

Crock Pot Beef Stew

So after the amazing stroganoff last week, somehow I still wanted to make more beef. (I think we had BBQ chicken one too many times over the holiday weekend.) So even though it is summer, I thought some hearty beef stew would satisfy my craving for red meat. The nice part about this meal and the hot weather is that a small serving is enough to satisfy and you can use local produce to really enrich the flavors of the stew. I am adding some extra vegetables to my stew that are in season, ripe and fresh right now. Check out your local farmer's market and see what vegetables look good to you. Enjoy!

1 lb. beef, cut into stew meat

1 c. baby carrots

4 stalks celery, cut into 1-inch sections

3 potatoes, skins left on, cut into small chunks

1 small onion, cut into small chunks

1 medium zucchini, cut into 1-inch sections

1 ear of corn, cut kernels off the cob

4-6 oz. fresh green beans, cut into 1-inch sections

2 c. water

3 cloves garlic, chopped

1/2 t. celery seed

1/2 t. paprika

1 T. parsley

1/2 t. salt

1 t. black pepper

To finish: 1 T. corn starch dissolved in 1/3 c. cold water

Put all ingredients into the crock pot and give it all a stir. Cook on low for 4-6 hours. Add water with dissolved corn starch and heat for 1/2 hour on high. Remove bay leaves before serving.

Crock Pot Chicken Divan



This recipe gives me crazy flashbacks! My mom use to make this when I was a kid. She made it in the oven, but it was almost the same recipe—broccoli, chicken, rice and some sauce that had a little bit of an orange color but didn't taste

at all like oranges. It took me a few more years of life to find out that the color was from the curry powder. I think Crayola should add the crayon color "curry".

It's hard sometimes for my taste buds to explain the flavors to my head, but I think I've figured out most of my mom's recipe. I've added the crock pot. Maybe the celery seed, too, but I think it adds a nice flavor. I start with frozen chicken breasts because I never think ahead to thaw it out and I don't like when I defrost it in the microwave and then the edges get a little cooked and weird. Using frozen chicken breasts works just fine, it will defrost and cook and fall apart into the

creamy goodness of the sauce and the starch of the rice and absorb all of the spices by the time it's done.

This home cooking will serve a table full of happy tummies and happy hearts. Enjoy!

1 lb. frozen broccoli cuts

1 c. uncooked white rice

3-4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1 can cream of chicken soup

1 t. Worcestershire sauce

1 t. fresh lemon juice

2 t. curry powder

1/2 t. celery seed

1/2 t. ground black pepper

2 T. melted butter

1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

1/2 c. Parmesan cheese sprinkles

1/2 c. milk

1/2 c. mayonnaise

Put frozen broccoli in crock pot first. Sprinkle with rice. Lay chicken breasts on top. Mix remaining ingredients in a separate bowl and then pour on top of chicken. Cook on high for 4 hours. Prior to serving, shred chicken and mix everything together.

Crock Pot Beet Salad



In the midst of summer heat, I love to use my crock pot to cook the season's ripe vegetables. My kitchen stays cool and my taste buds get to dance. This week, I had friends bring me fresh beets from their community CSA. I love roasting beets in a little bit of olive oil, salt and pepper, so I thought this would be a fun challenge for the crock pot.

When you roast beets in the oven, there is the chance of overcooking, resulting in a dried, wrinkled sad result for this moist and vibrant treat. With the locked-in moisture of the crock pot, I really think that beets get the chance to both marinate and cook to perfection.

Please note— this recipe calls for FRESH produce. This recipe is not intended for canned beets. When you are preparing fresh beets, be cautious that the juice doesn't dye your hands, your counter or your cutting board. But you will benefit greatly by doing the preparation, because the taste and texture of using fresh produce for this recipe is so much better than you could ever replicate with a canned product.

6 large fresh beets, greens removed and skins peeled, sliced

3-4 fresh white radishes, greens removed and skins peeled, then sliced

1/4 c. water

3 T. olive oil

1/2 t. salt

1 t. ground black pepper

1 t. celery seed

1/2 t. ground mustard

1/4 onion, sliced thin

2 T. red wine vinegar

topping: 1/2 c. crumbled feta cheese

Put all ingredients in crock pot and stir together. Cook on low for 4 hours. After beet salad cools, transfer and refrigerate until salad is cold. When serving, top it with 1/2 c. crumbled feta cheese.

Crock Pot Chicken and Quinoa

This is great sick food. Not food that will make you sick, but a food that falls into the same category as matzah ball soup, egg drop soup and homemade mashed potatoes— these foods all make you feel better! I'll warn you that this dish is very bland, so if you'd like to eat it when you are aren't queasy or feverish, you might want to add some more veggies and seasonings. When you read this recipe, save it to your favorites so that next time you are sick, you have a go-to recipe for an easy dish to make everyone feel better. Enjoy! (and stay healthy!)

