

Crock Pot Chimichurri Steak

The word “chimichurri” might make you think of that silly little ditty from Mary Poppin’s chimney sweep friend, but I assure you, there is nothing dirty or British about this recipe (not that the two are synonymous!). I think of chimichurri sauce as an Argentinian version of pesto, but with parsley instead of basil. I love it as a marinade, but it can also be used as a garnish or a dipping sauce for pretty much any meat. I challenge you to try this on as many grilled meats as possible this summer and to find any single one that it doesn’t complement.

But since I don’t feel like firing up the grill and cinging my eyebrows, I’m going to cook my beef in the crock pot. Chimichurri is often served with steak, so I am using a flank steak and I sliced it into half inch sections before cooking it. I think this will help really get all the flavors into the steak. I marinated the meat overnight in the refrigerator, but that isn’t necessary. I would recommend marinating it for at least four hours, just to give it enough time to fester.

I don’t have enough fresh produce on hand to make this with the real ingredients, but if you do– use 1 c. fresh flat-leaf parsley and some fresh oregano, too. I assure you this will taste good with the dried stuff, but even more amazing with fresh herbs.

I’m serving my chimichurri steak with some steamed veggies (at least I know my kids will eat those things!), but you can also try roasting some potatoes with the meat or serving it on a nice bed of salad. Enjoy!

Meat: 2 lbs. beef (flank steak, skirt steak, London Broil, flat iron steak... if you don’t love beef, use chicken)

Chimichurri sauce:

1/2 c. white wine

1/3. c. vegetable oil

1/4 c. red wine vinegar

2 lemons

3-4 cloves garlic, minced

4 T. parsley flakes

2 T. oregano flakes

1 T. red pepper flakes

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

Combine all seasonings, liquids and the juice of two lemons in a bowl and mix well. Put meat in a sealable bag and pour marinade on top of meat. Mash around and then let it sit for 4-24 hours in the refrigerator. When ready to start cooking, dump meat and marinade into crock pot and cook on low for 6-8 hours.

Crock Pot Stuffing Balls



Stuffing is an under-appreciated side dish. It completely defines a Thanksgiving dinner and can sometimes be found at kitschy homecooking restaurants, but there is no reason to leave it alone for the rest of the year. Plus, it's a

great way to use leftover or stale bread. The more variety you use in your bread selection will equal a total change in the taste of the end result.

In my fridge right now, I have half a loaf of wheat bread (very dense and yeast-smelling) and half a loaf of what was labeled a "tomato bread" (tastes like Italian bread with a swirl of seasoned tomato paste in it). Here is how to prep your bread for stuffing: cut into slices and then into bite-sized cubes. For example, I would cut a normal piece of wheat bread four times each way = 16 smaller pieces. Then, lay cubes out in one layer on a cookie sheet and cook for about 10-15 minutes at 350 degrees, just until the bread toasts.

Instead of just pouring the stuffing into a pan, I love the idea of hand rolling the stuffing into balls. It cooks into nice individual servings and leaves lots of surface area to crisp. These balls also freeze really well, so make a full recipe and then save what you don't consume. Enjoy!

6 cups homemade stuffing cubes

1/2 medium onion, chopped

1/2 green pepper, chopped

2 eggs, beaten



1/4 c. water

1 16 oz. can cream-style corn

1 T. parsley

1 t. salt

1 t. black pepper

1 t. celery seed

1/2 t. paprika

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

10 little pads of butter or margarine

In a bowl, mix together all ingredients, except butter or margarine. After combined, mixture should be moist, but not dripping wet. Form 10 balls, using your hands and mush it together so that it can stand on it's own. Coat oval-shaped crock pot with non-stick spray. Place stuffing balls side by side in crock pot. Place one little pad of butter or margarine on top of each stuffing ball. Cook on low for 3 hours.

