

Crock Pot Apple Brown Betty

Your crock pot isn't just for cooking main dishes, I'm on a kick cooking desserts too! If you are a fan of baked apples or even just apple sauce, you'll love this take on what I call "apple brown betty". If you look up the meaning, it's still unclear who this "betty" is and why her apples were so brown. Most sources date the dish back to colonial times and confirm that the dessert is truly as American as... well, apple pie.

The flavor and composition of my apple brown betty is similar to a cobbler, so if you'd like to try this with peaches, berries or any combination of fresh fruit, give it a try and please post a comment and let us all know how it turns out. Enjoy!

6-8 medium apples, peeled, cored and sliced

1/3 cup brown sugar, packed

1 T. vanilla

1 t. cinnamon

1/4 t. nutmeg

For the crumbles—

2 cups of granola

1/2 c. sugar

1 t. cinnamon

2 t. melted butter

Put apples in crock pot first and then rest of filling ingredients. Toss together so that the apples get coated. Then, in a separate bowl, mix together crumbles ingredients

and then pour on top of apples, but do not mix. Cook on low for 3 hours. Serve a scoop of dessert with a scoop of ice cream– the warm sweetness and the cold creaminess are a delightful combination.

Crock Pot Carrot Cake



I would like to begin this post with an argument. The title of carrot cake is really a misnomer. This shouldn't be considered a dessert. It is based foremost on a VEGETABLE for goodness sake! It is a carbohydrate next and then a treat after that. It is vegetarian, kosher, can be low

fat and I'd almost put the gold sticker of "healthy" on it!

Based on these clear and evident facts, I would like to share with you my recipe for crock pot carrot cake. Serve it for breakfast, after lunch, for an afternoon or evening snack or just about any point of the day. Chalk it up as doing a good deed for yourself. And trust me, this tastes soooo much better than drinking v8!

1 c. flour

1 c. oatmeal

1/2 c. sugar

1/2 c. applesauce

2 t. potato starch

1/4 c. apple juice

1/4 c. vegetable oil

1 t. baking powder

1 t. baking soda

1 t. cinnamon

1 c. grated carrots

1 t. vanilla

1/2 c. raisins

1/2 c. chopped walnuts (optional)

Mix all ingredients in a separate mixing bowl by hand. Coat a loaf pan with non-stick spray and then pour batter in. Place entire loaf pan in crock pot (use oval shaped crock pot to make it fit). Cook on high until center of cake is no longer jiggly— about 2-2.5 hours. Let cool and then smear with whipped cream cheese or cream cheese frosting.

Vinaigrette Salad

*“To make a good salad is to be a brilliant diplomatist –
the problem is entirely the same in both cases.*

To know exactly how much oil one must put with one’s vinegar.”

Oscar Wilde 1856-1900, British Author

Dinner was not a crock last night. We grilled out brats and had cold side dishes, drank chilled wine and enjoyed time with friends. Sometimes I really enjoy the contrast of a hot main dish and the refreshment of cold accompaniments. I made a



vinaigrette salad last night that everyone seemed to really enjoy, so I thought I'd share the recipe with you too.

Tomorrow I'll use the crock pot, but this was a nice change.

Making a vinaigrette salad takes only a few ingredients, but just the right balance (as Oscar Wilde said in the quote listed above). You want chemistry and harmony and simplicity in the perfect mix. Depending on the potency of your ingredients, you may want to divide the dressing measurements in half and add a bit at a time until you get a good balance. Remember that when the vegetables marinate, they will absorb some oil and vinegar and release some water, so you might want to drain the salad a little bit before serving. Enjoy!

1 English cucumber, peeled and cut into chunks

2 c. cherry or grape tomatoes, cut in half

1/2 medium sweet onion, cut into chunks

1 15 oz. can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed

1 15 oz. can green beans, drained and rinsed

3 T. fresh parsley, chopped

1/4 c. extra light olive oil

3 T. red wine vinegar

1/2 t. salt

1 t. coarsely ground pepper

Mix all vegetable together, then drizzle with oil, vinegar and seasonings. Toss salad together and then add parsley and mix one more time. Refrigerate at least an hour and then drain, if needed, before serving.