1 c. quinoa, rinsed and drained

2 c. chicken broth

1/2 medium onion, chopped

3 carrots, sliced

6 skinless chicken thighs (about 1.5 lbs)

2 bay leaves

1 t. salt

1 t. black pepper

1 T. parsley flakes

1 t. celery seed

Put quinoa and broth in crock pot and stir. Add onions and carrots, stir again and then place chicken thighs in. Sprinkle seasonings all over everything. Cook on high for 2.5-3 hours. How to tell it's done: each quinoa grain has a white string that appears on it when it's cooked, chicken thighs need to be cooked through and carrots need to be soft.

Crock Pot Stuffing Balls



Stuffing is an under-appreciated side dish. It completely defines a Thanksgiving dinner and can sometimes be found at kitschy homecooking restaurants, but there is no reason to leave it alone for the rest of the year. Plus, it's a great way to use leftover or stale bread. The more variety you

use in your bread selection will equal a total change in the taste of the end result.

In my fridge right now, I have half a loaf of wheat bread (very dense and yeast-smelling) and half a loaf of what was labeled a "tomato bread" (tastes like Italian bread with a swirl of seasoned tomato paste in it). Here is how to prep your bread for stuffing: cut into slices and then into bite-sized cubes. For example, I would cut a normal piece of wheat bread four times each way = 16 smaller pieces. Then, lay cubes out in one layer on a cookie sheet and cook for about 10-15 minutes at 350 degrees, just until the bread toasts.

Instead of just pouring the stuffing into a pan, I love the idea of hand rolling the stuffing into balls. It cooks into nice individual servings and leaves lots of surface area to crisp. These balls also freeze really well, so make a full recipe and then save what you don't consume. Enjoy!

6 cups homemade stuffing cubes

1/2 medium onion, chopped

1/2 green pepper, chopped

2 eggs, beaten



1/4 c. water

1 16 oz. can cream-style corn

1 T. parsley

1 t. salt

1 t. black pepper

1 t. celery seed

1/2 t. paprika

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

10 little pads of butter or margarine

In a bowl, mix together all ingredients, except butter or margarine. After combined, mixture should be moist, but not dripping wet. Form 10 balls, using your hands and mush it together so that it can stand on it's own. Coat oval-shaped crock pot with non-stick spray. Place stuffing balls side by side in crock pot. Place one little pad of butter or margarine on top of each stuffing ball. Cook on low for 3 hours.

(The original inspiration from this dish came from crock pot maven Mable Hoffman's Crockery Cookery Cookbook. No offense, but her recipe was bland and suggested using packaged stuffing mix; my adaptation takes it up a notch and makes it flavorful and heartier.)

Crock Pot Tuna Casserole

OK, so this one might seem a little like "school lunch", but I like the combination of creamy noodles and easy protein. Anytime I make this in the oven, I always wind up burning the edges. When I make it in the crock pot, it keeps the meal warm and creamy and doesn't get crispy crusts. (Although, if the crispy crusts are your favorite part, feel free to use this recipe and just shove it in the oven for an hour instead.)



One of the things that is really unique about my tuna casserole is that I used diced water chestnuts. I like the surprise burst of these moist, crunchy morsels. They keep to the neutral color of the dish and add a little bit of jazz that is pleasing to the palate. I also suggest using tuna from a foil

packet, not from a can. The canned fish is great for tuna salad, but I like that the foiled fish has better texture and bigger chunks. If you are not a fan of peas, you can try any frozen vegetable— corn, green beans and mixed veggies are good ones to try, too.

One last big difference in my version is that most tuna casseroles call for cheddar cheese and mine adds something extra. While I think melted cheddar cheese adds to the creaminess, I think including something like feta actually gives the whole dish more flavor and an overall better success. With these modifications, we are taking “school lunch” into the adult world. You could serve this to family or friends on real plates.

The only thing that could be better than this tuna casserole would be if the school lunch ladies could be here to serve and clean everything up. Enjoy!

1 lb. broad egg noodles, cooked and drained

1 6 oz. foil packet of albacore tuna

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1 c. milk

8 oz. frozen peas

1 8 oz. can of diced water chestnuts, drained

1 c. crumbled feta cheese

1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

1/2 t. salt

1.2 t. black pepper

1 T. parsley

1/2 t. celery seed

1/4 t. ground mustard

Cook noodles according to directions on package. Combine all ingredients in crock pot and stir until well mixed. Warm on low for 2-3 hours.

Crock Pot Cabbage Roll Casserole

One of my favorite dishes that my grandmother made is cabbage rolls, but honestly— who has time for all the steps?! I have made them before in the crock pot (use the search function to see my recipe) but today's version is even easier. It has almost all the same components, but only takes a cutting board, a knife and a spoon to get everything into the crock pot.

I really like that this casserole is thick, there isn't much broth left in the pot. I suggest serving it over some mashed potatoes. It's like a complete meal in one bowl!

