

Crock Pot Short Ribs



OK fans, THIS should be your new favorite holiday dish. I don't care what you celebrate, we all celebrate deliciousness. There's a little prep work involved, but it is worth every juicy morsel. I am making this dish for the upcoming Jewish New Year... and perhaps Halloween. Thanksgiving. Christmas. And an early happy Valentine's Day to me.

Since the beef is the focal point of the entire meal, I wanted to make sure I had quality beef and plenty of it. I bought six short ribs equally just over three pounds. That sounds like a lot, but you have to take into account the bones. We each ate two ribs at dinner. You can adjust the serving size as needed. I served my meat with green beans tonight and that's eat. I mean, it. I'm still thinking about eating those short ribs!

Marinating the meat is essential to get the flavors going and the apples to break down and tenderize the beef. I soaked mine for 24 hours— you could do as little as 6-8 hours, but I wouldn't go much more than a full day.



I first tried to fit everything into a gallon size bag, but that was a futile effort. You could use a bowl or storage container. I like to keep these [HUGE bags](#) on hand exactly for this type of need. Whatever you use needs to fit back into the

refrigerator, don't forget that detail!



Crock Pot Short Ribs is one of the only recipes where I braise the meat before I put it into the crockpot. The flash of heat helps caramelize the flavors quickly and seal in the juices. It's worth the extra step, trust

me! It's also necessary in my house to open the windows or disarm the smoke detector when braising. Something about that quick heat and sugar causes some excess "fog" in the air—that's what my kids call it, cooking "fog"!



When you are braising the meat, make sure you save the juices and marinate from the bag or container— that goodness goes straight into the crock pot. Do not dump it out! Once the meat is done braising, you just gently place the meat on top of the sauciness and let it

continue its cooking all together.

Yes, there are more steps to this dish, but the end result is soft and juicy and smiles all around. And isn't that the point of holiday meals?!

Happy everything to you. I hope you enjoy this dish and everything you celebrate throughout the year.

Crock Pot Short Ribs

Serves 3 (Double or triple the recipe as needed!)

3 lbs beef short ribs, bone IN

1 c. shredded sweet onion

2 medium gala apples, shredded (skin on)

1 inch fresh ginger, peeled and then shredded

8 cloves garlic, whole

5 stalks green onion, cut the greens only into 2 inch strips

1/2 c. soy sauce

1/4 c. Mirin or rice wine

3 T. sesame oil

3 T. honey

1/4 c. sugar

Begin by shredding onions, apples and ginger and put into [large bag](#) or bowl. Add garlic cloves and green onions. Add remaining ingredients (except ribs) and combine well. Add beef short ribs and massage marinate onto all sides of meat. Cover bowl tightly or seal bag and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. When you are ready to proceed, remove ribs from marinate and put everything else into the crock pot. Heat pan on high and then braise all sides of short ribs quickly, but do not cook through. Add ribs to mixture already in crock pot, cover and cook on high for 3-4 hours or low for 4-6 hours.



The meat will pull away from bones when it is soft and ready.

Serve bone-in with extra juice. The whole cloves of garlic will taste amazing- do not throw them out- spread them on bread or eat like candy!

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.

Crock Pot Hot and Sour soup

I had three reasons for creating crock pot hot and sour soup this week...

1. Chinese New Year was on Monday and I forgot to order takeout.
2. I've been trying to do at least one meatless meal each week.
3. Hot and sour soup is amazing for clearing up a stuffy nose and a winter cold!



As with all my soups, I like more “stuff” than “broth” so my hot and sour soup is more crowded than what you get at a Chinese restaurant, but I think you’ll like this as a full meal and not just an appetizer. Plus, it can be made completely vegetarian and I think it’s gluten-free, so this is a great dish if you are cooking for people with food limitations.

If you didn’t get a chance to celebrate the Chinese New Year either, then whip up a quick batch of this hot and sour soup

to start the year out like a fire-breathing dragon! (but you don't need to make it that spicy if you don't want!)

3 oz. shiitake mushrooms (I bought a 6 oz. jar of mushrooms in liquid and used half)

2 cups baby carrots, quartered

3 medium green onions, sliced

3 cups bok choy, chopped

4 c. low-sodium chicken broth

1/3 c. rice vinegar

1 T. soy sauce

1 t. ground ginger

1 t. sesame oil

2 t. sriracha sauce (Asian red pepper sauce, also sometimes called rooster sauce)

1 package extra-firm tofu, drained and cut into half-inch cubes

Put all ingredients EXCEPT TOFU into crock pot and stir into mixed. Cook on high for 3-4 hours (or until carrots are soft enough) then add cubed tofu and cook for one more hour.

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 Thai Chicken Wraps

Tonight is open house at my son's school and the timing makes dinner as a family tough. So, it is going to be date night instead– but eating out is expensive, so I'll feed the kids early and then us parents can eat when we get home (and the kids are sleeping!). But since I'm not sure what time we'll get home from the school, I'm going to start the crock pot late this afternoon so that dinner is ready when we get back.

One of my favorite appetizers is those amazing sauced up thai chicken wraps that you can get at fancy Asian-inspired restaurants. The unfortunate part is that the lettuce is totally an illusion making you think this is a healthy choice. The typical sauce is usually full of really salty, sugary, high calorie ingredients that I totally don't want to indulge in tonight. So I've come up with a healthier way to enjoy this treat, using the crock pot to get the most out of all the flavors and then whipping up a quick sauce in a pan to coat the whole mixture.

Most restaurants serve this dish with iceberg lettuce because it is crisp, but you can also use leaves of romaine lettuce or

even tortillas. I hope you get to enjoy this at your next date night at home, too!

2 stalks celery, chopped

2 carrots, chopped

1/2 onion, chopped

6 oz. mushrooms, sliced

3 cloves garlic

1 8.75 oz. can water chestnuts, chopped

2 10 oz. cans white chicken in water

sauce:

1/2 c. peanut butter

1/4 c. soy sauce

1/4 c. water

3 T. rice wine vinegar

2 packets of Splenda

Put all filling ingredients in the crock pot and cook on low for four hours. In a saucepan, cook all sauce ingredients over medium heat (yes, on the stove), until it reaches a smooth consistency. If it is too thick, add 1/4 c. water and continue stirring. Pour the sauce into the crock pot and stir the mixture well. Serve with chilled lettuce leaves.

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.

Crock Pot Green Bean Casserole

It doesn't have to be Thanksgiving to enjoy a side dish that can be a year round favorite. I like to go to restaurants and just order an array of side dishes as my meal— green bean casserole, mac and cheese, mashed potatoes and scalloped apples are some of my favorites. Let's be honest, it's a good thing Cracker Barrel doesn't have a buffet.

Side dishes can be dangerous though. All these creamy, cheesy, salty tastes can be brief in moments, but high in fat and calories. This crockpot version of green bean cassarole saves some calories by using fresh onions instead of fried ones and also adds water chestnuts for the crunchy texture.

Try this crockpot cassarole with any of your favorite meals. And if you eat it as a main course... I'm ok with that too.

1 28 oz. can green beans

1 can diced water chestnuts

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1/2 c. milk

1 t. soy sauce

1 clove garlic, minced

1/2 medium onion, sliced thin

1/2 t. pepper

Mix together soup, milk and soy sauce. Put green beans, water chestnuts and onion in crockpot and then dump liquid mixture and mix through once. Don't overmix it or else the canned

green beans will fall apart. Cook 4 hours on low.