

# Crock Pot Sweet Potato and Corn Chowder

This recipe comes from my friend I.H.K. and she is an amazing cook. This soup is thick and chunky and a whole meal in one bowl. She recommends serving it with tortilla chips or corn bread. Using an immersion blender can really change a soup from drab to fab by altering the consistency to be smooth and creamy instead of watery.

Since this recipe takes 8 hours on low, it's a great one to start before you leave for work in the morning and then come home to a beautiful dinner. Take a chance on this vegetarian chowder and enjoy!

2-3 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed (about 1/2 inch)

1 medium onion, chopped

1 can whole-kernel corn (15-16 oz.), drained

1 can creamed corn

1 teaspoon salt

fresh ground black pepper, to taste

2 cups broth (I use the vegetarian "chicken" flavor)

2 cups half-and-half or whole milk (depending on how virtuous you want to be)

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 teaspoon smoked sweet or hot paprika (optional)

1 cup of shredded cheddar cheese

Put first set of ingredients in crock pot and cook for about 8 hours on low or for 4 hours on high. Once the sweet potatoes are tender, stir everything together. Use an immersion blender to break up the ingredients as much as you want—I like my chowder chunky, but breaking up some of the sweet potatoes and corn makes the soup thicker and more luxurious. When only 1 hour of cooking time is left (if the slow cooker has been on

high, turn down to low) ADD: half and half or milk, butter, paprika and cheddar cheese.

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## Crock Pot Chicken Tortilla Soup

The morning is half over and my whole family is still wearing pajamas. Yay for snow days! But since it's dreadful and cold outside, I need something hot and satisfying to fill our bellies. I decided that we should head south of the border tonight and enjoy some Mexican fare, so today I am sharing my recipe for chicken tortilla soup. This recipe is simple and easy (and note– it freezes well, too!) and you can definitely vary the spiciness of the dish, depending how much heat your mouth can withstand.

I am sharing my basic recipe for this soup, but feel free to add any of the following to the pot for additional spice. I would recommend only picking one or two of these things as each one packs a punch:

1/2 t. cayenne pepper OR

1 chopped jalapeno pepper OR

1 t. Tabasco sauce

You can also decorate your chicken tortilla soup in a variety of ways. Try sprinkling some fresh, chopped cilantro on top, or a few slices of avocado. If the spice is more than you anticipated, cut it with some shredded monterey jack cheese or a dollop of sour cream. Most restaurants serve this soup with tortilla strips– you can crumble regular tortilla chips on top

for the same effect. Or just like an old scantron test, you can select E. All of the Above (that's the correct answer!!)

We might be skating on the lawn and building a snowman on the porch, but at dinner tonight, we'll all be saying "Ole!"

1 28 oz. can petite diced tomatoes

2 10 oz. cans diced tomatoes with green chiles

1 15 oz. can sweet corn, no salt added (drained)

1 lb. frozen chicken breasts or tenders

1/2 medium onion, chopped

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

1 T. chopped fresh cilantro

1 bay leaf

1 t. chili powder

1 t. cumin

1/2 t. black pepper

1/2 t. salt

Put all ingredients in crock pot and stir so that the spices mingle with all of the solid foods. Cook on low for 6 hours. Remove chicken, shred it and then put back in crock pot for one hour. Serve with any of the additional spices or toppings outlined above.

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# Crock Pot Spicy Applesauce

Ok fans, let me put it this way... my dad dubbed this "ass-kickin' applesauce" and he's a respectable man. It's spicy and tangy and might tingle your tongue a little (especially if you use the full 1/2 t. of cayenne pepper); but this dish is also flavorful in ways that normal applesauce or apple butter just does not compare.

Here are my top three FAVORITE ways to enjoy this spicy applesauce:

Thanksgiving– leftover turkey sandwich on wheat bread– use this applesauce instead of mayonnaise to rock your taste buds to a happy holiday tune.

Chanukah– one potato latke+ one tablespoon cold sour cream + one scoop spicy applesauce= a celebration in your mouth.

Dessert– serve this spicy applesauce warm on top of a scoop of french vanilla ice cream for a hot and sweet treat.

I definitely recommend adding this to your holiday table over the next few weeks. Enjoy and happy holidays!

8 medium apples (any red, crisp variety) peeled, cored and cut into chunks

1/2 c. rum

1 t. cinnamon

1/2 t. black pepper

1/4 t. (OR UP TO 1/2 t.) cayenne pepper

1 can jellied cranberry sauce

Put apples in first, then seasonings, then rum. Stir well.

