

Crock Pot Chana Masala



So I recently riddled my fans on [Facebook](#) about whether they would want a crock pot chicken marsala or crock pot chana masala recipe... and of course, you guys asked for both! So as promised, I have created both recipes and I'm sharing them with you this week. First up, is chana masala (even though I made the other recipe first!), but since that is the smell filling

my house, it is the first to write up and share. It's like the amazing fumes are traveling through my body and out my fingertips as I type.

You might recognize this dish from your local Indian buffet. With just a few ingredients, but plenty of seasonings and flavor, it's a great side dish. Served with rice and naan bread, it makes a fantastic dinner. I think it's a great introduction to Indian food too because it's not too potent or unfamiliar in flavor. I would still consider myself a novice with cooking Indian food and I much prefer to go out and eat someone else's delicious recipes than my own, but sometimes it's nice to try something new and customize it yourself.

(I really like the [Simply Organic herbs](#) from Amazon. I think they are affordable and a quality product. I've linked each ingredient so you can buy them if you'd like to use what I use, too. I do not work with them directly, but I do use them consistently.)

So here's my go at crock pot chana masala. I hope you are inspired to try cooking something new, too!

Crock Pot Chana Masala

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 6 hours

Serves: 8-10 people

1 28 oz. can chick peas, drained

1 28 oz. can diced tomatoes, NOT DRAINED

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 yellow onion, diced (= about 1/2 cup)

1/2 t. [ground coriander](#)

1/2 t. [cumin powder](#)

1/2 t. [turmeric powder](#)

1 t. [garam masala powder](#)

1 t. minced fresh ginger

1 T. fresh cilantro leaves, sliced

1 lime, cut into wedges

Put all ingredients in crock pot and mix together. Cook on low for 6 hours. Serve with a lime wedge to squeeze for flavor, a side of basmati rice and naan bread for a complete meal.

[Crock Pot Vegetarian Refried](#)

Beans



With just a few ingredients, you can add a rich side dish to Taco Tuesday- on any day of the week!

In our house, every Tuesday is TACO TUESDAY! The kids have become so accustomed to it, that sometimes I like to mess with them and make tacos on the “wrong” day of the week. If we eat something different on a Tuesday, they are a little disappointed... but if we eat tacos on any night other than Tuesday, it’s almost unacceptable. I’ll say “it’s Taco Tuesday on Wednesday!” and they respond, “we can’t eat tacos on Wednesdays!” “But why??” I ask. “Because we’d have to call it Waco Wednesday!” they would shout with despair.

Oh trust me, that scenario is totally legit. It happens. Scripted or not, that’s how it plays out every freaking time.

But this week is an exception, because it’s Cinco de Mayo on a Thursday. That’s an unwritten acceptable negotiation and my hellions are ok with moving the taco consumption in order to celebrate another nation’s announcement of victory in war.

(Not to be confused with Mexico's Independence Day, that's September 16– which is also not a Tuesday this year.)

My mini-me's could practically prepare taco night by themselves– hard shells and tortillas. Sour cream. Shredded cheese. Lettuce, tomato, onions, and olives. Jalapeños and [this ridiculous taco sauce](#) for mommy. Homemade tomatillo salsa verde, too. And then ground beef or chicken. By the book, typical American-style taco night. Extra napkins, of course.



The perfect side dish
for your next fiesta!

But since tomorrow is a celebration, I wanted to introduce a new dish into taco night. Growing up, a trip to Taco Bell always included way too many tacos and a side of pintos and cheese. What's that, you ask? A bowl of refried pinto beans and a handful of soft, shredded cheddar cheese. They put a lid on it and by the time you filled your fountain drink and sat down to scarf, the cheese would be gooey and melted perfectly. Ok, it was crap quality, but the taste was so good!

So here's my attempt at recreating a mouth-watering memory and introducing it to my family. Let's all celebrate our little victories– not just the big war-type ones. Sometimes sitting down to eat as a family is a victory in itself. Ole!

Crock Pot Vegetarian Refried Beans

Serves: 8-12

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 8-10 hours

1 lb. dried pinto beans

1 c. [crock pot caramelized onions](#)

3 cloves garlic, peeled

2 t. cumin

2 t. salt

6 c. water

Put all ingredients in crock pot and give it a stir. The water level should cover everything. Cook on high 8-10 hours or low 12 hours. Remove excess water that isn't absorbed, do not discard. Puree everything in the crock pot using [an immersion blender](#). Add reserved water 1 tablespoon at a time until desired smooth consistency is reached. Serve immediately with toppings like shredded cheddar cheese, sour cream, jalapeños, bacon bits, or use inside of a taco or burrito.