(The original inspiration from this dish came from crock pot maven Mable Hoffman's Crockery Cookery Cookbook. No offense, but her recipe was bland and suggested using packaged stuffing mix; my adaptation takes it up a notch and makes it flavorful and heartier.)

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.

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 Cabbage Roll Casserole

One of my favorite dishes that my grandmother made is cabbage rolls, but honestly— who has time for all the steps?! I have made them before in the crock pot (use the search function to see my recipe) but today's version is even easier. It has almost all the same components, but only takes a cutting board, a knife and a spoon to get everything into the crock pot.

I really like that this casserole is thick, there isn't much broth left in the pot. I suggest serving it over some mashed potatoes. It's like a complete meal in one bowl!

1 lb ground turkey, not cooked

1 c. brown rice, not cooked

2 c. spaghetti sauce

1 c. vegetable juice

1/2 head cabbage, chopped fine

1/2 medium onion, chopped

2 T. brown sugar

2 T. apple cider vinegar

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

1 t. celery seed

1 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

1 T. parsley

1/2 c. water

Put cabbage and onion in crock pot first, then top with rice, all seasonings and garlic. Pour sauce and juice in next and stir well. Place ground meat on top of mixture. Cook on low for 4 hours. When meat browns, break up with a spoon and/or fork and stir entire contents. Add water and cook one hour more.

Crock Pot Baked Ziti with Mini Meatballs

We love pasta. Sometimes in a ridiculous way. I don't know if that makes me a carb-a-vore or a carb-a-whore, but either way, it's one of my favorite meals to make... and eat. I especially like when the kids eat pasta because I know that the sauce sneaks in lots of great vegetables and nutrients. The problem with an elaborate dish like baked ziti is that it can take a lot more work and I don't have time to do all the steps in time for dinner. So, I've figured out a way to make some of my favorite dishes using my handy dandy crock pot. Time is no longer a nuisance.



All the parts of this recipe can be made separately and ahead of time, so if it helps you to make the meatballs and boil the pasta the night before, then go ahead and save yourself those steps. But I do recommend making homemade meatballs (recipe is listed below). In fact, you can make them and freeze them

without sauce so that when you want to eat them, you can decide later if you want them in marinara, stroganoff, alfredo, or sweet and sour. (PS- IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A VEGETARIAN ENTREE, FOLLOW ALL THESE STEPS EXCEPT FOR THE MINI MEATBALLS. YOU CAN ADD FRESH ZUCCHINI, MUSHROOMS OR SPINACH IF YOU'D LIKE ADDITIONAL FLAVORS.)

After you make the mini meatballs, these are the other things

you'll need for the baked ziti:

1 lb cooked ziti (al dente)

2 1/2 c. spaghetti sauce

2 c. shredded mozzarella cheese

1/2 c. parmesan cheese

1 T. oregano

Pour hot, drained pasta into crock pot. Top with spaghetti sauce, but save 1/2 c. for later. Stir until pasta is coated then add cheeses, but save 1/2 c. of mozz cheese for later. Stir until cheese is starting to melt. Top with oregano and stir through one more time. When meatballs are done, line them on top of pasta and sauce mixture. Pour remaining sauce on top of meatballs and then sprinkle with remaining cheese. Warm on low for 2 hours. Enjoy!

Mini Meatballs (makes 48 balls)

1 lb. ground turkey

1 c. bread crumbs

1/2 c. parmesan cheese

1 t. oregano

1 T. parsley

2-3 cloves chopped garlic

1/2 t. black pepper

1 beaten egg (if needed)

Mix all ingredients together with your hands. If consistency isn't wet enough to bind, add egg (I prefer mine without it). Roll meat mixture into small, bite-sized balls and place on

foil covered cookie sheet. Cook in oven at 350 degrees for 25 minutes and then broil on high for 3-5 minutes to brown but NOT BURN outside of ball. When cooled, balls can be frozen and saved for later use.

