

# Crock Pot Stuffed Green Peppers



This recipe is all about using up LEFTOVERS. I don't mean the extra serving from the [Crock Pot Celery and Leek Soup](#) you made over this cold weekend so you can have a delicious hot lunch to start the week, or the corner pieces of [Crock Pot Vegetarian Lasagna](#) that you purposefully didn't scoop out so you could nibble on the cheesy goodness again after the kids are in bed, I mean the small containers of random single ingredients that you can't bring yourself to throw out.

Stuffed peppers are the perfect solution to this ongoing drama of being single. Ingredient, that is.

I did make lasagna last week and didn't have a chance to make homemade sauce, so I bough (gasp!) a big jar of chunky spaghetti sauce. I also rolled sushi and had one sad bowl of white rice left. So I stopped by the store and picked up a few fresh peppers— because even though it was a separate trip, I rationalized that I was actually doing a service by cleaning out the fridge.

DISCLAIMER: this next statement is not political, religious,

or meant to have any greater meaning in life. I don't really believe in gender... of bell peppers. That's right, there's a myth that you can judge the gender of a pepper based on the number of bumps on the bottom of the bell. Male peppers are a tripod with three bumps and females are more voluptuous and display four proud bumps instead. Farmers and cooks have tried to determine if there is a taste variety, increase or decrease in the number of seeds, or what causality actually exists to determine the gender, but I have yet to see scientific proof on this topic. Lack of proof does not discourage me from believing that once again, we can say that size does matter and so do the number of bumps. I think they are called male and female just as an easy way to differentiate, but that there isn't actually a gender connection to the bells, since they grow the same seeds and reproduce in the same way.

I prefer to use the female, four bump variety, when I make stuffed peppers for no greater meaning than I think they stand up easier in the crock pot. If you are going to cut them in half before stuffing, then it doesn't really make a difference, but I like to stuff my peppers whole. When they start to get soft, the three bump chumps tend to tippy over and the contents and liquids spill out. So if you can, try to find full, robust "females" to stuff with your meaty goodness. (I HAVE A FEELING THAT I SHOULD REPEAT THAT DISCLAIMER AGAIN HERE, YOU NAUGHTY LITTLE READERS.)

A normal serving would be one full pepper, but I like to make three peppers and then a few extra meatballs. That's right... I turn my leftovers into leftovers. Sometimes, the kids just prefer the meatballs to the peppers and that's fine with me, too. My oldest son tells me he doesn't like peppers or onions, but doesn't realize they are already chopped up and cooked in the meatball. He tells me that dinner was "so good" in the same voice that my nana used to say those words. And then she would suck in air, like it was grabbing up the last morsel of goodness from that bite.

## **Crock Pot Stuffed Green Peppers**

**Prep Time: 10 minutes**

**Cook Time: 5 hours**

**Serves: 3-4 people**

3 green bell peppers, with four bumps on the bottom

1 lb. 80/20 ground beef

1/4 sweet onion, finely chopped = about 1/2 cup total

2 c. cooked [white medium-grain rice](#)

1 t. dried basil leaves

1/2 t. ground celery seed

2 T. tomato paste

2 c. marinara or spaghetti sauce, chunky preferably

Cut top inch off each bell pepper and scoop out the seeds and pithy parts. Cut the green parts off the top part and finely chop. Mix beef, chopped pepper and onion, seasonings, rice, and tomato paste. Stand peppers up in the crock pot and using your hand, gently fill each pepper pot with meat. Push mixture into the sides so that air is removed and maximum capacity is reached. Use any remaining mixture to make meatballs; place them in the crock pot surrounding the peppers. Pour marinara sauce over the stuffed peppers and meatballs. Cook on low for 5 hours. Serve immediately (overcooked peppers will fall apart and lose all remaining texture).

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# Crock Pot Mushroom-Spinach Soup with Middle Eastern Spices



So it's Saturday and I've got a date with this really fungi... haha, get it?! I'm making a mushroom soup!