Cook on high 3-4 hours. Add cranberry sauce and then use a hand blender to puree the applesauce. Cook on low one more hour. Enjoy as a side or as a spread or topping.

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## Crock Pot Escalloped Apples



This recipe is the direct result of two completely different factors=

1. we've been getting great fall apples and need to use some up, especially the ones with bruises
2. it's almost the holiday season and I'm trying to find lower calories, but equally delicious dishes to serve up as dessert

This recipe is best served warm with a scoop of either vanilla ice cream or just a dollop of whipped cream. It tastes like the inside of a warm apple pie, but barely has more calories than a cup of applesauce. It's soothing and comforting to the whole body and there is no reason to save this dish for dessert— try it for breakfast with your oatmeal, as a side to lunch or dinner or as a snack at any point of the day!

Unlike applesauce, this dish should be made with large chunks of apples. As they cook down, the apples might fall apart a little bit, but that will help the juices flow. Do not

overcook this recipe or you will wind up with apple butter.

8 medium apples, peeled and cored and cut into large chunks

2 T. salted butter

1/2 c. brown sugar

1 t. cinnamon

pinch of nutmeg

1/2 t. black pepper

1 T. vanilla extract

1/4 c. cold water

1 t. corn starch

Put apples in the crock pot first, then sprinkle with brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, black pepper and drizzle with vanilla. Put butter on top of mixture, it will melt as it heats. Cook on low for 4 hours or until apples are softened, but still firm. Dissolve corn starch in water and then pour over apple mixture and stir. Turn crock pot off and let sauce thicken until it gets syrupy and easily coats the apple chunks. Serve warm.

(Makes 8 servings)

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## Crock Pot Vegetable Soup For Men



I am fortunate to have a husband that loves my cooking and loves to eat. He tries everything I make and is very agreeable about most of it. But today, I had the privilege of watching my husband cook his first crock pot meal. And it turned out great!

Today's soup includes a lot of produce, but unlike my normal vegetarian vegetable soup which has small bits of lots of vegetables, my hubby's recipe includes chunkier cuts of vegetables and not as much variety. The real kicker of this soup is the topping– add a few jalapeno peppers and you've got a treat to eat without any meat! ☐

I definitely encourage you to offer the crock pot up for family cooking adventures. It's great to take with you on road trips to save money instead of eating out. It's a great way to teach kids about cooking because there's less risk of burning food or fingers. It's also a great way to add healthier meals into your busy lives.

So kudos to my husband for coming up with this great recipe. Maybe he'll do the dishes, too. Enjoy!

2 28 oz cans diced tomatoes

1 15 oz. can sweet kernel corn, drained

1 zucchini, chopped

4 stalks celery, cleaned and chopped

1 medium onion, diced

2 medium potatoes, skins left on and diced

2-3 cloves garlic, chopped

1 t. celery seed

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

1 T. dried parsley

TOPPING: jar of jalapeno pepper slices

Add all ingredients (except jalapeno slices) to pot and stir. Cook on high for 4 hours. When serving, add a few chilled jalapeno pepper slices straight from the jar, to each bowl. If your man likes it hotter, try a few shakes of Tabasco sauce, too!

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## Crock Pot Noodle Kugel

This is one of my favorite foods from my experience with Jewish holidays. This casserole is sweet and dense with a wonderful warmth of cinnamon and vanilla. The noodles are soft and bound with the creamy egg filling. But my favorite taste is the plump raisins that swell with flavor and are a great contrast to the texture of the noodles.

I've made this dish many times in the oven, so it seemed like an easy transition to do it in the crock pot. Plus, it was so much easier to serve this dish hot as a buffet item when guests could just scoop it up still steaming. Plus— no one had to be embarrassed to have seconds when they could just go back to the crock pot for more!

1 lb. yolk-free broad egg noodles, cooked



5 eggs, beaten

16 oz. sour cream

16 oz. cottage cheese

1/2 c. sugar

1 t. cinnamon

1 T. vanilla

1 c. raisins

1 c. Special K cereal (crushed)

2 T. butter, melted

Mix all ingredients except noodles in crock pot until smooth. Fold noodles into mixture gently. Mix crushed cereal and melted butter in a separate bowl and then flake on top of casserole mixture. Cook on low for 4 hours. For last 15 minutes, position lid sideways so that air can escape during final moments of cooking.

