too). Place chicken in pot- to know it's on the correct side, you should see the smooth skin covering the chicken breasts. Brush the skin with the olive oil and sprinkle with the chopped garlic. Position the carrots, celery and onions around the bird. Sprinkle all contents with paprika, salt and pepper. Cook on low for 8-10 hours, depending on bird size.

[Crock Pot Purple Oatmeal](#)

This oatmeal is an easy way to invite your senses to wake up

and start the day. I love the surprise of removing the crock pot lid and seeing a beautiful bright purple, smelling the sweet steam and seeing the little bubbles around the edges on this thick and smooth oatmeal.

This would be a great holiday dish, easy to serve to overnight guests and would even be great for a morning meeting at work. Seriously, they make portable crock pots for a reason! Enjoy this sweet treat for breakfast tomorrow. If you spend the rest of the day humming “Purple Rain” or singing “Flying Purple People Eater” to your kids, you can thank me later.

2 c. quick oats

2. c. water

1 c. milk

1 T. vanilla

1 can cherry pie filling

1 c. frozen blueberries

Put everything in the crockpot, stir gently and cook on “keep warm” for 8 hours over night. When you mix this in the morning, stir gently so you don’t make the blueberries fall apart– they will be juicy and ready to explode.

[Crock Pot Pomme de Tara](#)

A friend of mine wants to use her crock pot more, but has an allergy to tomatoes. After doing a little research, I agreed with her– most crock pot recipes seem to have some sort of

tomato or tomato-based product in them! It is an injustice that my friend should not be able to embrace easy crock pot cooking more often. So, my next few recipes will definitely not be red. And if it's just that you don't like tomatoes, these might just become some of your new favorites too.

This is an easy potato casserole that gets jazzed up by the cheese and chips. Since the french word for potato is "pomme de terre", I am honoring my friend Tara with this recipe for "Pomme de Tara". Enjoy! ☐

(Is there a recipe you'd like to see or an ingredient you'd like to avoid?? Click on my contact page and send me a note- I'm happy to post something just for YOU!)

6-8 potatoes, diced

1 onion, chopped

4 T. butter, melted

1 c. milk

1 c. sour cream

1-2 garlic cloves, chopped fine

1 t. parsley

salt and pepper

1 cup Cool Ranch Doritos- crunched up into little bitty pieces

1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Put potatoes and onions in the crockpot first. In a separate bowl, mix together melted butter, milk, sour cream and seasonings. Pour mixture over potatoes and onions and stir. Cook on low for 6 hours. Turn pot off and mix shredded cheese and Doritos into pot, but don't overstir- you don't want your soft potatoes to turn into mashed potatoes. Feel free to top

this with crumbled bacon, chives or green onions. Makes a great side dish for breakfast, lunch or dinner!

Crock Pot Sassy Meatballs

I'm too excited about tomorrow's dinner to wait until morning to post this. It's funny- I have been posting all these recipes that are hearty and healthy, but mostly vegetable-based. Not this one! For all you meat lovers, this is simple, sassy and super! (Thank you to my friend BBM for introducing me to this sauce.) This recipe is fantastic to throw together for any occasion. It makes a great appetizer, can be thrown on egg noodles for dinner or on little crusty rolls as sandwiches. While it only has a few ingredients in it, the flavors mingle together in a tangy, unique way. Whether you serve it with toothpicks or forks, you'll be pleased by how little efforts it takes to make great taste.

(Start by making your own meatballs using 1 lb beef, 1 lb turkey, 2 eggs, 1 T. chopped parsley and 1/2 c. breadcrumbs. Mix it all together, form little balls and then bake them on a cookie sheet at 400 degrees for about 25 minutes. I'm going to make these tonight and then do the crock potting tomorrow at lunchtime. Or, if you prefer, you can totally buy frozen meatballs and use those instead. I won't tell!)