This version is an adaptation of [a recipe from the New York Times](#), it is not my original creation. But I saw the recipe online and thought... this looks delicious, but has WAY TOO MANY steps. Let's make it easy and throw it all in the [crock pot](#) instead. And guess what. Yup. It works just perfectly without the extra hassle and dirty dishes.

There are so many wonderful varieties of mushrooms, you can change up the the recipe a million different times for different texture and flavor results. Play around with it. I have increased the quantity of seasonings after reading reviews saying that it needed a little more umphh. I don't think that's a technical culinary term, but neither is WOW or YUM and those are the things I'm going for here! I've added links for you to my [favorite brand of seasonings](#), just in case

you don't already have these items on hand.

Try this soup with a dollop of plain greek yogurt and some naan or pita bread. Enjoy!

## **Crock Pot Mushroom-Spinach Soup with Middle Eastern Spices**

**Prep Time: 20 minutes**

**Cook Time: 7 hours**

**Serves: 8 people**

~1-1.5 lbs fresh mushrooms- cleaned and diced=about 5-6 cups

(try button, cremini, portobello, Baby Bella, etc)

1/4 lb shallot (one) finely diced

2 T. tomato paste

3 T. salted butter

2 t. dried [thyme](#)

1 1/2 t. [coriander](#)

2 t. [cinnamon](#)

2 t. [cumin](#)

1 t. salt

1/2 t. freshly cracked black pepper

5 cups water

5 ounces fresh baby spinach

1 lime

plain greek yogurt (optional)

Dice mushrooms and shallots and stir together in [crock pot](#). Add seasonings, tomato paste, and butter. Pour water in, but do not stir. Cook on low for 6 hours- you may lift the lid and give it a stir after the butter appears to be completely melted.

After 6 hours, add the spinach and squeeze about 2 T. of fresh lime juice into the crock pot, give it all a stir, and heat on low for up to one more hour... or until spinach is wilted. Serve with a dollop of plain greek yogurt.

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## Crock Pot Winter Vegetable Soup



Crock Pot Winter Vegetable Soup is the comfort of home served in a cup.

You'll often hear me say that food isn't just about sustenance, but also satisfaction. Entertainment. Emotion. Nutritionists focus on the content of food. Dietician focus on the balance of food. But when I sit down to eat— or more importantly— serve a meal to family and friends, it's about the experience and the memories we create around the table. Your food will be through your system in less than 24 hours, but the feeling you had when eating it will last a lifetime.

That's how I feel about this soup. It's based on a recipe my mom used to make when I was a kid. We ate dinner as a family, almost every night. It's just what we did. And we didn't do it in front of a television or on the run, but it was quick and easy meals and meant to create an atmosphere for conversation.

Mom's meals were much like this one— a basic recipe with few ingredients that when combined received minimal complaints! We called it winter vegetable soup because nothing really is fresh during an Ohio winter. She could keep all of these items on hand and whip this meal up in about half an hour. I prefer to cook it low and slow, of course, and add a few more seasonings. But overall, it's the comfort of home in a cup.

## **Crock Pot Winter Vegetable Soup**

**Prep Time: 5 minutes**

**Cook Time: 5 hours**

**Serves: 8**

2 12 oz. packages frozen vegetables- broccoli, cauliflower and carrot combination

1 32 oz. box of vegetable broth

3 T. butter

1 t. minced garlic

1/2 cup [crock pot caramelized onions](#) (or substitute 1/2 sweet onion, diced)

1/2 t. each: dill weed, celery seed, basil, parsley, salt, black pepper (ALL DRIED SEASONINGS)

1/4 c. corn starch

3 cups cold milk (2% or whole is preferred)

Pour frozen vegetables into crock pot, followed by broth, butter, garlic, onions and seasonings. DO NOT ADD CORN STARCH OR MILK YET. Cook on high for four hours. In a separate bowl, dissolve corn starch into COLD milk and then add to crock pot. Cook on high for another hour. Soup will have thickened. Add salt and pepper to taste preference.

