

Crock Pot Beef Stroganoff

Ok fans, this is the recipe you chose for today! Beef stroganoff is a great one-pot meal. You've got meat, dairy and carb (when served on noodles or rice) and if you count mushrooms as a veggie, then don't bother serving this with side dish. There is something great about the creaminess of this recipe that really makes the flavors melt together.

While skillet beef stroganoff really focuses on browning everything in a pan, the crock pot version really fuses the flavors together in a better way. The skillet version tastes to me like butter and burning, so I like that in the crock pot everything turns out soft and sweet.

While you might like trying everything light or fat-free, I'd rather see recipes that use moderation, but keep to the true versions. If you want to save calories, eat less stroganoff and serve it with a salad or steamed vegetable. And drink it with a Diet Coke, of course. Enjoy!

1 lb. beef tenderloin, cut into thin strips

1 medium sweet onion, sliced thin

8 oz. baby portobello mushrooms, cleaned and sliced

1 c. beef bouillon

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 t. black pepper

1/8 t. ground nutmeg

1 T. parsley flakes

1 T. flour

1 c. sour cream

1 lb cooked pasta (egg noodles, farfalle or fettuccine) or 4 c. cooked white rice

Place beef, onion, garlic, mushrooms in the crock pot. Pour in bouillon and then sprinkle with seasonings. Cook on low for 4 hours. In a separate bowl, mix together flour and sour cream and add to crock pot, then cook for another 1 hour on low. Serve on a bed of hot noodles or rice.

VARIATIONS: If you don't have beef tenderloin, try one pound of browned ground beef or chicken. If you don't like mushrooms, then use green beans, corn or just go without.

Crock Pot Chimichurri Steak

The word "chimichurri" might make you think of that silly little ditty from Mary Poppin's chimney sweep friend, but I assure you, there is nothing dirty or British about this recipe (not that the two are synonymous!). I think of chimichurri sauce as an Argentinian version of pesto, but with parsley instead of basil. I love it as a marinade, but it can also be used as a garnish or a dipping sauce for pretty much any meat. I challenge you to try this on as many grilled meats as possible this summer and to find any single one that it doesn't complement.

But since I don't feel like firing up the grill and cinging my eyebrows, I'm going to cook my beef in the crock pot. Chimichurri is often served with steak, so I am using a flank steak and I sliced it into half inch sections before cooking it. I think this will help really get all the flavors into the

steak. I marinated the meat overnight in the refrigerator, but that isn't necessary. I would recommend marinating it for at least four hours, just to give it enough time to fester.

I don't have enough fresh produce on hand to make this with the real ingredients, but if you do— use 1 c. fresh flat-leaf parsley and some fresh oregano, too. I assure you this will taste good with the dried stuff, but even more amazing with fresh herbs.

I'm serving my chimichurri steak with some steamed veggies (at least I know my kids will eat those things!), but you can also try roasting some potatoes with the meat or serving it on a nice bed of salad. Enjoy!

Meat: 2 lbs. beef (flank steak, skirt steak, London Broil, flat iron steak... if you don't love beef, use chicken)

Chimichurri sauce:

1/2 c. white wine

1/3. c. vegetable oil

1/4 c. red wine vinegar

2 lemons

3-4 cloves garlic, minced

4 T. parsley flakes

2 T. oregano flakes

1 T. red pepper flakes

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

Combine all seasonings, liquids and the juice of two lemons in a bowl and mix well. Put meat in a sealable bag and pour

marinade on top of meat. Mash around and then let it sit for 4-24 hours in the refrigerator. When ready to start cooking, dump meat and marinade into crock pot and cook on low for 6-8 hours.

Crock Pot London Broil

My head had been swirling with a mix of the traditional children's song about a certain London Bridge and the contemporary naughty version of the song by a certain Mrs. Black-Eyed Pea. While I might not have the cute sequin British flag on a pair of boy shorts, I think my London Broil is a fine salute. The funny thing about the name "London Broil" is that there actually isn't any connection to London or English foods and you don't actually have to broil this cut of meat, even though that direction is clearly stated in the name.

