

Crock Pot French Dip

At this time of year, everyone is trying to hang on to at least a shred of the New Year's resolution that they made only a couple weeks ago. This recipe is a great one to help— you can eat healthier and save money by making French dip. You don't need a lot of meat on your sandwiches and you get to savor so much of the flavor by using the cooking liquid as the au jus. Plus, you don't need to add extra condiments, cheese, oil or any other typical sandwich toppings that just add fat and calories anyway. (You can also make a great salad and top it with the leftover meat as a second meal!)

This meal was inspired by my friend T.D.H. who made these sandwiches for her family last week. I altered her recipe a little, but I appreciated her recommendation. Thank you! I hope you enjoy these crock pot French dip sandwiches so much that you share it with your friends, too. ☐

1.5-2 lb. London Broil, trimmed

32 oz. beef stock (I use low-sodium)

1/4 c. soy sauce (again, low-sodium)

1/2 medium yellow onion, quartered

3 cloves garlic, smashed

1 t. celery seed

1/2 t. thyme

1/2 t. rosemary

2 bay leaves, whole

1 t. whole black peppercorns

Serve on 4-6 crusty french rolls

Heat a flat skillet with 1 T. olive oil in it. Sear your London Broil on both sides, but do not cook meat through. Put all other ingredients in the crock pot and then delicately place the meat in. Cook on high for 3 hours. Remove meat, slice across the grain, then put the meat back in the crock pot for an additional hour. Serve meat on warmed, crusty french rolls. Remove bay leaves from the crock pot and discard. Either drain the remaining liquid through a cheese cloth– or be lazy like me... I used a ladle and removed 1/2 c. of the liquid for each sandwich and served it in a ramekin. So what if some rosemary or thyme comes along for the ride, it just adds more flavor!

Purple Sweet Potato Biscuits

Happy New Year, friends and fans!

So to be perfectly honest, I haven't done a lot of cooking since January 1. We've relished in some easy dinner like grilled cheese and tomato soup, grilled chicken with steamed veggies and even ordering in Chinese food. But yesterday I tried a little baking and the result turned out so funny, I thought I would share.

I recently bought some organic veggies, including purple sweet

potatoes. These potatoes are the same size and shape as regular sweet potatoes, but the insides are a vibrant purple (think the color of Barney or pansies!!) When I roasted the purple sweet potatoes, they were beautiful, but when I used them in this biscuit recipe, they turned out to be a purplish/blueish/greenish color instead! We were all entertained and they were really funny to see. But the taste and light, fluffy texture was great.



So here's the recipe for you to try. This is NOT my recipe. It's from www.foodnetwork.com with the original recipe provided by "Mama Dip", whoever that is. You can use regular sweet potatoes if that is what you can find, but I assure you that the purple variety is much more entertaining. Enjoy!

I will work on new crock pot recipes next week, I promise. ☐



2 cups cooked, mashed sweet potatoes (skins removed)

1 stick butter, melted

1 1/4 c. milk

4 cups self-rising flour

3 T. sugar

pinch of baking soda

Mix together the sweet potatoes, butter and milk until well blended. Stir in the flour, baking soda and sugar. Shape the dough into a ball and knead about 10 times on a well-floured board. Roll the dough out 1-inch thick and cut with a biscuit cutter. Bake in a greased baking pan in a 400-degree oven for 15-20 minutes or until brown on top.

((if you don't have self-rising flour you can substitute with all purpose flour and a few more ingredients and the result will be the same. 1 c. self-rising flour= 1 c. all-purpose flour+ 1 1/2 t. baking powder+ 1/2 t. salt))

Yields: 15 biscuits

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.

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.

Crock Pot Acorn Squash

As the seasons change so does the selection of produce. I love summer for its melon and berries, but fall is such a refreshing reminder of patience. Have you ever tried to grow acorn squash? You plant it and then wait and wait and wait. Two summers ago, I lost an entire crop to shield bugs. The summer before that, my summer pole beans took over and the acorn squash never got the space to grow. The tough part about fall produce is encouraging it to survive the summer.

This year, I didn't plant any of my own, but the local farmer's market is just started to offer beautiful varieties of squash, so I picked up an acorn, a butternut and a spaghetti squash and I am happy to have found fall in these forms. Tonight I made the acorn squash and baked it with a nice complement of baby carrots. This is a great side dish

that is easy to make with very few ingredients. Enjoy!

1 acorn squash, cut in half and seeds removed

1 cup baby carrots

2 T. butter

2/3 c. water

Place acorn squash halves in the crock pot, facing up. Put 1 T. butter in each half, then 1/2 c. carrots. Pour the water in the crock pot, but not on or in the acorn squash. Cook on high for three hours.

Crock Pot Beef and Barley Stew



Here's your history lesson for today, folks... let's learn about barley. If you are a "meat and potatoes" kind of person, barley is a great item to add to your grocery list. Barley rations go all the way back to biblical times, I think, it's healthy, hearty and inexpensive; is one of the world's top harvested

grains; and here's a fun one— one of its main purposes is for producing beer and malted beverages.

Now that you've done your studies, let's prepare your eats! This stew is meaty and thick and satisfies the hungriest

belly. It is a meal in itself, but I prefer a small bowl of it with a side salad– and a beer, so I can be consuming barley in multiple forms. ☐ This is a nice variation to the common beef stew.

On a nice fall day like today, your house will be filled with the warm smell of meat, vegetables and an easy dinner. Enjoy!

1 lb. beef stew meat chunks

1 c. baby carrots

4 stalks of celery, cut into chunks

1/2 medium onion, diced

3-4 cloves garlic, chopped

1 15 oz. can diced tomatoes, NOT drained

1 cup pearl barley

3 c. water

1 t. black pepper

1 t. salt

1 t. celery seed

Add all ingredients to the crock pot in this order. Give a little stir, just enough to promote mingling. Cook on low for 6-8 hours.

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!

Crock Pot Vegetarian Fiesta

After a great weekend away, it's nice to be back home to cook. But surprise!! Company for dinner tonight. I haven't had a chance to go to the grocery store yet, so I need to whip up something for dinner that is tasty and unique without needing a separate shopping list.

Here's one of my secrets— I always have tortillas in the refrigerator as a quick fix (think... chicken quesadillas, deli wraps, flatbread pizzas) and I also keep random cans of food

in the pantry. Voila! Dinner is served. Seriously, it's just that easy. Try stocking your kitchen with some of these easy ingredients and next time you have last minute guests, you'll have a great meal to serve. Enjoy!

2 15 oz. cans of black beans, drained and rinsed

2 10 oz. cans of diced tomatoes with green chiles

1 15 oz. can corn kernels, drained

1 10 oz. can of enchilada sauce

1 lb. bag of frozen mixed pepper strips

1 t. cumin

1 t. dried oregano

1/2 t. black pepper

Pour all canned ingredients and seasonings into crock pot and stir together. Add frozen peppers and stir again. Cook on low for 3-4 hours. Use this as a filling for soft tortillas, serve it on white rice as an entree or on top of shredded lettuce as a salad.

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.

Crock Pot Broccoli and Rice

This dish is so easy, so tasty and so complete that I started it while I drank my morning coffee and we ate it for lunch. You could use this decorated-vegetable-and-carbohydrate with pretty much any protein and it would be the perfect complement. Even my kids like it! Try this next time you want a simple side. Enjoy!

1 lb frozen broccoli spears

1 c. white rice, uncooked

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1 can-full of water

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

Put all ingredients in crock pot and stir. Make sure the rice is mixed into the water and soup and isn't just sitting on top of the broccoli spears. Cook on low for three hours.