

HOLIDAY SAVORY RECIPES

Crock-Pot Sweet Potato Casserole

As a chef, I long for a larger kitchen with endless counter space, a forty-two inch eight burner stove and most of all, two ovens. This longing is probably strongest come the holiday season when oven space is scarce and recipes requiring oven time are many. That is why I love this recipe - it is excellent to make for the holidays because it uses your crock-pot instead of the oven, thus freeing up that valuable space for something else. Plus, it tastes great too!

2 cans (48 ounces each) sweet potatoes, mashed (one can drained-liquid saved, one not) *
1/3 cup margarine or butter, melted
2 tablespoons white sugar
2 tablespoons brown sugar, either light or dark
1 tablespoon orange juice
2 eggs, beaten
½ cup milk
1/3 cup chopped pecans
1/3 cup brown sugar
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons margarine or butter, melted

Lightly grease crock-pot. In a separate large bowl, mash sweet potatoes, 1/3 cup margarine, white sugar and brown sugar. Fold in orange juice, eggs, milk. Transfer this mixture to the crock-pot.

Note: Save the juice from the second can. If when mashing the potatoes, if they seem too dry, add some of the juice from the second can to the mixture; however, only do this after you have added all the other ingredients but prior to spreading the pecan/sugar mixture over the top of the sweet potatoes.

Now combine the pecans, 1/3 cup brown sugar, flour, and 2 tablespoons margarine and/or butter. Spread this mixture over the sweet potatoes in the crock-pot. Cover and cook on high setting for 3 to 4 hours. Just prior to serving, if desired, cover the top of the casserole with mini marshmallows. Serves six to eight, depending on how large a spoon you use to scoop out the potatoes.

Note: To add a little kick to this dish, you can add a tablespoon or two or three of Jack Daniels to the potato mixture prior to putting it in the crock-pot.

For The Stuffing:

- 1 or 2 packages of Pepperidge Farm Corn Bread Stuffing Mix with Herbs
- 1 Cup each diced onion, carrot, and celery – this is called a mirepoix
- 1 package Italian sausage, either hot or mild, casings removed
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 8 Tablespoons butter (1 stick)

Cook the sausage in a frying pan over medium heat in a little olive oil, breaking it up as it cooks, till the meat is fully cooked, then add the vegetables and continue to cook for 3 to 5 minutes so they get slightly soft. Season to taste with salt and pepper and any other herbs you wish to use. Melt the butter in 3 cups of the chicken stock; now mix this vegetable/sausage mixture in a bowl with the stuffing mix and add the 2 cups of the chicken stock/butter mixture and fold together. If the mixture seems dry, continue adding stock in ¼ cup installments till the mixture is moist and totally incorporated. You can now either place this in a buttered baking dish, or as I do, scoop it into a 12 cup muffin pan that has been sprayed with cooking spray. Bake in a 350-degree oven for about 25 to 35 minutes or till the top of the stuffing muffins is crisp and cooked through. Remove and allow to rest a few minutes prior to removing the muffins. If you bake in a casserole dish, cover with foil and bake about the same amount of time, removing the foil the last 8 to 10 minutes of cooking time to allow the top of the stuffing to brown.

Sliced Brussels Sprout's Leaves with Pecans

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 8 cups halved and thinly sliced Brussels sprouts (about 1 ½ pounds)
- ½ cup low sodium chicken broth
- 1 ½ tablespoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 8 teaspoons coarsely chopped pecans, toasted

Melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic, sauté 4 minutes or until lightly browned; stir in Brussels sprouts, sauté 2 minutes. Add broth and sugar, cook 5 minutes or until liquid almost evaporates, stirring frequently. Stir in salt. Sprinkle with pecans, spoon onto serving platter and enjoy.

Roasted Green Beans

- 6 cups green beans, cleaned and trimmed
- 1 large onion, sliced into half rings
- 6 cloves garlic, sliced

3 – 4 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
Salt and Pepper to taste

Combine the green beans with the onion, garlic, and olive oil. Season this combination to taste with salt and pepper. Spread combined ingredients onto a foil-lined shallow edged roasting pan. Bake for 30 minutes, stirring once or twice in a 450-degree pre-heated oven. When done baking, sprinkle with the balsamic vinegar and maybe, depending on taste, a little more salt and pepper. Serve and enjoy!

