

Crock Pot Roasted Chicken (and curried chicken salad)

It's Friday! I work hard all week waiting for today. Tonight we get to start our weekend. I can't think of a better way to welcome the weekly 2-day vacation than to have a family meal together at home. To make it more special, we are having guests this evening as well. Ok crock pot, it's time to do your thing and make dinner tonight taste like it was hard to make (but really it's only noon o'clock and it's already done).

The most challenging part of this recipe is making sure that your meat will fit in the crock pot. If you have a round and more vertical design of a crock pot, you might have to use a cornish hen instead of a chicken if you want it to fit! This recipe really works best in a 5-6 qt. crockpot that is **oval shaped**. I just thought you should know this before you start trying to shove everything in and then being disappointed when it doesn't fit. *(check out my next post about buying a new crock pot!)*

If you have leftover chicken after tonight, I'd recommend making curried chicken salad tomorrow. Add a stalk of fresh, chopped celery (not a cooked one from the pot), add a small can of diced water chestnuts, 1/2 c. quartered red grapes and then enough mayo to make it a good consistency. Then, add curry powder, a little salt and pepper— I can't tell you how much because I don't know how much chicken you have left, but remember that curry powder becomes more potent after it gets a chance to fester. Make this salad up and then put it in the fridge for a couple hours— when it turns a darker copper color (from the curry), it's ready to eat!

Well there you go, I guess it's a two recipe day. You have one

for today and one for tomorrow!

Now for to the roasted chicken recipe:

1 3-4 lb. fresh chicken, thawed, rinsed and patted dry

2 T. olive oil

2 cloves garlic, chopped

8 oz. baby carrots

3 stalks celery, cut into 2 inch chunks

1/2 med. onion, cut into chunks

dash of paprika

salt and pepper

If you have a trivet that fits in your crock pot, I'd recommend using it. It keeps your chicken just elevated from sitting in it's own juices and makes it MUCH easier to pull the chicken out when it is done (which makes for a nicer presentation too). Place chicken in pot- to know it's on the correct side, you should see the smooth skin covering the chicken breasts. Brush the skin with the olive oil and sprinkle with the chopped garlic. Position the carrots, celery and onions around the bird. Sprinkle all contents with paprika, salt and pepper. Cook on low for 8-10 hours, depending on bird size.

Crock Pot Pomme de Tara

A friend of mine wants to use her crock pot more, but has an

allergy to tomatoes. After doing a little research, I agreed with her— most crock pot recipes seem to have some sort of tomato or tomato-based product in them! It is an injustice that my friend should not be able to embrace easy crock pot cooking more often. So, my next few recipes will definitely not be red. And if it's just that you don't like tomatoes, these might just become some of your new favorites too.

This is an easy potato casserole that gets jazzed up by the cheese and chips. Since the french word for potato is "pomme de terre", I am honoring my friend Tara with this recipe for "Pomme de Tara". Enjoy! ☐

(Is there a recipe you'd like to see or an ingredient you'd like to avoid?? Click on my contact page and send me a note—I'm happy to post something just for YOU!)

6-8 potatoes, diced

1 onion, chopped

4 T. butter, melted

1 c. milk

1 c. sour cream

1-2 garlic cloves, chopped fine

1 t. parsley

salt and pepper

1 cup Cool Ranch Doritos— crunched up into little bitty pieces

1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Put potatoes and onions in the crockpot first. In a separate bowl, mix together melted butter, milk, sour cream and seasonings. Pour mixture over potatoes and onions and stir. Cook on low for 6 hours. Turn pot off and mix shredded cheese

and Doritos into pot, but don't overstir– you don't want your soft potatoes to turn into mashed potatoes. Feel free to top this with crumbled bacon, chives or green onions. Makes a great side dish for breakfast, lunch or dinner!

Crock Pot Ratatouille

In the Pixar movie by this name, the character Linguini says "Ratatouille. It's like a stew, right? Why do they call it that? If you're gonna name a food, you should give it a name that sounds delicious. Ratatouille doesn't sound delicious. It sounds like "rat" and "patootie." Rat-patootie, which does not sound delicious. " But with Remy's help, Linguini learned to cook, to enjoy it and to share great delicious dishes to others.

In our house, this movie is a favorite because it also teaches lots of great lessons. For example: we shouldn't judge others based on their families or where they came from, you should pursue your interests with passion and dedication, you shouldn't steal from others, in order to have great success we all need to work together and there will always be people to criticize, but even more people we can make happy.

This recipe is easy to make, maybe even for a movie night with your friends or family. Enjoy and remember "anyone can cook!"

