

Crock Pot Sweet Potato Soup

I've always been a fan of our grill... really, for two reasons. 1. In the summertime, it's a great way to eat healthy and not heat up the kitchen and 2. when we grill, my husband is usually the one cooking! Since it's been such a mild winter, we've been taking advantage of the unseasonably warm evenings and grilling our food. But since local produce isn't as plentiful in January, I've been getting creative.

So I've been grilling sweet potatoes. Sure, they get their glory at Thanksgiving when they are smothered and covered by marshmallows or syrup or sugar. Sometimes they even make a repeat performance at Christmas or Easter or Passover, but my new absolute favorite way to eat a sweet potato is by grilling it to perfection.



It's so easy, let me tell you the few easy steps... Wash your sweet potatoes. Poke fork holes all over. Wrap sweet potato in aluminum foil. Grill on med-high heat for one hour, turning the sweet potato halfway through. That's it! When the sweet vibrant goodness is done, it will be easy to squeeze the flesh with tongs. Please be cautious though, sometimes the sweet juices will run out of the foil (and I don't want you to get burned).

So a couple nights ago, I grilled five sweet potatoes. I figured we would eat the leftovers so I made a couple extra.

And these extra potatoes became the inspiration for tonight's new recipe! With a few ingredients I already had on hand, I was able to literally "whip together" this amazing meal. This crock pot sweet potato soup is thick and hearty and even though soup might not be fresh and exciting for a winter meal, adding in the flavor from the grill really makes a difference.

2 medium sweet potatoes, already cooked in grill or oven, cooled and then skinned

3 c. chicken broth

1/2 c. [caramelized onions](#)

1/4 t. nutmeg

1/4 t. chili powder

1/4 t. celery seed

1/4 t. curry powder

1 clove garlic, minced

1/2 c. heavy cream

Put all ingredients (except heavy cream) in crock pot, stir and then cook on low for 3-4 hours. Use a hand blender and puree mixture until smooth, then stir in heavy cream. Serve hot with a tiny sprinkle of nutmeg or curry on top.

[Crock Pot Chicken Tortilla](#)

Soup

The morning is half over and my whole family is still wearing pajamas. Yay for snow days! But since it's dreadful and cold outside, I need something hot and satisfying to fill our bellies. I decided that we should head south of the border tonight and enjoy some Mexican fare, so today I am sharing my recipe for chicken tortilla soup. This recipe is simple and easy (and note— it freezes well, too!) and you can definitely vary the spiciness of the dish, depending how much heat your mouth can withstand.

I am sharing my basic recipe for this soup, but feel free to add any of the following to the pot for additional spice. I would recommend only picking one or two of these things as each one packs a punch:

1/2 t. cayenne pepper OR

1 chopped jalapeno pepper OR

1 t. Tabasco sauce

You can also decorate your chicken tortilla soup in a variety of ways. Try sprinkling some fresh, chopped cilantro on top, or a few slices of avocado. If the spice is more than you anticipated, cut it with some shredded monterey jack cheese or a dollop of sour cream. Most restaurants serve this soup with tortilla strips— you can crumble regular tortilla chips on top for the same effect. Or just like an old scantron test, you can select E. All of the Above (that's the correct answer!!)

We might be skating on the lawn and building a snowman on the porch, but at dinner tonight, we'll all be saying "Ole!"

1 28 oz. can petite diced tomatoes

2 10 oz. cans diced tomatoes with green chiles

1 15 oz. can sweet corn, no salt added (drained)

1 lb. frozen chicken breasts or tenders

1/2 medium onion, chopped

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

1 T. chopped fresh cilantro

1 bay leaf

1 t. chili powder

1 t. cumin

1/2 t. black pepper

1/2 t. salt

Put all ingredients in crock pot and stir so that the spices mingle with all of the solid foods. Cook on low for 6 hours. Remove chicken, shred it and then put back in crock pot for one hour. Serve with any of the additional spices or toppings outlined above.

