

# 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 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 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.

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# Crock Pot Chicken Caesar

It's not the ides of March, but I feel the need to honor our dear friend, Julius. After an intense workout this morning, I feel like an Olympian! I am in need of good, lean protein, so I came home and started a healthy pot of meat and veggies with some great flavor. This recipe is super easy and I promise that you'll feel full and pleased at dinner tonight.

Frozen chicken can be a little ridiculous. I'm not sure where some companies find the Pam Anderson's of chickens, but the serving size of one frozen breast is much too large for one person. Fresh chicken breasts are usually even a little less reasonable so I prefer to buy fresh, cut them each in half and then freeze them myself. My advice is to picky about your meat; buy the lean kind, fresh or frozen, and accompany your proteins with full flavors from seasonings and vegetables.

If you plan ahead and prep your food, you can have a little more control over your portions and still make your favorite meals. So while this chicken recipe calls for TWO chicken breasts, it actually can usually feed four people. If you have leftovers, put the chicken on a mixed green salad tomorrow for lunch and you'll be cheering "All hail, Caesar!" all afternoon. Enjoy!

3 medium potatoes, diced

6 oz. frozen green beans

2 frozen boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1/2 c. light caesar dressing

Layer ingredients in crock pot in order provided. Cook on high

for 4 hours.

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## 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 bouillion. 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!