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## [Crock Pot Split Pea Soup \(Vegetarian\)](#)





This classic soup is a smoky vegetarian delight on a cold winter's night.

I don't usually put specific tags in the titles of my posts, but I think it's really important on this one. It should really say... Crock Pot Split Pea Soup #noham but still #tastesyummy! Haha. I made those up. So this soup is hearty and delicious and still has a great smoky flavor, but doesn't include the typical ham hock that you throw into the pot to add flavor to the broth.

This soup will also freeze and/or reheat really well. Keep this recipe tagged if you are going to bring a dinner to friends (great meal for someone ill, new baby, new home, etc.). Note to self- you might think, oh I'll just double it so I have some for me and some for someone else or later. But you are better off making two batches. You can't really fit 8 cups of broth in most crock pots and the ratio in this recipe makes it the right thickness without crowding the pot. YES- this does give you permission to buy a [new crock pot](#) so you can double the batch easier! ☐

Crock Pot Split Pea Soup

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 5-6 hours on low

Serves: 6

## **INGREDIENTS**

1 c. dried split green peas

2 carrots, peeled and diced (about 1/2 cup)

4 parsnips, peeled and diced (about 1 cup)

2 leafy stalks celery, diced (about a cup)

1/2 sweet onion, diced

3 cloves garlic, smashed

4 c. vegetable broth

1/2 t. each: dill weed, ground celery seed, smoked paprika

1 t. dried parsley

2 bay leaves

1/4 t. salt

1/8 t. ground white pepper

## **DIRECTIONS**

1. Put all ingredients in crock pot.
2. Cook on high for 5-6 hours.
3. Remove bay leaves.
4. Use an immersion blender to puree, if desired.
5. Turn off crock pot and remove lid. Let cool and thicken in pot.

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# Crock Pot Asian Mushrooms



With a change of sauce and topping, these mushrooms went from the ground to being great!

Well fans, I told you I made variations to two of my recipes and I finally have a minute to share. The first variation was for [crock pot asian meatballs](#) and this was the side dish I made to go with it! I've been trying to do some Asian-inspired dinners that don't involve me picking up the phone and ordering fried, fried, sauced and steamed. I also wanted this dish to still be kid-friendly for picky eaters. So I took my favorite [crock pot sassy meatballs](#) and changed it's regional origin and then took my [crock pot garlic mushrooms](#) and added a different sauce and topping!

I learned from a Korean friend of mine that I can make a very basic sauce out of three ingredients, put it on almost anything, and it will taste awesome. And indeed, she was right! I'm also convinced that mushrooms can taste good covered in just about anything.

So I pretty much made these mushrooms according to the original recipe but without all of the seasonings. Add the sauce and sprinkles and be good to go!

### Crock Pot Asian Mushrooms

serves 8 as sides

2 lbs white mushrooms, cleaned, stems removed, and quartered

1/4 lb. butter (one stick)

2 T. minced garlic

1 t. onion powder

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

#### Sauce:

1 T. sesame oil

1 T. soy sauce

1 clove minced garlic

#### Topping:

1 T. roasted sesame seeds

Put mushrooms in crock pot first, then all of the seasonings and garlic. Put the stick of butter on top as the last step and then put the lid on. No mixing is necessary. Do not add sauce yet. Cook on low for 5-6 hours. Combine the three sauce ingredients in a separate bowl. Remove the mushrooms using a slotted spoon and then toss in the sauce just before serving. If you wish, you can decorate the mushrooms with the roasted sesame seeds just before serving.

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# Crock Pot Garlic Mushrooms



It's quite possible that these little fungi will become your new favorite side dish. Consider yourself warned.

