

Crock Pot Beet Salad



In the midst of summer heat, I love to use my crock pot to cook the season's ripe vegetables. My kitchen stays cool and my taste buds get to dance. This week, I had friends bring me fresh beets from their community CSA. I love roasting beets in a little bit of olive oil, salt and pepper, so I thought this would be a fun challenge for the crock pot.

When you roast beets in the oven, there is the chance of overcooking, resulting in a dried, wrinkled sad result for this moist and vibrant treat. With the locked-in moisture of the crock pot, I really think that beets get the chance to both marinate and cook to perfection.

Please note— this recipe calls for FRESH produce. This recipe is not intended for canned beets. When you are preparing fresh beets, be cautious that the juice doesn't dye your hands, your counter or your cutting board. But you will benefit greatly by doing the preparation, because the taste and texture of using fresh produce for this recipe is so much better than you could ever replicate with a canned product.

6 large fresh beets, greens removed and skins peeled, sliced

3-4 fresh white radishes, greens removed and skins peeled, then sliced

1/4 c. water

3 T. olive oil

1/2 t. salt

1 t. ground black pepper

1 t. celery seed

1/2 t. ground mustard

1/4 onion, sliced thin

2 T. red wine vinegar

topping: 1/2 c. crumbled feta cheese

Put all ingredients in crock pot and stir together. Cook on low for 4 hours. After beet salad cools, transfer and refrigerate until salad is cold. When serving, top it with 1/2 c. crumbled feta cheese.

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.