

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!

Crock Pot Thai Chicken soup

One of my favorite new indulgences is Thai food. I started a few years ago with Pad Thai. It's like the Thai version of lo mein, which is really just a step above the college-grade ramen noodle. But it started to introduce me to new flavors. Then, I moved up and through a few of the curry dishes; I quickly learned my ridiculously low capabilities for spicy food. I like my Thai dishes with either chicken, tofu or shrimp— I just think that these proteins absorb the most flavor from everything else it's cooked in.

There are some particular seasonings for Thai food, though, and I just don't keep these things in my kitchen yet. So while I'd love to have lemongrass and kaffir lime leaves abundantly available or even know where to buy some galangal, I'm replacing some of these flavors with some easier go-to foods that you can find at your regular grocery store.

My crock pot Thai chicken soup is an interpretation of a traditional Thai tom kha soup. It still has the coconut milk, chicken and mushrooms, but I use ginger instead of galangal and lime juice for the citrus twist. I also haven't broken down and bought fish sauce yet, so I just leave it out. Fish sauce's first impression is that it just tastes salty, so the broth really already fulfills that requirement for me.

I hope you enjoy the new flavors of this soup. If you want to make it more of a Thai dinner, try adding some white rice and veggies with curry sauce to make this a complete cultural meal!

3 boneless, skinless raw chicken breasts cut into strips

2 c. chicken broth

1 13.5 oz. can lite coconut milk

1 T. ginger root, peeled and minced

2 T. lime juice

6-8 mushrooms, cleaned and sliced

2 stalks celery, sliced

1 c. baby carrots

1 t. red chili pepper flakes

cilantro or basil leaves, sliced for garnish

Combine all ingredients in crock pot and cook on high for 4 hours. Serve with some green leaves sprinkled on top.

Crock Pot Thai Chicken Wraps

Tonight is open house at my son's school and the timing makes dinner as a family tough. So, it is going to be date night instead- but eating out is expensive, so I'll feed the kids early and then us parents can eat when we get home (and the kids are sleeping!). But since I'm not sure what time we'll get home from the school, I'm going to start the crock pot late this afternoon so that dinner is ready when we get back.

One of my favorite appetizers is those amazing sauced up thai chicken wraps that you can get at fancy Asian-inspired restaurants. The unfortunate part is that the lettuce is totally an illusion making you think this is a healthy choice.

The typical sauce is usually full of really salty, sugary, high calorie ingredients that I totally don't want to indulge in tonight. So I've come up with a healthier way to enjoy this treat, using the crock pot to get the most out of all the flavors and then whipping up a quick sauce in a pan to coat the whole mixture.

Most restaurants serve this dish with iceberg lettuce because it is crisp, but you can also use leaves of romaine lettuce or even tortillas. I hope you get to enjoy this at your next date night at home, too!

2 stalks celery, chopped

2 carrots, chopped

1/2 onion, chopped

6 oz. mushrooms, sliced

3 cloves garlic

1 8.75 oz. can water chestnuts, chopped

2 10 oz. cans white chicken in water

sauce:

1/2 c. peanut butter

1/4 c. soy sauce

1/4 c. water

3 T. rice wine vinegar

2 packets of Splenda

Put all filling ingredients in the crock pot and cook on low for four hours. In a saucepan, cook all sauce ingredients over medium heat (yes, on the stove), until it reaches a smooth consistency. If it is too thick, add 1/4 c. water and continue

stirring. Pour the sauce into the crock pot and stir the mixture well. Serve with chilled lettuce leaves.

Crock Pot Cowpea Soup



Most of you probably just read the title of this recipe and giggled. Yes, cowpea sounds a lot like cow pie. In fact, cow pee makes it seem even more funny. So if you haven't heard of a cowpea before, let me tell you a little about it. But seriously, you can stop giggling

now. Cowpeas are meaty little legumes that come in long pods. Once you pull the string off, you'll see the tightly packed peas pop out of the pod. They are sometimes classified as a black-eyed pea, but you can also get purple-eyed ones, they can be green, white or dark in color and they are hearty little nuggets to cook.

When you can get them fresh, you are good to go once they are out of the pod. If you get them dried, then you need to soak them in water overnight for about 8 hours and then rinse them a few times before you throw them in the pot.

Cowpeas are common in a lot of African recipes and provide excellent protein in many soups and rice dishes. These "beans" are also used in a lot of southern recipes in the USA. I even found a great recipe online for chow chow salsa that included canned black-eyed peas, but would be awesome with fresh cowpeas instead.

I thought that split pea soup sounded great to make this week—fresh cowpeas are readily available at my local farmers market right now and if I make it now and freeze it, it will make a great meal later this fall when the weather cools off a bit. I decided not to go the traditional route and cook the soup with a ham hock, but to keep it vegetarian instead. If you'd like to, you can add diced cooked ham or turkey sausage after you puree the soup and then heat it for an additional hour to warm the meat. Either way, the soup is filling and satisfying and an easy meal when served with a crusty bread.

Kudos to you for trying something new. Cowpeas are a nice variation, especially if your family already likes peas and beans. Plus, if you can get them fresh, it's fun to pull the string and unleash the pea from the cow. Enjoy!

2 c. fresh cowpeas

1 medium onion, chopped

2-3 carrots, chopped

2 stalks celery, chopped

3 garlic cloves, chopped

2 parsnips, peeled and chopped

3 c. water

1 t. salt

1 t. black pepper

1 T. fresh parsley, chopped

Put all ingredients in the crock pot and cook on high for 4-6 hours. Using a hand blender, puree soup in the crock pot. If desired, add 1/2 lb. diced cooked ham or turkey sausage to the pot and heat for one additional hour on low.