Snow Day #7. I've been using my crock pot for [breakfast](#), for [lunch](#), and for [dinner](#). Somehow the invasion of snow has worked up some serious appetites after playing outside. To feed my little monsters, I planned on making pasta last night (no, not in a crock pot... just the normal boil water and add pasta) but I wanted a nice side dish to go with it. I bought a huge container of mushrooms last week, but then forgot what I was going to make, so I decided that they would make the perfect side dish for our pasta dinner.

Mushrooms are one of my favorite vegetables. They are all fine and good raw, dipped in ranch, or marinated. And they come in so many different varieties! Don't believe me? Take a trip to your favorite international grocer and see if you can even identify all of those little fungi. I like enoki in miso soup

or baby portabellos in [beef stroganoff](#), but I used regular, white mushrooms in today's recipe. They are a pretty standard item for me to buy, since they are sturdy, take a long time to spoil, and can be added in so many different ways.

This dish is really easy to make, but be warned— you can fill the crock pot with mushrooms and six hours later, you will have about a quarter of a pot of food left! So plan for more than you think you want. They also work well added to spaghetti sauce or used as a layer in vegetable lasagna. Enjoy!

Crock Pot Garlic Mushrooms (serves 8 as sides)

2 lbs white mushrooms, cleaned, stems removed, and quartered

1/4 butter (one stick)

2 T. minced garlic

1 T. dried dill

1 t. onion powder

1/2 t. paprika

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

2 sprigs fresh thyme, just the leaves

parmesan cheese

Put mushrooms in crock pot first, then all of the seasonings and garlic. Put the stick of butter on top as the last step and then put the lid on. No mixing is necessary. Do not add parmesan cheese yet. Just don't. Cook on low for 5-6 hours. Remove the mushrooms using a slotted spoon and then decorate

with grated or shredded parmesan cheese just before serving. If you wish, you can save the liquid in the crock pot for mushroom gravy.

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## Crock Pot Turkey Pot Roast

This afternoon, I went with my family to an apple orchard to pick fresh, local produce to enjoy. It felt organic. Not in the “lacking chemicals and pesticides” way, but in the “feeling connected to the earth and supporting something good”. My kids loved picking the fruit and sampling all the different kinds of apples. I am eager to make my [escaloped apples](#) recipe as soon as possible.

But the best part of the day was coming home to dinner already made and a very hungry family to feed!

One of my favorite meals to cook and eat is pot roast– meat, potatoes, carrots, celery, onions... all the basics. It’s so filling and full of great nutrients. One crock pot is a whole meal. But sometimes I like to vary it up a little. I made a very similar recipe today, but instead of beef, I used three turkey legs as our protein.



The meat becomes so tender it falls off the bone. I used whole carrots because they make such a nice presentation and they don't get soggy when they cook. The key to keeping the meat tender is to use the meat rack for the crock pot and keep it elevated. It still absorbs all the flavors

as it cooks, but it doesn't deteriorate as it cooks.

I highly recommend making this dish for a family dinner or even for the holidays! Trust me— I'm sure you can think of 100 other ways to spend a weekend afternoon than staying in the kitchen cooking. Get out there and enjoy life a little, then come home for a great meal. Enjoy!

3-4 turkey legs (2-3 lbs)

6 whole carrots, peeled

1/2 sweet onion, cut into chunks

4 stalks celery, cut into 2-3 inch sections

1 t. minced garlic

1 white potato, cut into chunks

2 c. chicken broth

1 T. olive oil

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

2 t. Mrs. Dash seasoning

Put all produce (carrots, onions, celery, potato) in crock pot and arrange in bottom. Using an oval shaped crock pot is best.



Put crock pot meat rack in so that the meat will sit just above the produce. Pour chicken broth in, but do not let the volume of it reach the meat rack. Place turkey legs on meat rack. Brush meat with olive oil and then sprinkle with seasonings. Cook on low for 6 hours.