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## Crock Pot Thai Chicken Wraps

Tonight is open house at my son's school and the timing makes dinner as a family tough. So, it is going to be date night instead— but eating out is expensive, so I'll feed the kids early and then us parents can eat when we get home (and the kids are sleeping!). But since I'm not sure what time we'll get home from the school, I'm going to start the crock pot late this afternoon so that dinner is ready when we get back.

One of my favorite appetizers is those amazing sauced up thai chicken wraps that you can get at fancy Asian-inspired restaurants. The unfortunate part is that the lettuce is totally an illusion making you think this is a healthy choice. The typical sauce is usually full of really salty, sugary, high calorie ingredients that I totally don't want to indulge in tonight. So I've come up with a healthier way to enjoy this treat, using the crock pot to get the most out of all the flavors and then whipping up a quick sauce in a pan to coat the whole mixture.

Most restaurants serve this dish with iceberg lettuce because it is crisp, but you can also use leaves of romaine lettuce or even tortillas. I hope you get to enjoy this at your next date night at home, too!

2 stalks celery, chopped

2 carrots, chopped

1/2 onion, chopped

6 oz. mushrooms, sliced

3 cloves garlic

1 8.75 oz. can water chestnuts, chopped

2 10 oz. cans white chicken in water

sauce:

1/2 c. peanut butter

1/4 c. soy sauce

1/4 c. water

3 T. rice wine vinegar

2 packets of Splenda

Put all filling ingredients in the crock pot and cook on low for four hours. In a saucepan, cook all sauce ingredients over medium heat (yes, on the stove), until it reaches a smooth consistency. If it is too thick, add 1/4 c. water and continue stirring. Pour the sauce into the crock pot and stir the mixture well. Serve with chilled lettuce leaves.

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## Crock Pot Marsala Pears



Lately, I've been more interested in making crock pot desserts. I think it's the farthest thing from what grandma used to make— this amazing kitchen appliance is meant for more than just soup and meat! I have a couple pounds of fresh seckel pears. They are still firm and their skins are colorful and fragrant with just a few blemishes. Since we'll be cooking these down, I think it's best to use fruit when it's just a day or two ahead of being ripe.

Some of the recipes I've seen for seckel pears require the cook to peel the pear, but that's it. I have issues with this prep. First off— it's ridiculously difficult to stand pears up on the crock pot. Have you ever seen a flat-bottomed pear?! Plus, it might make a nice presentation in its original form, but then you have to worry about cutting around the tough middle and not eating any of the seeded parts. Why not just half it and use a melon baller to remove the part you don't want to eat?? Or you can be even lazier, like I am, and

just slice the halves off just outside of the core so you don't even have to scoop it out. So there you go, that's my suggestion. Either way, it's a couple minutes more prep work, but it's just as good to eat with less hassle at the dinner table.

Marsala wine is great for cooking. It's full flavored and a little sweet. I opened a bottle to make chicken marsala one night and now it's been sitting on my shelf. It's not a wine I would drink from a glass, but it's great for cooking. So I think the combination with fresh fruit really makes mouth water. Plus, it's really sad to let the bottle gather dust between chicken marsala nights. If you don't have marsala, try another red wine and maybe add some raisins or craisins to the recipe to add a little sweetness.

Try these pears for pretty much any meal. They would be amazing next to some cinnamon oatmeal for breakfast, a nice snack with a side of vanilla greek yogurt or serve it for dessert after a steak dinner and top it with some dark chocolate shavings. However you discover it, I hope you like experimenting with this fresh fruit. Enjoy!

12 seckel pears, halved and scooped (see above note)

1/2 c. marsala wine

1 T. sugar

Place pears in the crock pot, pour wine in and sprinkle sugar. Stir it all around and cook on low for 2-3 hours. The pears should be soft enough to cut with the edge of a fork, but not mushy like apple sauce.

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# Crock Pot Summer Onion Dip



If you read my post about the cute \$7 crockpot that I saw on sale last week, this recipe would be the perfect fit for it! If you have a “little dipper” sized crock pot, you can make this dip and then use the crock pot to serve it and keep it warm. I thought these flavors fused together well for an easy

afternoon snack.

I'd recommend serving my summer onion dip with crisp pita chips, wavy potato chips, baby carrots and cut up celery. It also would be great on a baked potato! It's a basic enough recipe that it would be great on top of pretty much anything. Enjoy!

1/2 c. chopped basil leaves

juice of 1 lemon

8 oz. cream cheese, warmed

1/2 t. black pepper

1 T. Worcestershire sauce

3 T. minced onion

1 clove garlic, minced

Put all ingredients in small crock pot and stir together. Heat on low for two 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.