

Crock Pot Parsnip and Potato Soup

I'm totally enjoying soups this week and I hope you are getting a chance to enjoy some of these recipes too. I love it when I can make an entire meal in ONE pot and feed the whole family. This soup is a variation on my crock pot potato soup recipe (search for it in the recipe index) and adds in the unique sweetness of parsnips and carrots and sweet onions.

Even though it's almost spring, we still need to survive on the rest of winter's vegetables. If you can already grow things in your garden or windowsill, try adding fresh herbs like flat parsley, dill or chives to your soup when it is done cooking. I think you'll find the promise of spring in the soothing warmth of this chowder. Enjoy!

4 medium potatoes, peeled and diced

3 medium parsnips, peeled and diced

3 medium carrots, peeled and diced

2 stalks celery, diced

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 medium sweet onion, chopped

3 c. water

1 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

1 t. celery seed

1 c. milk

1 T. corn starch

1 can cream-style corn

Put all vegetables and seasonings in crock pot, cover with water. Cook on high for 4 hours. When vegetables are all soft, dissolve corn starch in milk and then add to crock pot. Add cream-style corn and mix ingredients together. Cook on low one more hour. Use an immersion blender and puree the soup until thick and creamy. Serve with fresh parsley, dill or chives on top.

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.

Crock Pot Grits with Sausage

Our county schools have been out of school for three days and the grocery has been out of milk for two. Oh, the fun of a southern winter! I have decided not to venture out until the roads are better so I'm getting creative with foods from the pantry and freezer.

Since we've already had crock pot soup and grilled cheese sandwiches and also crock pot Cincinnati chili, I thought it would be fun to do a crock pot breakfast for dinner. I like finding new ways to remake some of our favorites, using the crock pot to my advantage. So this is my rendition of our breakfast favorites.

1 c. quick grits

4 c. water

1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

6 turkey sausage precooked breakfast links, thawed and sliced thin

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

Put all ingredients in crock pot and stir. Cook on high for 3 hours. Consistency should be thick and almost creamy– all grit particles should be softened and cheese melted throughout. When serving, top with your choice of salsa, peppered gravy, shredded cheese, butter, salt and/or pepper.

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 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)

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!