2 lb. meatballs

8 oz. grape jelly

1 jar Heinz chili sauce

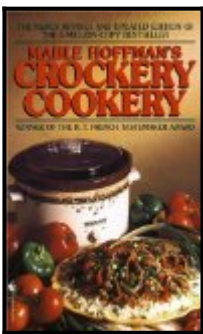
1 can pineapple chunks, drained

1 green pepper, diced

2 T. fresh minced parsley

Put all solids into the crockpot. Mix jelly and chili sauce together and then pour into crockpot. Cook 4-6 hours on low.

Crockery Cookery, By Mable Hoffman



[The Wall Street Journal](#) posted an [article](#) today about crockery cooker, Mable Hoffman. She wrote a fantastic cookbook for simple crock pot meals. I like the note in the article that tells us how her book, [Crockery Cookery](#)[✖], surpassed [The Joy of Sex](#)[✖] as the best selling book of 1975. Mable passed away at the age of 88, on February 9, 2010.

Thank you Mable, for providing us with direction and recipes in an easy to follow cookbook. I have the [article](#) today about crockery cooker, Mable Hoffman. She wrote a fantastic cookbook for simple crock pot meals. I like the note in the article that tells us how her book, [Crockery Cookery cookbook](#)[✖] in my collection and I love thumbing through it for inspiration.

Crock Pot Tapioca Pudding

Growing up, my dad really liked tapioca pudding and I could never understand why he enjoyed eating eyeballs. They look gooey and slimey and smelled like playdough. I also remember seeing vats of it at Chinese buffet restaurants and was again reminded of things like eyeballs and fish eggs.

Then I discovered that with a little love, it could actually be a delicious treat. The addition of vanilla and cinnamon make this more of a dessert, but I wouldn't be opposed to eating it for breakfast. As an additional note—tapioca pearls are also a great way to thicken up desserts, stews and sauces, but use the small pearls in those instances.

Try serving this dish with vanilla wafers or a few little chocolate cookies that might be "thin" and "minty". If you eat it warm, you might also like it with some pound cake and fresh fruit.

4 cups milk

1/2 c. sugar

1/2 c. tapioca

2 eggs, lightly beaten

1 t. vanilla

1/2 t. cinnamon

pinch nutmeg

Mix everything together in the crock pot and then cook on low for 4 hours or on high for about 2 hours. Can be served warm or cold.

Crock Pot Turkey Legs

Thanksgiving might just be one of my favorite holidays. There is something about preparing so many amazing dishes all day long and then sitting around the table with friends and family as we all ooh and ahhh about the foods. That feeling should not just be reserved for one or two days a year! Therefore, I am offering up a delicious new way of preparing turkey and I suggest serving it with ONE of your favorite side dishes from Thanksgiving.

I think most people are fans of turkey's white meat, but I actually prefer the dark meat. It's juicier, has more flavor and has a much less likelihood of getting dried out when cooked. Also, turkey legs are really inexpensive to buy, compared to buying a whole bird, and still tastes amazing. When you make this recipe, the meat will literally fall off of the bone, it is soft and moist without tasting greasy or fatty.

Herbs de provence sounds more foreign than it tastes. I like easy seasonings that blend together in harmony. It's a sultry combination of thyme, rosemary, basil, tarragon and lavender flowers. It's great on meats or can add lots of flavor to soups and vegetable dishes.

My brother said this recipe is "caveman chic". There's no need to be savage, all the meat falls off the bones before serving it. But if you prefer to dive in without silverware, at least you have the lavender flowers in the herbs de provence to make you seem a little civilized.

3-4 turkey legs (about 2-2.5 lbs)

1 T. olive oil

2 T. herbs de provence

Coat crock pot with non-stick spray so the turkey skin doesn't stick to the pot too much. Place legs in pot and then brush lightly with olive oil. Shake herbs de provence all over turkey legs. Cook for 6 hours on low.

Crock Pot Ratatouille

In the Pixar movie by this name, the character Linguini says "Ratatouille. It's like a stew, right? Why do they call it that? If you're gonna name a food, you should give it a name that sounds delicious. Ratatouille doesn't sound delicious. It sounds like "rat" and "patootie." Rat-patootie, which does not sound delicious. " But with Remy's help, Linguini learned to cook, to enjoy it and to share great delicious dishes to others.