*(If you like gravy, put the remaining liquid in a pot on the stove and bring it to a boil. Add 1 T. corn starch that has been dissolved into 1/4 c. warm water. When gravy thickens, serve with turkey pot roast.)*

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## Crock Pot Parsnip and Potato Soup

I'm totally enjoying soups this week and I hope you are getting a chance to enjoy some of these recipes too. I love it when I can make an entire meal in ONE pot and feed the whole family. This soup is a variation on my crock pot potato soup recipe (search for it in the recipe index) and adds in the unique sweetness of parsnips and carrots and sweet onions.

Even though it's almost spring, we still need to survive on the rest of winter's vegetables. If you can already grow things in your garden or windowsill, try adding fresh herbs like flat parsley, dill or chives to your soup when it is done cooking. I think you'll find the promise of spring in the soothing warmth of this chowder. Enjoy!

4 medium potatoes, peeled and diced

3 medium parsnips, peeled and diced

3 medium carrots, peeled and diced

2 stalks celery, diced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1/2 medium sweet onion, chopped  
3 c. water  
1 t. salt  
1/2 t. black pepper  
1 t. celery seed  
1 c. milk  
1 T. corn starch  
1 can cream-style corn

Put all vegetables and seasonings in crock pot, cover with water. Cook on high for 4 hours. When vegetables are all soft, dissolve corn starch in milk and then add to crock pot. Add cream-style corn and mix ingredients together. Cook on low one more hour. Use an immersion blender and puree the soup until thick and creamy. Serve with fresh parsley, dill or chives on top.

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## Crock Pot Sweet Potato and Corn Chowder

This recipe comes from my friend I.H.K. and she is an amazing cook. This soup is thick and chunky and a whole meal in one bowl. She recommends serving it with tortilla chips or corn

bread. Using an immersion blender can really change a soup from drab to fab by altering the consistency to be smooth and creamy instead of watery.

Since this recipe takes 8 hours on low, it's a great one to start before you leave for work in the morning and then come home to a beautiful dinner. Take a chance on this vegetarian chowder and enjoy!

2-3 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed (about 1/2 inch)

1 medium onion, chopped

1 can whole-kernel corn (15-16 oz.), drained

1 can creamed corn

1 teaspoon salt

fresh ground black pepper, to taste

2 cups broth (I use the vegetarian "chicken" flavor)

2 cups half-and-half or whole milk (depending on how virtuous you want to be)

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 teaspoon smoked sweet or hot paprika (optional)

1 cup of shredded cheddar cheese

Put first set of ingredients in crock pot and cook for about 8 hours on low or for 4 hours on high. Once the sweet potatoes are tender, stir everything together. Use an immersion blender to break up the ingredients as much as you want—I like my chowder chunky, but breaking up some of the sweet potatoes and corn makes the soup thicker and more luxurious. When only 1 hour of cooking time is left (if the slow cooker has been on high, turn down to low) ADD: half and half or milk, butter, paprika and cheddar cheese.

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# Crock Pot Grits with Sausage

Our county schools have been out of school for three days and the grocery has been out of milk for two. Oh, the fun of a southern winter! I have decided not to venture out until the roads are better so I'm getting creative with foods from the pantry and freezer.

Since we've already had crock pot soup and grilled cheese sandwiches and also crock pot Cincinnati chili, I thought it would be fun to do a crock pot breakfast for dinner. I like finding new ways to remake some of our favorites, using the crock pot to my advantage. So this is my rendition of our breakfast favorites.

1 c. quick grits

4 c. water

1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

6 turkey sausage precooked breakfast links, thawed and sliced thin

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper

Put all ingredients in crock pot and stir. Cook on high for 3 hours. Consistency should be thick and almost creamy— all grit particles should be softened and cheese melted throughout. When serving, top with your choice of salsa, peppered gravy, shredded cheese, butter, salt and/or pepper.