[Sarah's Vegetable Chili](#)

I love when my friends and fans share their recipes... everyone loves a good crock pot dish that is worthy of sharing! So from one crock pot fanatic to another, here is Sarah's recipe for vegetable chili. It sounds like a great way to use fresh produce and also make a vegetarian dish that will fill everyones' bellies with happiness. I especially like her tools of measurement. Enjoy!

Chop one metric crap-ton (that's 1 HUGE zucchini, 3 small bell peppers, 2 big handfuls of green and wax beans and 2 ears of corn, hulled) to bite-sized pieces and drop into crock pot. Add 3 (15 oz) cans of beans (I used pinto, kidney and dark kidney). Stir to combine.

Separately, combine 1 (8oz) can tomato sauce, 1 (6 oz) can tomato paste, 4 cloves minced garlic, 4 T chili powder, 1 T dried mustard powder, 1 t oregano and 1 t ground cumin. Plop over veggies.

Add 1 box (4 C) vegetable stock. (I like wetter chilis, but you can use less if you prefer a chunkier chili). Stir to combine and coat all the veggies with the chili goodness.

Pop on low for I think mine was on for about 10 hours, so I'll go with the 8-10 hours on low. At this point, you can add cooked elbow noodles, sour cream, cheese, fresh onion...whatever you like.

I'm thinking carrots would sweeten it up a bit if that's what you like. OOH! I bet barley would be good too...Lookie at me, cooking without a complete recipe. My sister would be so proud! ☐ Next recipe will be filled with "a pinch of" and "a dash of" and "half an eggshell of"...."

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 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 Cincinnati Chili

If you are unfamiliar with Cincinnati chili, let me explain to you how this is different from what you might think. This is more like a spaghetti sauce, than a stew. It usually has some combination of allspice, cinnamon and sometimes cocoa powder in it. There are no beans cooked in this pot and it is not meant to be consumed by itself. It is however, an amazing

topper for hot dogs, spaghetti, french fries or even in a tortilla! When you eat this, there are different ways of presenting it– five in fact! Two-way would be spaghetti and chili, three-way adds finely shredded cheddar cheese, four-way diced onions and five-way would be all of the above plus some dark red kidney beans. Crazy enough– you can also top it with oyster crackers and hot sauce, if you so choose.

Skyline and Gold Star are probably the most common brands of Cincinnati Chili and you can get it at the fast-food restaurants or in cans at the grocery store. But since I don't live in the Great Lakes area anymore, I make my own crock pot Cincinnati chili using my best friend's mom's recipe. Yes, it's three degrees of separation, but it's still so good! So to "K" and "R"– thank you for sharing your recipe with me, it's better than the original!!

1.5 lbs. ground beef

1 29 oz. can tomato sauce

1 14.5 oz can peeled whole tomatoes

1 onion, diced

1/2 t. allspice

1/2 t. cinnamon

1 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

1 1/2 t. chili powder

1 t. white vinegar

1 clove garlic, minced

3 bay leaves

Brown meat in a pan, then add to crock pot. Add all ingredients and stir well. Cook on high 4-5 hours. Smash peeled tomatoes while still in the crock pot. Remove bay leaves before serving. See notes above for different ways of enjoying your Cincinnati chili, including on a hot dog, on french fries, in a tortilla, or most commonly on spaghetti and topped with finely shredded cheddar cheese.

Crock Pot Vegetarian Chicken Chili



Did you catch the title?? Does it sound like a contradiction to say “vegetarian” and then “chicken” in the same meal?! It is not. Thanks to modern day culinary creativity, I can make chicken chili for friends that don’t want to eat meat. This is a pretty easy recipe, but I like that it is a crowd pleaser and

still meets certain dietary limitations.

Give this chicken chili a try next time you host a friend that is vegetarian or keeps kosher– they will be so happy that you honored their wishes and still served tasty dishes. (yes, that rhyme was intentional.) And don’t think this meal is for light weights– you can serve this at your next party or sporting event and even the men will be raving about your soup– it’s spicy, it’s filling and everyone will enjoy!

