

Crock Pot French Dip

At this time of year, everyone is trying to hang on to at least a shred of the New Year's resolution that they made only a couple weeks ago. This recipe is a great one to help— you can eat healthier and save money by making French dip. You don't need a lot of meat on your sandwiches and you get to savor so much of the flavor by using the cooking liquid as the au jus. Plus, you don't need to add extra condiments, cheese, oil or any other typical sandwich toppings that just add fat and calories anyway. (You can also make a great salad and top it with the leftover meat as a second meal!)

This meal was inspired by my friend T.D.H. who made these sandwiches for her family last week. I altered her recipe a little, but I appreciated her recommendation. Thank you! I hope you enjoy these crock pot French dip sandwiches so much that you share it with your friends, too. ☐

1.5-2 lb. London Broil, trimmed

32 oz. beef stock (I use low-sodium)

1/4 c. soy sauce (again, low-sodium)

1/2 medium yellow onion, quartered

3 cloves garlic, smashed

1 t. celery seed

1/2 t. thyme

1/2 t. rosemary

2 bay leaves, whole

1 t. whole black peppercorns

Serve on 4-6 crusty french rolls

Heat a flat skillet with 1 T. olive oil in it. Sear your London Broil on both sides, but do not cook meat through. Put all other ingredients in the crock pot and then delicately place the meat in. Cook on high for 3 hours. Remove meat, slice across the grain, then put the meat back in the crock pot for an additional hour. Serve meat on warmed, crusty french rolls. Remove bay leaves from the crock pot and discard. Either drain the remaining liquid through a cheese cloth– or be lazy like me... I used a ladle and removed 1/2 c. of the liquid for each sandwich and served it in a ramekin. So what if some rosemary or thyme comes along for the ride, it just adds more flavor!

Crock Pot Cowpea Soup



Most of you probably just read the title of this recipe and giggled. Yes, cowpea sounds a lot like cow pie. In fact, cow pee makes it seem even more funny. So if you haven't heard of a cowpea before, let me tell you a little about it. But seriously, you can stop giggling

now. Cowpeas are meaty little legumes that come in long pods. Once you pull the string off, you'll see the tightly packed peas pop out of the pod. They are sometimes classified as a black-eyed pea, but you can also get purple-eyed ones, they can be green, white or dark in color and they are hearty little nuggets to cook.

When you can get them fresh, you are good to go once they are out of the pod. If you get them dried, then you need to soak them in water overnight for about 8 hours and then rinse them a few times before you throw them in the pot.

Cowpeas are common in a lot of African recipes and provide excellent protein in many soups and rice dishes. These “beans” are also used in a lot of southern recipes in the USA. I even found a great recipe online for chow chow salsa that included canned black-eyed peas, but would be awesome with fresh cowpeas instead.

I thought that split pea soup sounded great to make this week—fresh cowpeas are readily available at my local farmers market right now and if I make it now and freeze it, it will make a great meal later this fall when the weather cools off a bit. I decided not to go the traditional route and cook the soup with a ham hock, but to keep it vegetarian instead. If you’d like to, you can add diced cooked ham or turkey sausage after you puree the soup and then heat it for an additional hour to warm the meat. Either way, the soup is filling and satisfying and an easy meal when served with a crusty bread.

Kudos to you for trying something new. Cowpeas are a nice variation, especially if your family already likes peas and beans. Plus, if you can get them fresh, it’s fun to pull the string and unleash the pea from the cow. Enjoy!

2 c. fresh cowpeas

1 medium onion, chopped

2-3 carrots, chopped

2 stalks celery, chopped

3 garlic cloves, chopped

2 parsnips, peeled and chopped

3 c. water

1 t. salt

1 t. black pepper

1 T. fresh parsley, chopped

Put all ingredients in the crock pot and cook on high for 4-6 hours. Using a hand blender, puree soup in the crock pot. If desired, add 1/2 lb. diced cooked ham or turkey sausage to the pot and heat for one additional hour on low.

Crock Pot Vegetable Curry

One of my favorite things about Indian food is that you can have such a variety of purely vegetarian dishes. With the right balance of ingredients, you can have a healthy, protein- and vitamin-rich meal with an array of flavors and nothing in it will have ever had a face.

There is also a misconception about crock pots that I'd like to ruin. Many people think the crock pot is just for cooking the hell out of a piece of meat or else making soup, but indeed there are so many other great dishes that we can make in a matter of minutes! So for the skeptics out there, I invite you to try this vegetable curry. It's hot and spicy, almost sexy, and definitely enjoyable. Experiment today with this cultural culinary specialty.

1 can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed

1 14 oz. can diced tomatoes

1 16 oz. bag of frozen cauliflower

2 c. baby carrots

1 small onion, diced

3-4 cloves of garlic, chopped

2 potatoes, diced

1 T. curry

1 t. red pepper flakes

1/4 t. cinnamon

1/2 c. vegetable juice

1 14 oz. can of lite coconut milk

Put everything in the crock pot except the coconut milk. Stir once through and then pour coconut milk on top of everything. Cook on low for 6 hours. Serve over white rice or with naan bread.

Crock Pot Potato Soup

My 93-year-old grandmother-in-law was visiting last week and the woman is amazing. She is clear minded and sound of body. She might not win the race, but she will definitely reach the finish line. She loves her grandchildren and great-grandchildren and hates to be idle. So when she was here visiting and offered to help in the kitchen, I was pleased to have her assistance.

My least favorite food prep is cutting onions. Let's be honest— I'm a big baby about it. My eyes first burn and tingle, then water profusely and run all down my face. I look like I'm in a bad soap opera by the time that innocent white bulb is finally all chopped up. So, I politely asked my "sous-chef" to complete this task and she diced enough onions to fill half of a gallon-sized freezer bag full!

Now I needed to figure out what to do with all these onions. I thought about a side dish of creamed onions or maybe crisping them up with some garlic to start a nice curry dish, but decided instead that it would only be appropriate to make my mother-in-law's recipe for potato soup and to use the onions that her own mama chopped up. My M-I-L didn't make this dish in the crock pot, but all the ingredients are just about the same. Enjoy!

5-6 medium potatoes, peeled and diced

1 medium onion, diced

3 stalks celery, cleaned and diced

3 cups water

1 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

1 bay leaf

2 t. dried parsley

1 c. milk

1 T. corn starch

1 can cream-style corn

Put potatoes, onion, celery and seasonings in crock pot. Cover with water (about 3 cups). Cook on high for 3 hours until all

veggies are soft. Dissolve corn starch in cold milk and then add to crock pot, dump in can of cream-style corn and cook for 1 more hour.

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!