Crock Pot Inside Out Stuffed Peppers

Stuffed peppers are a delicious union of textures and are meant for slow cooking. But sometimes, the prep work of cutting and chopping and mixing and stuffing is just too much. Consider this my recipe for “inside out stuffed peppers”. I’ve figured out a way to get that same great result with even less time. It might not have the same presentation as beautifully stuffed bells, but if you are looking for ease and a great meal, this is a good sloppy way to serve a favorite dish. Enjoy!

1 lb. ground turkey or chicken

2 T. dried parsley

1/2 c. uncooked rice

1 t. salt

1/2 t. ground pepper

1/2 t. red pepper flakes

1 t. worchestershire sauce

1 16 oz. bag frozen chopped peppers

1 medium onion, sliced

2 c. spaghetti sauce

Mix together first seven ingredients. Put frozen peppers and onions in bottom of crock pot. Form 12-14 meatballs from the mixture and arrange in a single layer in the crock pot. Pour spaghetti sauce on top evenly. Cook on high for 3-4 hours.

Vinaigrette Salad

*“To make a good salad is to be a brilliant diplomatist –
the problem is entirely the same in both cases.*

To know exactly how much oil one must put with one’s vinegar.”

Oscar Wilde 1856-1900, British Author

Dinner was not a crock last night. We grilled out brats and had cold side dishes, drank chilled wine and enjoyed time with friends. Sometimes I really enjoy the contrast of a hot main dish and the refreshment of cold accompaniments. I made a



vinaigrette salad last night that everyone seemed to really enjoy, so I thought I’d share the recipe with you too. Tomorrow I’ll use the crock pot, but this was a nice change.

Making a vinaigrette salad takes only a few ingredients, but

just the right balance (as Oscar Wilde said in the quote listed above). You want chemistry and harmony and simplicity in the perfect mix. Depending on the potency of your ingredients, you may want to divide the dressing measurements in half and add a bit at a time until you get a good balance. Remember that when the vegetables marinate, they will absorb some oil and vinegar and release some water, so you might want to drain the salad a little bit before serving. Enjoy!

1 English cucumber, peeled and cut into chunks

2 c. cherry or grape tomatoes, cut in half

1/2 medium sweet onion, cut into chunks

1 15 oz. can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed

1 15 oz. can green beans, drained and rinsed

3 T. fresh parsley, chopped

1/4 c. extra light olive oil

3 T. red wine vinegar

1/2 t. salt

1 t. coarsely ground pepper

Mix all vegetable together, then drizzle with oil, vinegar and seasonings. Toss salad together and then add parsley and mix one more time. Refrigerate at least an hour and then drain, if needed, before serving.

Crock Pot Creamy Corn

Not to be too corny, but I'm a big fan of corn. I love fresh local corn on the cob in the summer, corn chowder soup in the winter, corn muffins, popcorn at the movies, canned cream corn, kettle corn at the apple festival, even cooking with corn oil.

I've got some great leftover meat from this weekend, but I really want a yummy side dish to go with it to make it seem like a whole new meal. It's already the middle of the afternoon, so I'm short on time, but this is a perfect time to make a delicious corn side dish as an accompaniment.

The contrast of the sweet corn and creamy cheese to the sting of the jalapenos is a great chemistry. When you make this dish and someone tells you how much they love it, just smile and say, "awww shucks!"

1 32 oz. bag of frozen corn

1 small yellow onion, chopped

4 T. butter, melted

1/2 c. milk

1 T. parsley

1/2 t. salt

1 t. black pepper

3 T. chopped jalapeno slices (from the jar, not fresh)

8 oz. whipped cream cheese

Put corn and onion in crock pot first, then stir in melted butter and milk. Add in all the seasonings and the jalapenos

and stir again. Scoop the cream cheese onto mixture, leaving scoops all over. Cook on high for 2 hours, stir cream cheese into mixture and then heat for half an hour more.

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.