

# 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.

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## Crock Pot Creamy Tomato Soup

I understand that the red label of canned tomato soup is

probably very patriotic and that eating grilled cheese and tomato soup is one of our commandments or laws or requirements as Americans. I support that, I do. But— I don't think my grilled cheese sandwich deserves to bathe in a mixture of weird canned goop and water. It needs more than that. So today I made homemade creamy tomato soup.

I think the key difference here is the spices and the heavy cream, you just can't get those flavors in a can. Another detail that is critical to this recipe is the use of an immersion hand blender. Thirty seconds of power will take this soup from delicious to heavenly. If you don't have an immersion hand blender, then you can cool your soup off and then put it into a blender to puree, then return it to the crock pot, add the heavy cream and heat it back up. That way is more work but will deliver the same smooth result.

Your soup should have an equal counterpart— a perfect grilled cheese sandwich. But you have to define that for yourself. For me, it's swirled pumpernickel/rye bread with swiss and havarti cheeses. For my kids, it's American cheese on whole wheat. For my husband, it's italian bread with sharp cheddar and colby jack. I am willing to entertain everyone's favorites, since the soup is so easy to make. Another trick for your sandwich is to change up from using butter or margarine on the outside of your bread— try using a light smear of mayonnaise instead and get a sweeter, crisper result. Or you can quickly dip the sandwich in a couple beaten eggs and turn your grilled cheese into a monte cristo instead. Discover whatever combination tickles your taste buds and then let it swell with the sweetness of the soup. Enjoy!

2 14 oz. cans of diced tomatoes

1 small onion, diced

2-3 cloves of garlic, chopped

1 bay leaf

1 t. of each seasoning: salt, black pepper, rosemary, oregano and celery seed

1 T. sugar

8 oz. heavy cream

Combine all ingredients except heavy cream in the crock pot. Cook on low for 4 hours. Remove bay leaf. Use immersion hand blender and puree until smooth. Add heavy cream, stir and heat for one more hour. Serve with your favorite grilled cheese sandwich, of course!