

A Very Veggie World

A Delicious Rainbow of 25 Recipes
Your Family Will Love



Clare Crespo

A Special Edition of

**CROCK COUNTRY
CHRONICLE**

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Photography by Eric Staudenmaier

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A Clare Crespo and Country Crock® Book



When I was growing up, the food that filled my belly also fed my imagination – shredded cabbage could morph into a bird’s nest, green beans stacked like logs became a cozy cabin. Now that I’m a mom, I know the importance of nutritious meals, but I also still believe nutritious food should be fun to eat.

That’s why I’ve partnered with Country Crock® to create this quirky collection of good-for-you dishes spotlighting the colorful and delicious world of vegetables. They found out that eight out of ten kids think that vegetables with Country Crock® are delicious. From squash-inspired “Hippo Dip” to sweet potato “Bear Paws,” dreaming up whimsical dishes that also taste delightful has never been easier. So cook up a little fun in the kitchen, and see just how quickly the veggies vanish!

Clare Crespo

As the mother of three, I know that feeding your family healthy foods can be a challenge, especially when it concerns vegetables. Balanced foods are the cornerstone of good health, and vegetables are some of the lowest-calorie, vitamin-rich foods around. They supply important nutrients, such as vitamins A and C, potassium, and fiber. And most vegetables are brimming with water, which helps satisfy fluid needs while filling you up, not out.

MyPlate, the newest icon for healthy eating, suggests filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal. However, few of us eat enough of a variety of vegetables, including carrots, dark leafy greens, potatoes, and beans, as recommended in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA).

Of course, we eat food, not nutrition guidelines. That’s why healthy fare, including vegetables, should taste great. Rather than give up on serving your family vegetables, serving the same one or two vegetables again and again, or hiding vegetables in other foods, embrace the natural goodness of vegetables. I use a variety of cooking methods, and add herbs, spices, and fat to vegetable dishes.

Fat adds flavor and makes food taste better. When choosing added fat, substitution is the name of game. *MyPlate* and the DGA encourage using foods with unsaturated fats and 0g of trans fat, such as Country Crock®, in place of foods rich in saturated fat, like butter.

Making foods, particularly veggies, look and taste delicious is an important element of “A Very Veggie World.” Clare Crespo’s clever designs will help entice families to consider serving up veggie recipes as part of their everyday meals. Keeping recipes simple and adding Country Crock® will ensure that veggies will taste delicious. Enjoy!

Elizabeth M. Ward, M.S., R.D.

author, “*MyPlate for Moms, How to Feed Yourself & Your Family*”

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Out of the Park Baseballs

4 servings

Prep Time: 30 minutes
Cook Time: 20 minutes

- 1 medium red bell pepper, seeded and very thinly sliced
- 3 medium baking potatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread
- 2 Tbsp. reduced-fat sour cream
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper

Bring small saucepan of water to a boil. Add pepper slices and boil until pliable, about 5 minutes; drain. In medium saucepan, cook the potatoes in salted water until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain the potatoes, reserving 2 tablespoons cooking water, then return potatoes to the saucepan.

Add the Country Crock® Spread, sour cream, garlic, salt and pepper. Mash with a potato masher or a ricer until the ingredients are blended and the mixture is fluffy. Add the reserved water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until the potatoes are the desired consistency (keep them stiff enough to hold their shape).

Using an ice cream scoop, mold a scoop of potatoes into a half sphere on a plate. Add pepper strips to resemble laces. Cut strips of pepper into smaller 1/4-inch pieces to make cross-stitches. Make additional baseballs with remaining potatoes and peppers.

See nutrition information for sodium content.

If this dish scores with your family, check out the recipe for Garlic Mashed Potatoes and Cauliflower at www.CountryCrock.com!

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 170, Calories From Fat 45, Saturated Fat 1.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 5g, Cholesterol 5mg, Sodium 520mg, Total Carbohydrate 28g, Sugars 4g, Dietary Fiber 4g, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 25%, Vitamin C 120%, Calcium 4%, Iron 6%



Mushroom Gnomes

Trim stems of mushrooms even with the bottoms of the mushrooms. Trim some of the stem into very tiny pieces for “noses.” Trim caps off peppers and scrape out seeds. Save 24 seeds. Cut parsley sprigs into tiny 1/4-inch pieces and bigger 1-inch pieces.

Melt Country Crock® Spread in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms, garlic, and 1/8 teaspoon of the salt and sauté until mushrooms are beginning to color, about 5 minutes. Turn mushrooms stem-side down. Add water; cover and cook over low heat until cooked through, about 10 minutes.

Remove mushrooms with tongs and place in a serving dish. Add peppers and remaining 1/8 teaspoon salt to skillet. Cook until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat.

