

# Crock Pot Sausage-Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms



These 5-ingredient stuffed caps are a delicious main or side dish!

Two tips with today's amazing recipe.....

1. Find a ground sausage that you like. It can be a prepped tube from the grocery store or a visit to a special deli or anything in between. But when you find it, it becomes a mainstay in your home for breakfast, lunch or dinner. No endorsement here, but my personal favorite is the country pork sausage from The Fresh Market. I also like that they shape it into the face of a pig each day and that makes me smile. But I really like the combinations of spices that gives it a little kick and a lot of taste.

2. Learn how to clean a mushroom. Because it is a sad sad day when you didn't REALLY get all the dirt out of it and then after 4-6 hours your dinner actually tastes more like mud than anything else. That's disgusting.

## How to Clean a Mushroom Cap

*Here's my step by step process to clean a portobello mushroom properly. Sorry for the footage- I had the phone propped on my paper towel holder, but I promise to start uploading better videos soon!*



The BEFORE mushrooms are on the left and the AFTER ones are beautiful on the right.

Now that your mushrooms are prepped, you just need to mix together the ingredients, much like making a meatloaf. This dish will taste much more complex than the basic ingredients because of all the seasonings in the sausage- so remember to pick a good one.

## Crock Pot Sausage-Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms

Serves 2-3

4-6 portobello mushroom caps, properly cleaned of skin and “gills”

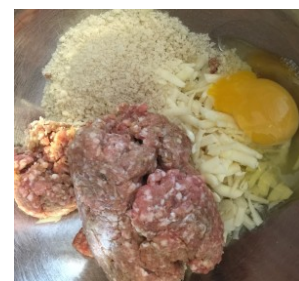
1/2 c. shredded gruyere cheese

1/2 c. shredded white cheddar cheese

1/2 cup panko bread crumbs

1 egg

Prep and wash mushrooms and then put in crockpot with the smooth side down and the underside facing UP. Mix the remaining ingredients in a separate bowl and then form into patties, much like a hamburger.



Place each patty into each mushroom cap and smush just a little so that the two things join together. Do not push so hard that you break the mushroom cap, but if you just did- it's ok. A broken mushroom tastes just the same.



Cook on high for 3-4 hours. The filling will cook through and brown just a little on top.

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# Crock Pot Buffalo Chicken

I have a real problem with breasts. Even when they are big and juicy, I just don't like them.

Haha, now that I have your attention, let me explain. I'm not really a fan of boneless, skinless chicken breasts. I know that they are healthy and lean and great protein, but I just don't love the texture or the challenge of cooking them. When we grill them, I always feel like they get too done on the outside to make sure that they are cooked all the way through. In the oven, they just have too much of a tendency to dry out. So of course– I cook mine in the crock pot so that they stay moist and soft.

I thawed out a package of four chicken breasts and after staring at them for three days in the refrigerator, I knew I either had to cook them or throw them out. So here's what I did... I cooked them, I shredded them, I covered them in hot sauce and I served them on a bun with some cheese and ranch dressing. THERE WERE NO LEFTOVERS!!! It worked! I like (chicken) breasts!

I used a bottle of Ken's Steakhouse Buffalo Wing Sauce on my chicken, but if you'd rather have barbeque sauce or even something sweet like teriyaki, it would work well for this recipe. We really like chicken wings at restaurants, but it makes such a mess to fry them at home– this recipe gives the flavor without the mess or the fat. When you cook the chicken in the apple juice, it gives it a little extra zing and then the sauce just saturates the meat with flavor. Enjoy!!



1.5-2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken breasts

3/4 c. 100% apple juice

1 bottle Ken's Steakhouse Buffalo Wing Sauce

(hot dogs buns, cheddar cheese, ranch dressing... and celery sticks on the side, of course!)

Put chicken breasts in crock pot, then pour apple juice in. Cook on high for three hours. Use a baster to remove the excess liquid, then using two forks or a fork and a knife, shred the meat in the crock pot. Pour sauce in next and stir until all meat is coated. It's hard to say exactly how many ounces of sauce because it depends on how much meat you used. But add a little sauce at a time until you have enough, but the meat isn't swimming. Cook for one more hour on low. Serve meat on a hot dog bun with cheese and ranch (or blue cheese) dressing.