4 c. vegetarian chicken broth

2 cans great northern beans (do not drain)

1 4 oz can diced green chiles (do not drain)

1/2 green pepper, chopped

1/2 medium onion, chopped

2 c. frozen corn

1 T. parsley

1 T. chili powder

1 t. oregano

1/2 t. cumin

1/2 t. paprika

1/2 t. cayenne pepper

1/2 t. black pepper

1 package Morning Star Farms chicken strips**

Put everything in the crock pot except for the chicken strips. Stir together and cook on low for 4-5 hours. Add the frozen chicken strips and cook for one hour more. You can divide the chicken strips up into small pieces once they are cooked through.

****IF YOU'D LIKE THIS TO BE AN ACTUAL MEAT DISH, BUY PRE-COOKED FRESH OR FROZEN CHICKEN STRIPS AND FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS THE EXACT SAME.**

Crock Pot Vegetarian Bean Dip

We're going to a party this weekend and everyone is supposed to bring a side dish to go with a taco bar main course. It sounds like lots of fun (hoping for margaritas, good music and salty lime tortilla chips) and I figured I'd make something in the crock pot that would be hot and spicy, just like the crowd! While other people might bring chips or cold dips, this dish is really easy and yummy and a little unique. It's nice to have a hot dip that doesn't get crusty and weird from sitting out. Feel free to serve this with some additional jalapenos, salsa and sour cream.

1 15 oz. can of vegetarian refried beans

1 c. chunky salsa (mild, medium or hot)

1 c. sliced black olives

1 c. shredded colby jack cheese

1 15 oz. can of black beans, drained and rinsed

1 t. cumin

1 t. chili powder

1/2 c. sour cream

Mix all ingredients together in crock pot, except for sour cream. Cook on low for 3 hours, then add sour cream, mix and heat for 1 more hour on low. Serve with tortilla chips meant for scooping.

(If you have leftovers, try putting a hearty serving into a soft taco shell tomorrow with some shredded lettuce and diced tomatoes, it makes a great second meal!)

Crock Pot Sloppy Joes

Here's your mission if you choose to accept it: *make dinner for four adults and two kids when you are staying at a friends house, you found one pound of ground turkey in the freezer and there is a pantry of assorted cans. And... GO!*

While visiting friends this week, I figured it was only appropriate to help with meals since they are at work all day. I know there is a crock pot on staff in the kitchen, so I accepted this mission without hesitation. Crock pot cooking is just the easiest way to make a crowd-pleasing dish without making a huge mess.

With our mix of adults and kids, I figured crock pot sloppy joes would be great. But with only one pound of meat, I knew that I needed to pump up the dish with some added ingredients. This recipe worked out great because it kept the true flavor of sloppy joes, but included some extra protein. Try this out next time you have to feed friends or family members or are looking for a no-fuss take on an old-time favorite. Enjoy!

1 lb. ground turkey

1/2 medium onion, diced (or 3 T. dried minced onion)

1 green pepper, seeded and diced

1 14 oz. can of black beans, drained and rinsed

1 6 oz. can of tomato paste

1/2 cup brown sugar

1 t. cumin

1 t. black pepper

1 t. chili powder

1 t. garlic powder

1/2 t. salt

1 t. worchestershire sauce

2 t. apple cider vinegar

1 t. yellow mustard

1 c. tomato juice or vegetable juice

1/4 c. water

Brown ground meat thoroughly in 1-2 t. of vegetable oil. Then add green peppers and (fresh) onions, cook until they are soft, and add to crock pot. In a separate bowl, mix together the rest of the ingredients and the pour on top of cooked items in crock pot, stir together. Add in the black beans and stir once more. Cook on low for 4-6 hours. Serve on hamburger buns for traditional presentation or use King's Hawaiian Original Rolls to make cute little sloppy joe sliders.