Crock Pot Summer Vegetable Puree



As much as winter is the time for soups and stews, I really like summer soups too. This one isn't too hearty since it's a puree and I think it tastes really light when it is served warm, not hot. I've had to become really creative with vegetables this summer— with so much amazing local produce, I

tend to over buy!

I like to base this recipe on carrots, because the orange color of the puree is so inviting, but feel free to experiment with whatever is in your basket. Just remember to include a starch (potato, sweet potato, kohlrabi, etc.) to help thicken the dish and something sweet (apple, beet, melon, peach) to make this unique for summer. Herbs are totally up to your discretion, too. I like fresh basil, but if you have rosemary or thyme or some oregano, those would be great as well.

Whatever you do, you are making a crock pot of wonderful by using fresh vegetables and your imagination. This should be served in a bowl, but it's perfect when it's thicker than soup, but thinner than mashed potatoes. PS— it's also a GREAT puree for baby food, but you can make it for your whole family to eat. Enjoy!

4 c. fresh carrots

2 stalks celery, chopped
2 yellow squash, cut into chunks
1 medium sweet onion, chopped
2 medium potatoes, cut into chunks
1 medium apple, cut off of core
2-3 cloves garlic, chopped
1 t. salt
1/2 t. black pepper
6-8 leaves fresh basil
2-3 c. vegetable broth

Put all vegetables and herbs into the crock pot, pour broth on top. Cook on high for 6 hours. Using immersion blender, puree in pot. (If you don't have one, then let dish cool and puree in batches in a standard blender.) Serve with a dollop of sour cream or greek yogurt on top and a sprinkle of fresh herbs.

Crock Pot Gumbo



I opened up my weekly CSA delivery and was so excited to see the ripe, fragrant produce. One thing in particular caught my attention— OKRA. The first thing I thought of was some hot, spicy gumbo. I think half of what I unpacked is going to end up in the gumbo— okra, tomatoes, basil, corn, green pepper... now

if only I stopped at a farm for some chicken and then headed to the coast for some shrimp, but I guess I'll have to buy those at the grocery store.

Gumbo is a perfect recipe for the crock pot because it needs to simmer for a long time to fuse all those flavors together. Cut your veggies into small pieces so you can have a bit of each morsel in your mouth! This soup would also freeze really well, so make the gumbo for dinner this week and then enjoy all these fresh treats again later this fall when they aren't so available.

This soup can also be made vegetarian if you leave out the chicken, sausage and shrimp. I'd amp up the amount of veggies though and maybe get a little more okra, so that this tastes more robust and unique than just vegetarian vegetable soup. You can also use Morningstar Farms chicken strips (fake meat) if you'd like to add some protein. Enjoy!

2 boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 1/2 inch cubes

1/2 lb. okra, sliced

1 c. of corn (cut off of fresh ears)

1/2 sweet onion, chopped

1 green pepper, seeded and chopped

3-4 ripe, sweet tomatoes, seeded and chopped

3 carrots, peeled and sliced thin

2 stalks celery, sliced

4-6 leaves fresh basil, chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 t. salt

1 t. black pepper

1/2 t. cayenne pepper

1/2 t. paprika

1/2 t. chili powder

1 T. parsley

2 T. Worcestershire sauce

2 T. Tabasco sauce

2 c. water

3 pork sausages, cooked and sliced

1/2 lb shrimp, peeled and cleaned

2 c. cooked white rice

Combine all vegetables in crock pot. Add liquid ingredients. Sprinkle with all seasonings. Place chicken pieces on top of mixture next. Cook on low for 4-6 hours. Add shrimp, sausage and cooked white rice and cook for an additional 1 hour on low.

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 Barbequed Salami

My nana didn't make cookies. She didn't make tea sandwiches. She didn't make cute food like fruit, desserts, hors d'oeuvres, cordials or ganache. But she made amazing, hearty dishes in mass quantity like spaghetti and brisket and homemade potato salad. But anyone in my family could tell you that the one dish that she was known for was her barbequed salami. It is spicy and soft and just the right amount of sauce to smother a plain hamburger bun and make it melt.

Nana always bought the big tubes of kosher salami and hand sliced in and then quartered it. I don't know how she made it so thin. I suggest using the tubes of Hebrew National salami, but here's an easier way to prepare it— cut it in half longways and then in half longways again (it will almost look like four hot dogs at this point). Then, run it through your food processor to slice it really thin. Or, you can do it by hand, like Nana, if you have a sharp knife and a lot of

patience.

Kudos to Nana for always serving this amazing feast to our family, for getting us all together and giving us memories to last forever. This will always be a favorite meal for me and I can't wait to share it with all of you, too. Make it for your next picnic, family gathering or game night. Barbequed salami is best served with a pickle, some wavy potato chips to scoop up anything that falls off the bun and a huge stack of napkins. Enjoy!

2 lbs salami, sliced and quartered

2 12 oz. bottles Heinz chili sauce

1 c. ketchup

1 onion, quartered and sliced

1 green pepper, minced

2 stalks celery, minced

2 T. white vinegar

1/4 c. brown sugar

1 t. dry mustard

1 t. chili powder

1 t. Worcestershire sauce

1/2 t. Tabasco sauce

Prepare meat to be sliced and quartered. Place in crock pot. Cook onion, green pepper and celery in a pan until soft, but not browned. Add to meat. Mix remaining ingredients in a separate bowl and then pour into crock pot. Mix all ingredients together. Heat on low for 2-3 hours. Serve on soft, plain hamburger buns.

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.