This beef steak is a good balance of muscle and fat and is moist and juicy. It can also be labeled as top round steak or flank steak and it's still the same part of the cow. It is helpful to marinate this cut of meat overnight before cooking in the oven, but you can get that same effect by cooking it on low with the marinade on the meat in the crock pot. If the meat doesn't fall apart when it's done cooking, you can remove it from the crock pot and make thin slices across the grain of the meat. Leftover slices also make really good cold roast beef sandwiches.

A simple meat and potatoes dish is a great way to have a filling dinner without having a lot of fuss. So be American and crock pot your London Broil today!

2-3 lb. London Broil (also called flank steak or top round

steak)

4 potatoes, cut into chunks

6 carrots, peeled and cut

1 medium onion, quartered

1/4 c. Worcestershire sauce

2 T. red wine vinegar

2 T. olive oil

3 T. ketchup

2 cloves of garlic, chopped

1 t. black pepper

1 t. rosemary

Place veggies in crock pot first, then lay meat flat. Mix together all remaining ingredient, except rosemary, in a separate bowl. Slowly pour marinade over meat then sprinkle rosemary on top of it. Cook on low for 5-6 hours.

Easiest Crock Pot Chili-- EVER

If you can work a can opener, you can make this chili. You still need to brown the meat before you put it in the crock pot, but that's the only work that needs done. Open the cans, dump it in, let it fester. Done.

My brother in law taught me this recipe and I love that it is uncomplicated. I usually make this on football Sundays so that when we have people over to watch the game, everyone can have a hot meal whenever they get hungry. Plus, I love all the fun toppings that go on chili. It isn't football season yet, but it is the start of baseball season. So, for sports fans everywhere, here is your game day strategy. Enjoy!

(I SUGGEST USING A 6 QT. CROCK POT TO MAKE THIS. IF YOU HAVE A SMALLER ONE, THEN REMOVE ONE OF THE CANS OF BEANS. ALSO, ALL CANS ARE TYPICALLY ABOUT 14-15 OUNCES.)

2 cans diced tomatoes

1/2 medium onion, chopped

1 can dark red kidney beans

1 can light red kidney beans

1 can great northern beans

1 packet of chili seasoning (FYI- it's a combination of things like onion powder, chili powder, a bit of cumin, salt and pepper, etc. but it's just easier to buy the packet instead of measuring it all out separately)

1 lb. ground beef or turkey

Brown meat completely and then put in crock pot. Dump everything else in. Give it a stir and then cook on high for 4 hours. Serve with shredded cheddar, chopped onion and sour cream. For added flavor, you can add 1 can of sweet corn kernels when you add in all the beans.

Crock Pot Brisket-- easy, medium and hard

I'm pretty sure everyone has a grandmother-aged person in their life that makes the "perfect brisket". It's moist, juicy, flavorful and pulls apart perfectly. We've tried and tried to repeat the old world secrets, but somehow our ovens continue to dry out the meat or make it tough to chew. Look no further— grandma might not have used a slow cooker, but these recipes are very easy and have amazing results.

Here's a great little nugget for you: my mom always cut off the last inch of the brisket before cooking it. I figured it was because of how she trimmed off the fat, skimming the top of the cut of meat and then cutting off the chunk at the end. I asked her about it and she said that it was how her grandmother did it. So I asked my grandmother why her mom cooked the meat in that particular way and she said, "because her pan was too small, the meat never seemed to fit right so she cut off the end so the brisket would lay flat." It's funny how traditions begin.

If you are looking for a pulled beef sandwich to serve at a spring BBQ, fork apart the meat when it is done, then top it with your favorite BBQ sauce and serve it on a braided roll. Oh— was it mean to say BRAIDED ROLL to those of you celebrating Passover? My bad.

EASY difficulty brisket

1 3 lb. beef brisket

1 bottle italian dressing

Pour half the dressing over the brisket and let it marinate overnight. In the morning, move the meat into the slow cooker

and top with the remaining dressing. Cook on low for 8 hours. Now, wasn't that easy?!