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## Crock Pot Sweet Potato and Corn Chowder

This recipe comes from my friend I.H.K. and she is an amazing cook. This soup is thick and chunky and a whole meal in one bowl. She recommends serving it with tortilla chips or corn bread. Using an immersion blender can really change a soup from drab to fab by altering the consistency to be smooth and creamy instead of watery.

Since this recipe takes 8 hours on low, it's a great one to start before you leave for work in the morning and then come home to a beautiful dinner. Take a chance on this vegetarian

chowder and enjoy!

2-3 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed (about 1/2 inch)

1 medium onion, chopped

1 can whole-kernel corn (15-16 oz.), drained

1 can creamed corn

1 teaspoon salt

fresh ground black pepper, to taste

2 cups broth (I use the vegetarian "chicken" flavor)

2 cups half-and-half or whole milk (depending on how virtuous you want to be)

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 teaspoon smoked sweet or hot paprika (optional)

1 cup of shredded cheddar cheese

Put first set of ingredients in crock pot and cook for about 8 hours on low or for 4 hours on high. Once the sweet potatoes are tender, stir everything together. Use an immersion blender to break up the ingredients as much as you want—I like my chowder chunky, but breaking up some of the sweet potatoes and corn makes the soup thicker and more luxurious. When only 1 hour of cooking time is left (if the slow cooker has been on high, turn down to low) ADD: half and half or milk, butter, paprika and cheddar cheese.

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## Crock Pot Grits with Sausage

Our county schools have been out of school for three days and the grocery has been out of milk for two. Oh, the fun of a southern winter! I have decided not to venture out until the roads are better so I'm getting creative with foods from the pantry and freezer.

Since we've already had crock pot soup and grilled cheese sandwiches and also crock pot Cincinnati chili, I thought it would be fun to do a crock pot breakfast for dinner. I like finding new ways to remake some of our favorites, using the crock pot to my advantage. So this is my rendition of our breakfast favorites.

1 c. quick grits

4 c. water

1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

6 turkey sausage precooked breakfast links, thawed and sliced thin

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

Put all ingredients in crock pot and stir. Cook on high for 3 hours. Consistency should be thick and almost creamy— all grit particles should be softened and cheese melted throughout. When serving, top with your choice of salsa, peppered gravy, shredded cheese, butter, salt and/or pepper.

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## [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.

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## Crock Pot Nacho Fries

I remember as a kid going to diners and cute little restaurants with good homecooking and a little grease on everything. It was always a treat to get something smothered or covered or dipped or drizzled. I don't usually eat a lot of fried and greasy, especially not in the crock pot, but today it just sounded good. I'm serving my crock pot dish with a side salad and low-cal dressing. Maybe if I wash it down with a Diet Coke it will just cancel out the bad stuff.

One of my favorite appetizers from my youth was "not-so-fries"—it was cheese and bacon and sour cream on top of silver dollar shaped french fries. The fried coins were coated

in toppings and best when shared with friends! I also really like bar food like nachos— again with the cheese covered goodness! My other favorite food isn't as unhealthy, but I really like pita and tzatziki sauce. There is something about the cold, creamy cucumber that becomes highly addictive. As you can probably conclude, I am completely food-oriented, so most of my memories include visual and culinary associations.

So, it is now my intention to combine three of my favorite snack foods in one amazing crock pot side dish. Enjoy!

1 lb. bag frozen french fries

1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

1/2 c. frozen corn kernels

2 oz. jarred jalapeno slices

4 oz. salsa

toppings:

sour cream

1/2 English cucumber, peeled, sliced and quartered

Coat crock pot with non-stick spray. Spread frozen french fries in bottom of pot, layer with ingredients. Cook on high for 2 hours. Serve with a dollop of sour cream and some cucumber. Feel free to use a fork or your fingers to consume!

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# 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.