Roasted Winter Vegetables

1 large rutabaga, peeled and cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ " chunks
1/3 cup low-salt chicken broth
3 medium carrots, peeled and cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ " lengths
12 small ($1\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter) white onions, peeled and halved
3 large all-purpose potatoes cut into $1\frac{1}{4}$ " chunks
1½ Tablespoons olive oil, preferably extra-virgin
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon dried thyme leaves
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground black pepper
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt

Preheat the oven to 375 –degrees.

Combine the rutabagas and broth in a large roasting pan or jelly-roll pan. Place on the center oven rack and roast, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes.

In a large bowl, stir together the carrots, onions, potatoes, oil, thyme and pepper until well combined. Add the rutabagas and any remaining broth. Transfer the vegetables to the pan previously used for the rutabagas. Spread the vegetables out evenly.

Roast, stirring occasionally, for 40 to 50 minutes, or until the carrots and rutabagas are just tender when pierced with a fork. Sprinkle with the salt and mix well. Makes 5 servings

Chunky Vegetable Turkey Stew

1/3 cup olive oil
2 each onions, large, sliced thick
4 cloves garlic, crushed
2 14 oz. can diced tomatoes
10 oz. sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
2 – 3 cups diced cooked turkey, white or dark meat or combination

2 cups Chick Peas, drained
1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
2 zucchini, diced
Salt and pepper to taste
½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated as garnish

Heat olive oil in heavy large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onions and cook for 10 minutes, then add garlic and cook 1 minute longer. Add tomatoes, chickpeas, and rosemary and simmer for 10 to 14 minutes. Cut zucchini in half and then cut into ½" pieces, add to cooking vegetables, along with the cooked turkey. Cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally until zucchini and sweet potatoes are tender, about 6 to 8 minutes longer. Serve in large bowls and garnish with fresh grated Parmesan cheese

Turkey Enchiladas

1 onion, small, diced	2 tablespoons oil
2 cloves garlic, minced	½ teaspoon cumin, ground
18 oz. tomato sauce	½ cup chicken stock
2 tablespoon chili powder	¼ teaspoon dried oregano
1 dash salt	12 flour tortillas
3 cups cooked/shredded turkey	6 oz. Jack Cheese, grated
6 oz. Cheddar Cheese, grated	2 ¼ oz., cans sliced black olives
1 bunch green onions	sour cream, for garnish

Sauce: Cook the onion in oil over medium heat until soft. Add the garlic, ½ tsp ground cumin and cook 1 minute. Add tomato sauce and chicken stock then gradually stir in chili powder. Add oregano and a dash of salt. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent burning.

To assemble: Roll each tortilla around the turkey meat and Jack cheese that were mixed together in a large bowl. Place a layer of sauce in the bottom of an ovenproof baking dish, then lay enchiladas in, seam side down. Pour remaining sauce over and sprinkle with the olives and remaining cheese. Garnish with sliced green onions. Bake in preheated 350-degree oven, covered, for 30 minutes or until hot throughout. Serve with Cheddar cheese and sour cream.

Cranberry, Ginger, Orange Relish

1 orange, preferably navel (or other seedless variety) scrubbed
24 ounces fresh cranberries, rinsed
1 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup peeled, chopped ginger root

Cut the orange - with its peel on - into 16 wedges, discarding any seeds. In a large bowl, combine the orange wedges, cranberries, sugar and ginger. Working in batches, transfer a portion of the mixture to a food processor or blender and pulse, scraping the sides of the container until the mixture is finely chopped. Transfer the relish to a bowl, cover and refrigerate. Return to room temperature and stir well. If the relish tastes too gingery, add a few teaspoons of orange juice and stir well.

This is best when made several days in advance and allowed to sit and develop the flavors. This goes great with ham, turkey or just about any meat. It will keep in the refrigerator for several weeks, covered.

GLAZED CROWN ROAST OF PORK w/CRANBERRY-CORNBREAD STUFFING

Roast:

1 (12-bone) pork Crown roast, about 7 pounds – have butcher tie for you.
¼ cup apple jelly
2 tablespoons jellied cranberry sauce

Stuffing:

3 (6 oz.) packages one-step cornbread stuffing mix
Butter – unsalted
Water
¾ cup sweetened dried cranberries
¾ cup chopped dried apples

Heat oven to 350-degrees: In large saucepan, prepare stuffing mix as directed on package, using butter and water. Stir in cranberries and apples; set aside.