1 medium eggplant, peeled and cubed
2-3 zucchini, sliced $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick
2-3 yellow squash, sliced $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick
1 medium onion, sliced into strips
2 cans diced tomatoes, NOT drained
2-3 cloves chopped garlic

Salt and pepper

Parmesan cheese

Sauté onion and garlic in a little bit of olive oil, just until onion is soft. Put eggplant, zucchini and squash in crockpot. Add onion and garlic on top, then both cans of diced tomatoes. Add salt and pepper to your liking. Cook on high for 3-4 hours.

Serve on top of egg noodles. Top with a bit of fresh parmesan cheese. Enjoy!

Crock Pot Vegetarian Lentil Soup

There used to be this great Greek restaurant that I frequented that served lentil soup in a styrofoam cup. It was always hot and fresh and the lentils were soft without being mushy. I would frame my entire meal around saving room and money for the soup. This recipe mirrors the flavors and warmth of the soup but without a disposable cup. Unlike my vegetarian vegetable soup which is savory and chunky, this lentil soup is hearty and robust with even more amazing health benefits. Lentils are high in protein, iron, amino acids and when you add in the lycopene in the tomatoes and then all the vitamins, folic acid and antioxidants in the spinach... this soup is like a power boost for your whole system. Oh yeah, and it tastes amazing too.

Feel free to serve it in a real bowl and maybe with some crusty bread instead of saltines.

2 cups lentils

8 cups vegetable broth
1 onion, diced
3 stalks celery, diced
2 carrots, chopped
6 oz. fresh spinach, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 t. salt
1/2 t. pepper
1 t. oregano
1 t. cumin
2 bay leaves
1/4 t. cayenne pepper
1 14 oz. can diced tomatoes
1 T. red wine vinegar

Put everything in the crockpot and cook on low for 8 hours, but add the vegetable broth LAST. Most likely, you won't have room to pour all the liquid in yet. Once the vegetables have all cooked down, then add the rest of the liquid. My 5-qt crock pot is filled to the rim by the time everything is included.

This soup also freezes really well, so save half the pot for a meal another time.

Crock Pot Green Bean Casserole

It doesn't have to be Thanksgiving to enjoy a side dish that can be a year round favorite. I like to go to restaurants and just order an array of side dishes as my meal— green bean casserole, mac and cheese, mashed potatoes and scalloped apples are some of my favorites. Let's be honest, it's a good thing Cracker Barrel doesn't have a buffet.

Side dishes can be dangerous though. All these creamy, cheesy, salty tastes can be brief in moments, but high in fat and calories. This crockpot version of green bean cassarole saves some calories by using fresh onions instead of fried ones and also adds water chestnuts for the crunchy texture.

Try this crockpot cassarole with any of your favorite meals. And if you eat it as a main course... I'm ok with that too.

1 28 oz. can green beans

1 can diced water chestnuts

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1/2 c. milk

1 t. soy sauce

1 clove garlic, minced

1/2 medium onion, sliced thin

1/2 t. pepper

Mix together soup, milk and soy sauce. Put green beans, water chestnuts and onion in crockpot and then dump liquid mixture and mix through once. Don't overmix it or else the canned

green beans will fall apart. Cook 4 hours on low.

Crock Pot Beef Stew

Last night I used my foodie knowledge to help a friend through a stressful moment. I described my love affair with Trader Joe's grocery store in such detail that she learned about my secret ongoing shopping list, what each item is that I crave and how I use one dish, three ways. By the end of my "foodologue" I think I had actually BORED her out of her anxiety attack.

It made me start thinking about comfort foods. For many people, it's what our mommies used to make for us or maybe what we had at favorite holidays. I wonder what my boys will recall as their favorite foods, twenty years from now. Today's recipe might top the list. The last time I made my beef stew, my boys and my husband all were members of the clean plate club. Definitely a recipe to repeat often! It's also easy to throw half of the finished product into tupperware and freeze it for another dinner, another time.

1 to 1 and 1/2 lbs beef stew meat, cubed
8 oz. baby carrots
5 stalks celery, cleaned and cut
6-7 red potatoes, peeled and cut into quarters
1 medium onion, cut into chunks
8 oz. frozen green beans
2 cloves garlic, chopped fine
2 bay leaves
1/2 t. rosemary
1 cup beef bouillion

3/4 cup leftover red wine

1 can condensed tomato soup (don't add any water)

salt and pepper

(1 T. corn starch and 1/2 c. water to finish it off)

Dump everything into the crockpot. Set on low and cook for 8-9 hours until meat and vegetables are soft. Remove the meat and veggies and then mix in 1 T. corn starch that has been dissolved into 1/2 cup water. When the gravy thickens up, dump the meat and veggies back into the crockpot, mix it all together and serve.