**[Crock Pot Mushroom-Spinach
Soup with Middle Eastern](#)**

Spices



So it's Saturday and I've got a date with this really fungi... haha, get it?! I'm making a mushroom soup!

This version is an adaption of [a recipe from the New York Times](#), it is not my original creation. But I saw the recipe online and thought... this looks delicious, but has WAY TOO MANY steps. Let's make it easy and throw it all in the [crock pot](#) instead. And guess what. Yup. It works just perfectly without the extra hassle and dirty dishes.

There are so many wonderful varieties of mushrooms, you can change up the the recipe a million different times for different texture and flavor results. Play around with it. I have increased the quantity of seasonings after reading reviews saying that it needed a little more umphh. I don't think that's a technical culinary term, but neither is WOW or YUM and those are the things I'm going for here! I've added links for you to my [favorite brand of seasonings](#), just in case you don't already have these items on hand.

Try this soup with a dollop of plain greek yogurt and some naan or pita bread. Enjoy!

Crock Pot Mushroom-Spinach Soup with Middle Eastern Spices

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 7 hours

Serves: 8 people

~1-1.5 lbs fresh mushrooms- cleaned and diced=about 5-6 cups
(try button, cremini, portobello, Baby Bella, etc)

1/4 lb shallot (one) finely diced

2 T. tomato paste

3 T. salted butter

2 t. dried [thyme](#)

1 1/2 t. [coriander](#)

2 t. [cinnamon](#)

2 t. [cumin](#)

1 t. salt

1/2 t. freshly cracked black pepper

5 cups water

5 ounces fresh baby spinach

1 lime

plain greek yogurt (optional)

Dice mushrooms and shallots and stir together in [crock pot](#). Add seasonings, tomato paste, and butter. Pour water in, but do not stir. Cook on low for 6 hours- you may lift the lid and give it a stir after the butter appears to be completely melted.

After 6 hours, add the spinach and squeeze about 2 T. of fresh lime juice into the crock pot, give it all a stir, and heat on low for up to one more hour... or until spinach is wilted. Serve with a dollop of plain greek yogurt.

Crock Pot Pork Roast

Ok fans, this one is really easy. It might surprise you to think about doing a roast in your crock pot, but again—anything that can be cooked in the oven, can be cooked in the crock pot. I started this roast while I drank my breakfast coffee and it was done by lunchtime. Dinner tonight is going to be a breeze. (I should note that my crockpot cooks quickly, even on low. You will want to use a meat thermometer to determine when your roast is cooked through. Pork is done when the internal temperature of the meat reached 160 degrees).



I like that the dry rub on this roast is simple and you can vary up the flavor and switch out other seasonings, if you prefer. I think that the brown sugar really complements the flavor of the pork, but if you'd rather cut down on the sweetness or calories, you can use other seasonings and leave out some of the brown sugar.

Enjoy this roast from your crockpot and savor the flavors. Add a couple side dishes and you'll have a complete meal for dinner tonight or even entertaining. Enjoy!

2 lb. pork loin rib end roast

1 t. thyme

1 t. parsley

1 t. garlic powder

1 t. cumin

1/2 t. black pepper

1/2 t. salt

3 T. brown sugar

1/2 c. water

Rinse roast and pat dry, then place in crock pot on metal trivet (this lets the juices run without letting the meat sit in the juice). Mix all seasonings and brown sugar in a separate bowl and place mix on the meat, patting down with your fingers until mixture is evenly distributed. Add 1/2 c. water to crock pot, but do not pour it on top of meat. Cook on low for 4-6 hours.

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.

Crock Pot Vegetarian Fiesta

After a great weekend away, it's nice to be back home to cook. But surprise!! Company for dinner tonight. I haven't had a chance to go to the grocery store yet, so I need to whip up something for dinner that is tasty and unique without needing a separate shopping list.

Here's one of my secrets- I always have tortillas in the refrigerator as a quick fix (think... chicken quesadillas, deli wraps, flatbread pizzas) and I also keep random cans of food in the pantry. Voila! Dinner is served. Seriously, it's just that easy. Try stocking your kitchen with some of these easy ingredients and next time you have last minute guests, you'll have a great meal to serve. Enjoy!

2 15 oz. cans of black beans, drained and rinsed

2 10 oz. cans of diced tomatoes with green chiles

1 15 oz. can corn kernels, drained

1 10 oz. can of enchilada sauce

1 lb. bag of frozen mixed pepper strips

1 t. cumin

1 t. dried oregano

1/2 t. black pepper

Pour all canned ingredients and seasonings into crock pot and stir together. Add frozen peppers and stir again. Cook on low for 3-4 hours. Use this as a filling for soft tortillas, serve it on white rice as an entree or on top of shredded lettuce as a salad.

[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 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.