In our house, this movie is a favorite because it also teaches lots of great lessons. For example: we shouldn't judge others based on their families or where they came from, you should pursue your interests with passion and dedication, you shouldn't steal from others, in order to have great success we all need to work together and there will always be people to criticize, but even more people we can make happy.

This recipe is easy to make, maybe even for a movie night with your friends or family. Enjoy and remember "anyone can cook!"

1 medium eggplant, peeled and cubed

2-3 zucchini, sliced $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick

2-3 yellow squash, sliced $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick
1 medium onion, sliced into strips
2 cans diced tomatoes, NOT drained
2-3 cloves chopped garlic
Salt and pepper
Parmesan cheese

Sauté onion and garlic in a little bit of olive oil, just until onion is soft. Put eggplant, zucchini and squash in crockpot. Add onion and garlic on top, then both cans of diced tomatoes. Add salt and pepper to your liking. Cook on high for 3-4 hours.

Serve on top of egg noodles. Top with a bit of fresh parmesan cheese. Enjoy!

The methods of my madness



I had a tough workout at the gym this morning, getting brutalized by my trainer for a solid hour. After a quick shower, I threw on my clothes and slumped down by the lockers to apply some quick makeup. Another woman asked me, “how can you put your makeup on without a mirror??” I replied, “well, this has been my face for a really long time. I guess I just know it.”

That’s how I feel about my recipes too. I have to remake some of these dishes so I can write down how it’s done, what to measure and how to cook it. I’ve been cooking for most of my life and while I might search a cookbook for inspiration, I am hardly an engineer about my cooking. So writing this blog is a fun way for me to examine my favorites so I can share them

with you.

I've been asked to post more "how to" suggestions about crock potting. Here are some tried and true methods to make your meals even easier.

1. The crockpot is meant to cook everything without burning it. But, it needs enough liquid to create steam and enough contents to prevent dehydration. No one wants to eat crocked beef jerky. You can always thicken too much liquid to make gravy.

2. Frozen vegetables and meats are fine to use without thawing, but you might need to add a little cooking time to compensate.

3. It's a great idea to freeze a crockpot meal— let it cool first and then put it in a plastic container with a tight-fitted lid. I prefer ones that are more sturdy, some are even specified as freezer-friendly. Label the meal and date it. You can also put a meal in a freezer bag, lay it flat to freeze and then stand it up in the freezer to store it-- you can make a library of good meals! Most crockpot meals are fine for at least 3 months, but remember that the freezer only makes food spoil slower, it doesn't preserve foods forever.

4. Thawing a meal should take as long as it did to cook it. Take a frozen meal out at least a day ahead and put it in the refrigerator to thaw. If you want it to speed up this process, put the plastic container/freezer bag in warm water in the sink to help it thaw. You can microwave the thawed meal or put it in a pan to simmer back to life.

5. Don't refreeze meats that have already been frozen though, so cook them fresh and then freeze the entire meal.

6. Crockpot meals are great for guests and for gifts. It's ok if you don't know exactly what time your guests are arriving— crock pot beef can be done perfectly without an exact time—

beef wellington in the oven cannot! Crockpot meals are also great to take to new neighbors, ill friends or new parents. You can deliver the meal fresh or frozen easily.

7. Meat to liquid ratios might vary depending if your crockpot is more vertical or more horizontal. If you want a glaze to form, make sure your meat isn't entirely covered by liquid. If you want to make pulled or stewed meat, then you need more coverage.

8. Don't just think about dinner ideas, you can crockpot any meal, side dishes, dips, drinks, sauces, jellies and desserts. The possibilities are easy and endless! Please continue to visit this page often for inspiration and ideas.

Now that the crock pot seems a little more approachable, what are YOU making for dinner??

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 lycopene 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.