Crock Pot Scalloped Potatoes



After some trial and error with cooking potatoes in the crock pot, I've finally got some advice for you. First off...don't try to make mashed potatoes. The long amount of time and lack of high heat sort of ruin the effect. But, if you want to make them on the stove and then keep them heated in a crock pot, that

works out fine.

I really wanted to make a side dish of potatoes that was easy to cook and didn't take an excessive amount of prep work (or extra dishes or pots). These scalloped potatoes turned out bubbly and flavorful without having to add a canned creamy soup. Give this a try, especially if you have two crock pots, so you can do a meat main dish in one and this delicious accompaniment in the other. Enjoy!

4-5 medium-sized potatoes, skin on

1 medium onion

1/4 c. flour

2 T. parsley flakes

1 T. salt

1 t. black pepper

1 1/2 c. milk

paprika

1 c. shredded cheese (try cheddar or mozzarella)

Use a food processor to slice potatoes and onions thin (this is much thinner than what you can do with a knife!). Put in pot and then mix in flour and seasonings. Smooth out mixture so that is it flat, then pour milk over entire surface area. Potatoes should not be completely covered by milk. Shake paprika on top as garnish. Cook on high for 2-3 hours or low for 3-4 hours. Stir in shredded cheese before serving.

(This is a really good recipe to use a [crock pot liner](#), the edges crisp first and get stuck to the sides. If you use a liner, it is much easier to clean out the pot! You can buy some by clicking [here](#).)

[Crock Pot Rhubarb Sauce](#)

This weekend, I visited an amazing little organic grocery store, that seriously had two aisles, a delicious bakery and an old man with four teeth. I was tickled to browse the spices and produce, all of local variety. My search for local honey

was finally complete and I bought "summer glory" that was harvested just last week. This time of year also produces one of my seasonal favorites, rhubarb, which was readily available and very affordable at this little corner store.

It doesn't surprise me anymore how many of my friends can only list about five different kinds of vegetables that they will eat, usually: lettuce, carrots, celery, corn and some sort of a bean. Come on, people, there is a rainbow of colorful delights growing in and on our earth! It's time to broaden your horizons and try something new... maybe grill a zucchini or steam an artichoke with dinner. Indulge in fresh mushrooms for a stir-fry or bake some beets to a sweet crisp. But today, I am going to introduce you to rhubarb, an unfamiliar stalk that cooks down into a mouth-twisting tartness that is best complemented by spring fruits or pastry sugariness.

There are very few ingredients in this dish and it takes almost no prep time. Serve it warm with angel food cake and vanilla ice cream or freeze the sauce and scoop it up as sorbet. It's non-dairy, can be sugar free, full of vitamins and a real treat. Enjoy!

5 stalks of rhubarb, cut into 3 inch sections (leaves and end removed, washed well)

1 lb. strawberries (tops removed)

3 ripe bananas

1/4 c. sugar (OPTIONAL)

Put all ingredients in crock pot, cook on high for 2-3 hours. Puree with immersion hand blender until consistency is smooth. Serve warm, cold or frozen.

Crock Pot Creamy Tomato Soup

I understand that the red label of canned tomato soup is probably very patriotic and that eating grilled cheese and tomato soup is one of our commandments or laws or requirements as Americans. I support that, I do. But– I don't think my grilled cheese sandwich deserves to bathe in a mixture of weird canned goop and water. It needs more than that. So today I made homemade creamy tomato soup.

I think the key difference here is the spices and the heavy cream, you just can't get those flavors in a can. Another detail that is critical to this recipe is the use of an immersion hand blender. Thirty seconds of power will take this soup from delicious to heavenly. If you don't have an immersion hand blender, then you can cool your soup off and then put it into a blender to puree, then return it to the crock pot, add the heavy cream and heat it back up. That way is more work but will deliver the same smooth result.