1 lb ground turkey, not cooked

1 c. brown rice, not cooked

2 c. spaghetti sauce

1 c. vegetable juice

1/2 head cabbage, chopped fine

1/2 medium onion, chopped

2 T. brown sugar

2 T. apple cider vinegar

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

1 t. celery seed

1 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

1 T. parsley

1/2 c. water

Put cabbage and onion in crock pot first, then top with rice, all seasonings and garlic. Pour sauce and juice in next and stir well. Place ground meat on top of mixture. Cook on low for 4 hours. When meat browns, break up with a spoon and/or fork and stir entire contents. Add water and cook one hour more.

Crock Pot Chicken Cordon Bleu

After three days of amazing holiday weekend barbecues, I am ready for something without sauce, sides of beans or cool whip desserts. I have had the pleasure of attending festivities at friends' homes so I actually haven't had to do much cooking! My crock pot has been sitting pretty for a few days now and I will neglect it no longer— it's time for a new recipe. I've had some requests for more chicken recipes, so today I am presenting you with a classic favorite, plus an alternative way to do it.



Chicken Cordon Bleu is a popular dish, but I think it's more American than French cuisine. Stuffed meat isn't that new of a concept and there is nothing actually blue in this dish. From what I understand, Cordon Bleu actually means "blue ribbon" in French and is an award given to culinary masterpieces. Here in

the states, I advocate for using deli ham and swiss cheese in your chicken, but if you'd like to make it more exotic, feel free to try prosciutto and gruyere cheese for more bite.

You need to start by venting your frustrations on a piece of meat. Place each boneless/skinless chicken breast in a zipped plastic bag and go to town on it. Use a rolling pin, a mallet, a can of soup... anything that will apply weighted pressure. You want the meat to be tenderized and spread thinner.

If you'd like to make this dairy-free/kosher/healthier, try using different filling in your meat. I suggest trying a combination of fresh spinach, sliced mushrooms and roasted garlic instead of ham and swiss in your chicken rolls. You

can use all the same directions, just substitute your inner components. Feel free to experiment and find out what earns the "blue ribbon" in your kitchen. Enjoy!

4 boneless/skinless chicken breasts

1/4 lb. deli ham, sliced thin

1/4 lb. swiss cheese, sliced thin

4 t. dijon mustard

1 t. celery seed

1 T. dried parsley flakes

salt and pepper

1 c. white wine

Beat chicken into flat, thin pieces. Lay flat and smear with mustard. Layer one piece of cheese and one piece of ham, then start at end and begin rolling chicken. Place each roll seam side down in the crock pot. Sprinkle seasonings on chicken rolls, then pour wine into crock pot, but do not rinse the seasonings back off. Cook on low for 4 hours. Remove rolls from pot and let cool for a few minutes so that juices can settle. Serve hot.

Crock Pot Turkey A La King

Hear ye, hear ye... thy dinner is potting! Thy royal family shall enjoy a delicious banquet of wild bird prepared in a lavish sauce that is truly fit for a king. Only, I don't have a royal chef, a housekeeping staff, a castle moat or a

dragon. I think the term “a la king” actually refers to the “richness” of the sauce on the meat. But instead of doing shredded or cubed chicken, I’ve decided to continue the royal renaissance theme to the meal and use whole turkey legs instead.

You don’t need to be savage in eating the turkey legs, simply serve them over pasta or rice or even biscuits and use a fork and knife instead of your hands. Enjoy this tender meat and please realize that you don’t need to be royalty to enjoy a divine meal.

3-4 turkey legs (2-3 lbs)

1 can condensed cream of mushroom soup

1 can condensed cream of celery soup

1/2 c. milk

3 T. flour

1 t. black pepper

1 t. paprika

1 t. celery seed

1 medium onion, diced

1 stalks celery, diced

1 roasted red pepper, sliced

Place turkey legs in crock pot laying flat (it’s best to use an oval shaped crock pot). Add onion and celery. Mix flour, seasonings, milk and soups in a separate bowl and then pour on top of meat and vegetables. Cook on low 6 hours. Add sliced roasted red pepper as garnish when serving.

Crock Pot Country Ribs

Let's make a play list for today's recipe to put you in the mood! By the time you sing along to *Sweet Home Alabama* (Lynyrd Skynyrd), *Little Bitty* (Alan Jackson) and the beginning of *Sweet Caroline* (Neil Diamond), you'll have a pot full of home cookin' set for a down-home country feast. Whether you live in the north, south, east or west, you'll enjoy this soothingly savory dish that goes great with any variety of side dishes. I'll be serving mine with steamed broccoli and maybe some scalloped potatoes. If I can figure out how to do the potatoes in the crock pot, you'll see it posted later this week!

Once your meal is made, add some more songs to your play list so you can dance around and sing when you are doing the dinner dishes later tonight. Enjoy!

1.5-2 lbs pork country ribs

1 cup ketchup

1/4 c. brown sugar

1/2 c. apple juice

2 T. apple cider vinegar

2-3 cloves garlic, chopped

1 t. celery seed

1/2 t. ground mustard

2 T. parsley flakes

Spray pot with non-stick spray. Place country ribs side by side in one layer (best if using an oval shaped crock pot). Mix remaining ingredients in a separate bowl and then pour on top of meat. Cook on low for 6-8 hours.