MEDIUM difficulty brisket

1 3 lb. brisket

1 medium-sized onion, sliced thin

1 12 oz. can of Coke (not diet)

1/2 c. ketchup

1 t. black pepper

1/2 t. cayenne pepper

pinch of salt

Place brisket into crock pot, use trivet if you have one. Surround meat with sliced onion. Mix together Coke and ketchup and pour on top of meat and onions. Sprinkle seasonings on everything. Cook for 8 hours on low or 4-5 hours on high.

If you want to vary the flavor, try using 12 oz. apple juice or 12 oz. of beer INSTEAD of the Coke.

HARD difficulty brisket

1 3 lb. brisket

1 t. of each seasonings: cracked black pepper, rosemary, paprika, parsley, celery seed

2-3 cloves garlic, chopped fine

1 t. olive oil

water

Rinse meat and pat dry. Using your fingers or a pastry brush, lightly coat meat with olive oil. Then mix together all seasonings and coat meat in dry rub. Let marinate overnight in the refrigerator. In the morning, take meat out and sprinkle with garlic. Heat up a pan and brown meat on all sides, then put meat in crock pot. Add enough water to the crock pot to cover the bottom of the pot. Also, if you have a trivet that fits in your crock pot, use that under the meat. Cook on low for 6 hours.

Crock pot broth

Last night I cooked an entire crock pot of food with no intention of eating it anytime this week. This is the beauty of the crock pot! I know that next week I want to make a big batch of chicken soup. But, I don't want it to be a day long project, I need it to be an easy meal.

So last night, I crock potted four boneless, skinless chicken breasts, 1 c. baby carrots, half an onion, 1 T. parsley and a little salt and pepper. I set it on high for 4 hours. When it was done, all the broth went into plastic containers for the freezer and the chicken and carrots are in the refrigerator for lunches today. Voila— when I want to make my soup, I simply put the brick of frozen chicken broth into a pot and let it simmer back to soup. Then I can add noodles or rice or more vegetables and have my meal done in a matter of minutes.

Homemade chicken broth is a healthier alternative to using boxed broths or bouillon. Store-bought bases are much higher in sodium and usually have that weird yellow tinge. This easy recipe means that my soup will taste flavorful and look

authentic.

You can do this recipe with beef as well, but when the broth cools, I would suggest skimming the fat off of the top. BL/SL chicken breasts are very lean and don't leave much to skim off, but since most cuts of beef have a higher fat content, you would want to remove some the excess. You can also make vegetable broth (try using carrots, celery, leeks, onions and parsley) or fish broth (from any part of the fish) in your crock pot.

After you make your broth, your chicken, beef, fish or veggies are cooked very soft, but most of the flavor has been boiled out. But, the meat is a great texture to add sauces too, try forking the meat apart and adding BBQ sauce for pulled sandwiches or chopping up chicken for curried chicken salad (see roasted chicken post for recipe). The vegetables can be glazed or broiled and served as a side dish with any future meal.

Hopefully, this post has you thinking ahead to future meals and you'll let your crock pot do your base preparations. Enjoy!

Crock Pot Cabbage Rolls

This is already in the pot for dinner tonight! It helps to cook the cabbage the night before so you don't scald your hands trying to peel off the perfect leaves.

1 head cabbage

1 lb ground meat (I'm pretty sure anything will work, I've used beef and turkey)

1/4 cup brown rice, uncooked
1 egg, beaten
1 onion, diced
1/2 t. salt
1/2 t. pepper
1/3 cup cider vinegar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 can tomato soup
1/2 cup Catalina dressing

1. Put cabbage in boiling water. Simmer for 5-10 minutes. Let cool completely before handling.
2. Mix meat, rice, egg, onion, salt and pepper.
3. In another bowl mix vinegar, sugar, soup and dressing.
4. Remove 12 large cabbage leaves from head and then chop remaining cabbage and put it in bottom of crock pot.
5. Put 2-4 T. of meat mixture in center of cabbage leave. Roll up, envelope style and place in crock pot, seam side down. (you can use toothpicks to hold the rolls together if you need to)
6. Pour tomato mixture over all of it.
7. Cover and cook on low for 8-10 hours.

(recipe is adapted from one on www.recipezaar.com)