

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.

Crock Pot Fish Chowder

This recipe has evolved from an amazing chowder that I once had at the Columbus International Festival in Ohio. I think it was the Scandanavian table that was honoring their long-standing countrymen's careers of treacherous trips on the ocean. I think it was really to honor the countrywomen's careers of having boatloads of fish to cook and trying to come up with new recipes that didn't resemble a fish face.

Now this recipe can easily be done in a pot on the stove and done in an hour, but then the flavors wouldn't have a chance to fester all together. I prefer it in the crock pot, usually made from leftover salmon or tilapia. You could probably use halibut, red snapper or maybe even some trout if you wanted to, depending on what you like. If you don't have leftovers to use, then just throw the (deboned, please) fish filets into a pan with a little butter, salt and pepper and then bake it, let it cool and flake it. Realistically, a budget-minded mama could also use a couple cans of pink salmon and still have a

similar result.

Well, if we wanted to, we could start by sauteeing up some diced bacon with the mirepoix (fancy word for chopped carrots, celery and onions) and then including it all in the pot for a smoky and salty addition. Or, we could throw in half a pound of shrimp at the end of the day and make the chowder heartier. But I keep it simple and it's still a crowd-pleaser and probably a little healthier too.

4 carrots, peeled and diced

3 celery stalks, diced

1 medium onion, diced

1 chopped zucchini, unpeeled

3 cups vegetable broth

2 bay leaves

1 clove garlic, minced

salt and pepper

1/2 – 1 lb fish– no skin, no bones; cooked, cooled and flaked
(1 T. corn starch dissolved into 2 cups cold milk)

Put all ingredients (except corn starch and milk) in the crockpot, with the fish being last. Cook 4-6 hours on high. Remove bay leaves. Dissolve corn starch in cold milk and then add to the pot 1 hour before serving.

If you'd like to add some variety, offer cheddar cheese, chopped scallions and puffy oyster crackers to top your fish chowder. Or a toy boat, if you can find one that hasn't been in the bath.

Crock Pot Vegetable Curry

One of my favorite things about Indian food is that you can have such a variety of purely vegetarian dishes. With the right balance of ingredients, you can have a healthy, protein- and vitamin-rich meal with an array of flavors and nothing in it will have ever had a face.

There is also a misconception about crock pots that I'd like to ruin. Many people think the crock pot is just for cooking the hell out of a piece of meat or else making soup, but indeed there are so many other great dishes that we can make in a matter of minutes! So for the skeptics out there, I invite you to try this vegetable curry. It's hot and spicy, almost sexy, and definitely enjoyable. Experiment today with this cultural culinary specialty.

1 can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed

1 14 oz. can diced tomatoes

1 16 oz. bag of frozen cauliflower

2 c. baby carrots

1 small onion, diced

3-4 cloves of garlic, chopped

2 potatoes, diced

1 T. curry

1 t. red pepper flakes

1/4 t. cinnamon

1/2 c. vegetable juice

1 14 oz. can of lite coconut milk

Put everything in the crock pot except the coconut milk. Stir once through and then pour coconut milk on top of everything. Cook on low for 6 hours. Serve over white rice or with naan bread.

Crock Pot Roasted Chicken (and curried chicken salad)

It's Friday! I work hard all week waiting for today. Tonight we get to start our weekend. I can't think of a better way to welcome the weekly 2-day vacation than to have a family meal together at home. To make it more special, we are having guests this evening as well. Ok crock pot, it's time to do your thing and make dinner tonight taste like it was hard to make (but really it's only noon o'clock and it's already done).

The most challenging part of this recipe is making sure that your meat will fit in the crock pot. If you have a round and more vertical design of a crock pot, you might have to use a cornish hen instead of a chicken if you want it to fit! This recipe really works best in a 5-6 qt. crockpot that is **oval shaped**. I just thought you should know this before you start trying to shove everything in and then being disappointed when it doesn't fit. (*check out my next post about buying a new crock pot!*)

If you have leftover chicken after tonight, I'd recommend making curried chicken salad tomorrow. Add a stalk of fresh, chopped celery (not a cooked one from the pot), add a small can of diced water chestnuts, 1/2 c. quartered red grapes and then enough mayo to make it a good consistency. Then, add curry powder, a little salt and pepper— I can't tell you how much because I don't know how much chicken you have left, but remember that curry powder becomes more potent after it gets a chance to fester. Make this salad up and then put it in the fridge for a couple hours— when it turns a darker copper color (from the curry), it's ready to eat!

Well there you go, I guess it's a two recipe day. You have one

for today and one for tomorrow!

Now for to the roasted chicken recipe:

1 3-4 lb. fresh chicken, thawed, rinsed and patted dry

2 T. olive oil

2 cloves garlic, chopped

8 oz. baby carrots

3 stalks celery, cut into 2 inch chunks

1/2 med. onion, cut into chunks

dash of paprika

salt and pepper

If you have a trivet that fits in your crock pot, I'd recommend using it. It keeps your chicken just elevated from sitting in it's own juices and makes it MUCH easier to pull the chicken out when it is done (which makes for a nicer presentation too). Place chicken in pot- to know it's on the correct side, you should see the smooth skin covering the chicken breasts. Brush the skin with the olive oil and sprinkle with the chopped garlic. Position the carrots, celery and onions around the bird. Sprinkle all contents with paprika, salt and pepper. Cook on low for 8-10 hours, depending on bird size.

Crock Pot Vegetarian Lentil

Soup

There used to be this great Greek restaurant that I frequented that served lentil soup in a styrofoam cup. It was always hot and fresh and the lentils were soft without being mushy. I would frame my entire meal around saving room and money for the soup. This recipe mirrors the flavors and warmth of the soup but without a disposable cup. Unlike my vegetarian vegetable soup which is savory and chunky, this lentil soup is hearty and robust with even more amazing health benefits. Lentils are high in protein, iron, amino acids and when you add in the lycopine in the tomatoes and then all the vitamins, folic acid and antioxidants in the spinach... this soup is like a power boost for your whole system. Oh yeah, and it tastes amazing too.

Feel free to serve it in a real bowl and maybe with some crusty bread instead of saltines.

2 cups lentils

8 cups vegetable broth

1 onion, diced

3 stalks celery, diced

2 carrots, chopped

6 oz. fresh spinach, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 t. salt

1/2 t. pepper

1 t. oregano

1 t. cumin

2 bay leaves

1/4 t. cayenne pepper

1 14 oz. can diced tomatoes

1 T. red wine vinegar

Put everything in the crockpot and cook on low for 8 hours, but add the vegetable broth LAST. Most likely, you won't have room to pour all the liquid in yet. Once the vegetables have all cooked down, then add the rest of the liquid. My 5-qt crock pot is filled to the rim by the time everything is included.

This soup also freezes really well, so save half the pot for a meal another time.