Your soup should have an equal counterpart– a perfect grilled cheese sandwich. But you have to define that for yourself. For me, it's swirled pumpernickel/rye bread with swiss and havarti cheeses. For my kids, it's American cheese on whole wheat. For my husband, it's italian bread with sharp cheddar and colby jack. I am willing to entertain everyone's favorites, since the soup is so easy to make. Another trick for your sandwich is to change up from using butter or margarine on the outside of your bread– try using a light smear of mayonnaise instead and get a sweeter, crisper result. Or you can quickly dip the sandwich in a couple beaten eggs and turn your grilled cheese into a monte cristo instead. Discover whatever combination tickles your taste buds and then let it swell with the sweetness of the soup. Enjoy!

2 14 oz. cans of diced tomatoes

1 small onion, diced

2-3 cloves of garlic, chopped

1 bay leaf

1 t. of each seasoning: salt, black pepper, rosemary, oregano and celery seed

1 T. sugar

8 oz. heavy cream

Combine all ingredients except heavy cream in the crock pot. Cook on low for 4 hours. Remove bay leaf. Use immersion hand blender and puree until smooth. Add heavy cream, stir and heat for one more hour. Serve with your favorite grilled cheese sandwich, of course!

Crock Pot Creamy Corn

Not to be too corny, but I'm a big fan of corn. I love fresh local corn on the cob in the summer, corn chowder soup in the winter, corn muffins, popcorn at the movies, canned cream corn, kettle corn at the apple festival, even cooking with corn oil.

I've got some great leftover meat from this weekend, but I really want a yummy side dish to go with it to make it seem like a whole new meal. It's already the middle of the afternoon, so I'm short on time, but this is a perfect time to make a delicious corn side dish as an accompaniment.

The contrast of the sweet corn and creamy cheese to the sting

of the jalapenos is a great chemistry. When you make this dish and someone tells you how much they love it, just smile and say, “awww shucks!”

1 32 oz. bag of frozen corn

1 small yellow onion, chopped

4 T. butter, melted

1/2 c. milk

1 T. parsley

1/2 t. salt

1 t. black pepper

3 T. chopped jalapeno slices (from the jar, not fresh)

8 oz. whipped cream cheese

Put corn and onion in crock pot first, then stir in melted butter and milk. Add in all the seasonings and the jalapenos and stir again. Scoop the cream cheese onto mixture, leaving scoops all over. Cook on high for 2 hours, stir cream cheese into mixture and then heat for half an hour more.

Crock Pot Blueberry Cobbler

Forget dinner– let’s skip straight to dessert. What could possibly be better than dumping everything in the crock pot and having your entire house filled with the glorious, sweet, satisfying smell of freshly baked dessert?! Cooking dessert in the crock pot requires a little more attention to detail than

the normal dump-and-go meal prep, but I think you'll really like this recipe. In all honesty, it still only took me 6 minutes from start to finish to get everything into the crock pot. Since this is a slow cooking method, you won't dry out or burn the edges of your tasty treat like you might in the regular oven. Plus, it is way better to use the crock pot for a few hours than to heat up the entire house with conventional baking.

This cobbler recipe can also be made using a variety of other fruits. Go for what is in season, grown locally or on sale in the freezer section; I would suggest trying cherries, peaches, apples, mixed berries or maybe some ripe pears. If you want this dish to be even more divine, throw in a 1/2 c. of butterscotch morsels or chocolate chips with the top layer. Enjoy!

1 c. flour

2 t. baking powder

1/2 t. salt

1/2 c. granulated sugar

1/2 c. packed brown sugar

2 eggs

2 t. vanilla

2 t. butter, melted

1/2 c. half and half or milk

16 oz. fresh or frozen blueberries

topping:

1 c. quick oats

1/3 c. flour

2 t. melted butter

1/2 t. cinnamon

2 T. brown sugar

Spray the entire crock pot with a non-stick spray. In a separate bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, salt, sugars, eggs and vanilla. Add the melted butter and half and half. Dump in blueberries and stir well. Pour into crock pot. Then, in another separate bowl, cut together the topping ingredients. Sprinkle topping on top of mixture already in crock pot and DO NOT MIX. Cook 4 hours on low or 2 hours on high.