Place pork roast on rack in shallow roasting pan. Fill cavity with as much of the prepared stuffing as it will hold. Cover stuffing and exposed bones loosely with foil. Spray 1-quart casserole dish with nonstick cooking spray and spoon remaining stuffing into sprayed casserole. Cover; refrigerate until 45 minutes before serving time.

Roast the pork for 2 ¼ to 3 hours, allowing 25 to 30 minutes per pound or until an instant read thermometer inserted in center registers 155 degrees.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine the apple jelly and cranberry sauce; mix well. Heat over low heat, until the mixture is melted and smooth.

During the last 45 minutes of baking time, brush roast with jelly mixture and bake any remaining stuffing. When finished, remove roast from pan and cover with foil; let stand 15 minutes. Remove foil and cut string from roast; cut between bones and plate. Serve with stuffing from center of roast and additional baked stuffing.

PEPPER-CRUSTED PRIME RIB w/ZINFANDEL SAUCE

Roast:

- 1 (6 lb.) boneless prime or choice beef rib roast
- 3 garlic cloves, sliced
- 1 tablespoon mixed peppercorns, coarsely ground
- 1 tablespoon mustard seed
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Sauce:

- 2 tablespoons finely chopped shallots
- 1 cup red Zinfandel wine
- 1 (14 oz.) can beef broth
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons brandy
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley

Heat oven to 450-degrees: Make shallow slits in surface of beef roast; insert slices of garlic. In small bowl, combine ground peppercorns, mustard seed, Worcestershire sauce and Dijon mustard; mix well. Spread over surface of roast. Place roast on rack in shallow metal roasting pan.

Bake for 15 minutes, and then reduce oven temperature to 350-degrees. Bake an additional 1 ¼ to 1 ½ hours or until an instant read thermometer inserted in center registers 140-degrees for medium-rare.

Remove roast from pan, cover with foil to keep warm. Remove and discard all but 2 tablespoons drippings from pan. Add shallots; cook and stir over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes or until shallots are tender. Add wine; cook over medium-high heat until mixture boils, scraping brown bits from bottom of pan.

In small bowl combine broth and flour; blend well. Stir into wine mixture and cook until mixture comes to a boil; stirring frequently. Boil for 3 minutes or until slightly thickened. Carefully with pan off heat, stir in brandy and mix well. Now slice roast into serving pieces. Serve sauce on the side. Sprinkle individual servings with the chopped parsley.

THREE- POTATO GRATIN

3 medium dark-orange sweet potatoes or yams (1 lb.) peeled
3 medium red-skinned potatoes (1 lb.) unpeeled
3 medium Yukon Gold potatoes (1 lb.) unpeeled
2 cups finely shredded Swiss cheese (8 oz.)
1 cup beef broth
1 teaspoon dried rosemary leaves crushed
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 garlic cloves, minced

Heat oven to 400 degrees; spray a 12 x 8 inch (2 qt.) glass baking dish and a sheet of foil with nonstick cooking spray. Cut all the potatoes into 1/8 inch thick slices. Layer half of the potatoes in sprayed baking dish. Top with half the Swiss cheese. Cover with the remaining potatoes.

In medium saucepan, combine broth, rosemary, pepper and garlic. Bring to a boil and then pour this boiling mixture over the potatoes. Loosely cover with sprayed sheet of foil. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove baking dish from oven and uncover. Sprinkle with the remaining half of cheese. Return baking dish to oven, uncovered, for an additional 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender and the cheese is melted.

BABY SPINACH SALAD w/CRANBERRY VINAIGRETTE

Dressing:

½ cup whole berry cranberry sauce
¼ cup vegetable oil
2 tablespoons orange juice
2 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
¼ teaspoon salt

Salad:

1 (10 oz.) bag fresh baby spinach leaves, washed and de-stemmed
2 avocados, peeled, pitted and sliced
1 tablespoon orange juice
½ cup pomegranate seeds

In a jar with tight-fitting lid, place cranberry sauce, vegetable oil, orange juice, honey, balsamic vinegar and salt. Shake until well blended. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Arrange an assortment of spinach leaves on individual salad plates. Coat avocado slice with 1 tablespoon orange juice; arrange over the spinach leaves. Sprinkle with pomegranate seeds and drizzle salads with the jar dressing, just enough to moisten the leave.

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