Crock Pot Asian Meatballs

Take your favorite foods to a new region with just a little variation!

Well fans, I told you I made variations to two of my recipes and I finally have a minute to share. 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!

You can add many different vegetables to this dish, like the pea pods and shredded carrot that I chose, but also try water chestnuts, bamboo shoots, baby corn, or bean sprouts for even more interesting textures and authentic cuisine.

Start by making your own meatballs using 1 lb beef, 1 lb turkey, 2 eggs, 2 cloves minced garlic and 1/2 c. panko breadcrumbs. Do not bake them like you would with the sassy meatballs, you can actually cook the meatballs directly in the sauce for a softer finish to the meat.

Crock Pot Asian Meatballs

serves 6-8

2 lb. meatballs (see above recipe or buy frozen ones)

8 oz. grape jelly

1 jar Heinz chili sauce

1/2 lb. snow peas or sugar snap peas

1 c. shredded carrot (bagged or hand-grated)

1 T. soy sauce

1 T. roasted sesame seeds

Put all solids into the crockpot. Mix jelly, soy sauce and chili sauce together and then pour into crockpot. Cook 4-6 hours on low. Serve over noodles or rice and top with sesame seeds.

Crock Pot Orange Tofu

I think it's a wonderful community celebration when a baby is born. Friends and family gather to welcome the sweet little child and help the new parents with meals and errands and extra hands for diaper changes. Tonight, it's my turn to bring dinner to some friends and I'm pretty sure that they already assume it's going to be something from the crock pot. The debate begins about what to make– it doesn't have to be

for an occasion, let’s admit that this debate happens practically every day, right?!

Let’s see– vegetarian or dairy is requested and the meal needs to feed two adults and a 2-year-old, too. I’m guessing that pasta dishes and soups have already been dropped off or stocked in the freezer, so I decided to do an Asian tofu dish and serve it with rice. Tofu is a unique protein, but it cooks up nicely and can suck up a whole bunch of flavor from whatever it accompanies. There are different consistencies of tofu sold, but I suggest using an extra firm one, it’s easiest to work with as a substitute for meat.

If you are scared of squishy food, you could make this dish with chicken instead. But give it a try– you might actually like tofu! The toughest thing about cooking it, is that sometimes it can really stick to the pan. Let it cook on each side without moving it around in the pan and then flip it quickly with a thin spatula. Enjoy!

1 brick of tofu, drained

3 T. olive oil

1/2 c. orange juice

1/4 c. honey

1/4 c. soy sauce

2 cloves of garlic, minced

1/2 medium onion, sliced thin

2 t. rice vinegar

1/2 t. paprika

12 oz. of any green vegetable (broccoli florets, snow peas, shredded cabbage, green beans or peas)

First you need to prep your tofu, it usually has an excessive amount of water in it that you want to drain off before cooking. Put a paper towel on a plate and then center the tofu on it. Add another paper towel up on top of the tofu and then put another plate on top. It looks like you've made a plate sandwich with the tofu in the middle. Add something heavy on top (can of food, metal pan, small child) and let sit for at least an hour. The paper towels will fill with water and the tofu will still have it's shape. Then cut tofu into 2-bite sized cubes.

Heat oil in a pan on medium heat. Brown tofu for 5-6 minutes on each side. Add the green vegetable, garlic and onion to the crock pot in that order, then put tofu on top. Mix the remaining ingredients in a separate bowl and then pour on top of everything in the crock pot. Cook on high for 3-4 hours and then serve with white rice.