Crock Pot Bean Medley

We're going to a BBQ at my brother's house this weekend and since the assumption is that I'll bring something from the crockpot, I know I need to come up with something tasty and creative. The catch is that I don't really want to go grocery shopping today. So, I'm diving into the pantry in the hopes that I will surface with a plan and an amazing side dish. I also want to make this dish over night so that it is ready to go in the morning.

Baked beans are a very typical BBQ side dish, but I would like to make a bean dish that isn't brown and smokey or looks like it's was dumped into a bowl and served. Beans are an easily accessible food— even if they look like they were prepared a little different, everyone still usually takes a

scoop to eat. This combination is a nice variation because it is more colorful and the light colors are a nice balance for spring. Enjoy!

NOTE: Assume that each can is about 15 ounces. This recipe works best in a 6-quart pot. Feel free to divide all ingredients in half if you are not cooking for a large gathering of people, a sports team or a small army.

2 cans black beans, drained and rinsed

2 cans dark red kidney beans, drained and rinsed

2 cans great northern or cannellini beans, drained and rinsed

2 cans sweet corn kernels, drained

8 oz. frozen cut green beans

1/2 medium onion, chopped

1/2 red bell pepper

1/4 c. apple cider vinegar

1/4 c. brown sugar

1/2 t. celery seed

1/2 t. oregano

1/2 t. black pepper

3 T. ketchup

3 T. tomato paste

1 T. brown or dijon mustard

Drain and rinse all the beans before putting them in the crockpot. Add the rest of the veggies. Mix together the brown sugar, apple cider vinegar, tomato paste, mustard, ketchup and

seasonings and dump in on everything in the crock pot. Give it one good stir and then set it on high for 3 hours or low for 5-6.

Crock Pot Escalloped Cabbage Casserole

My husband's family use to have this amazing tradition; every Wednesday night we would all go to his grandmother's house for dinner. Gaga's recipes usually start with butter or oil and a little salt and pepper and from there, it could be chicken or beef or vegetables or any number of simply wonderful simple dishes. But one of my favorites is Gaga's cabbage casserole.

Every time Gaga made this, I knew that the kitchen would be uncomfortably warm from the oven being on and that it would taste so good that there would rarely be leftovers. This dish doesn't even taste like cabbage, it tastes like fluffy goodness that you can say is actually good for you. Save yourself the perspiration and make this dish in your crock pot instead. If you want to finish the casserole off, remove the crock and place it under the broiler for a couple minutes, just so the top layer crisps.

This dish is simple and the salt and pepper really give it most of its flavor, so it's great to make as a complement to pretty much any meat. It's not a main dish, but it will probably be a favorite! I wouldn't recommend freezing this casserole, but refrigerating it and reheating it is fine.

1/2 head cabbage

1 sleeve of saltine crackers (if you want it to taste more buttery, use a Ritz style cracker instead)

milk

3 T. olive oil

salt and pepper

Shred the cabbage, the smaller the pieces, the better. Put the crackers in a zipper bag and smash them till they are itty bitty, but not powder. Layer the cabbage and then the cracker crumbs in the crock pot; in between layers drizzle about 1 T. of olive oil and a pinch each of salt and pepper. When all of the cabbage, crackers, seasonings and oil have been layered, pour milk into the crock pot until it almost reaches the top layer, but not quite. It usually takes about 4 cups of milk. Cook on high for 3 hours. There shouldn't be much liquid left when the casserole is done— the crackers absorb most of it, but make sure that your cabbage is soft, it shouldn't be crunchy at all.

Enjoy this with pretty much anything. Gaga would be proud if you made this on a Wednesday night at your house, too.