Place a long toothpick into a pepper and stick on top of mushroom with tip sticking out of the pepper. Arrange larger parsley pieces as “beards” at the base of each mushroom. Stick two pepper seeds on each mushroom as “eyes.” Add tiny parsley “eyebrows.” Stick tiny pieces of mushroom stem on as noses.

6 servings

Prep Time: 30 minutes
Cook Time: 20 minutes

- 12 large white button mushrooms
- 12 mini red or orange sweet peppers
- 3 sprigs curly parsley
- 2 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. water
- A squeeze of lemon juice
- 12 toothpicks or skewers

Get the family involved with this fun recipe! Everyone can chip in to clean the mushrooms with a damp towel.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 60, Calories From Fat 25, Saturated Fat 0.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 3g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 135mg, Total Carbohydrate 7g, Sugars 4g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 2g, Vitamin A 50%, Vitamin C 160%, Calcium 2%, Iron 4%



Pizza Flag

8 servings

Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 22 minutes

6 ounces part skim mozzarella cheese slices

1 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread

2 cups fresh spinach leaves, rinsed and patted dry

1 frozen pizza dough, thawed

1 cup Ragu® Pizza Quick Sauce

2 plum tomatoes, sliced in half lengthwise and cut into slices or 1 sliced red bell pepper or a mixture of the two

Crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

Take two slices of mozzarella cheese and stack together. Use kitchen scissors or small knife to cut a few star shapes out of the cheese. Slice remaining cheese slices into 1-inch strips.

Preheat oven to 450°. Melt Country Crock® Spread in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add spinach and cook until wilted, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

Stretch pizza dough to fit a rectangular pan. Spread Ragu® Pizza Quick Sauce evenly over dough. Sprinkle spinach over top left corner of dough. Place stars on the spinach. Lay tomatoes (or peppers) and cheese strips in alternating strips on rest of the pizza.

Bake 10 to 20 minutes until cheese is melted and starting to turn golden and crust is starting to brown. Remove from oven and serve with crushed red pepper flakes (if using).

Pressed for time? Grab your favorite low-fat string cheese to use as the stripes!

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 210, Calories From Fat 70, Saturated Fat 2.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 7g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 460mg, Total Carbohydrate 29g, Sugars 4g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 10g, Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 10%, Calcium 20%, Iron 10%



Veggie Pets

Bring 1-inch of water in medium saucepan to a boil over medium high heat. Cut a slice off the long side of the potatoes so they do not roll. Place potatoes, cut side down, in steamer basket and place in pan.

Cover and steam for 10-15 minutes, until tender. Carefully, with tongs, remove potatoes and add snap peas to basket to steam for 5-10 minutes. Remove peas and cut tips off to make hamster's "ears." Remove eight peas from pea pods.

Using chopsticks or small knife, poke two holes into the top of the potato. Insert snap pea pieces into top of the potato for the pet's ears.

Use chopsticks or a small knife to make three holes on front of potato and insert peas for "eyes" and corn kernel for "nose." Use a toothpick to poke a few holes around the nose and insert rosemary leaves for "whiskers." Brush pets with Country Crock® Spread and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 15 minutes

- 4 new potatoes
- 4 snap peas
- 4 kernels of frozen corn
- 24 fresh rosemary leaves
- 2 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread, melted
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. salt

If your family loves potatoes, try Country Crock Creamy Mashed Potatoes. Go to www.CountryCrock.com for the recipe.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 190, Calories From Fat 35, Saturated Fat 1g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 4g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 230mg, Total Carbohydrate 35g, Sugars 3g, Dietary Fiber 4g, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 8%, Vitamin C 35%, Calcium 4%, Iron 10%



Fall For Them Leaves

6 servings

Prep Time: 30 minutes
Cook Time: 30 minutes

6 carrots, peeled and cut lengthwise in half

2 large parsnips, peeled, trimmed and cut lengthwise in half

1 rutabaga, peeled and cut lengthwise into 1/4- 1/2-inch slices

1 sweet potato or yam, peeled and cut lengthwise into 1/4- 1/2-inch slices

8 fresh sage leaves

3 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread, melted

1/8 tsp. ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400°.

With a small sharp knife, cut vegetables into leaf shapes. Score some of the leaves with lines down the center to make them more “leaf-like.”

Put all of the vegetables and sage onto a parchment lined rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle Country Crock® Spread over vegetables. Season with black pepper. Toss to coat.

Roast in oven until golden brown and tender, about 30 minutes.



Substitute any root veggies you like, or whatever's available locally, for this dish.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 140, Calories From Fat 40, Saturated Fat 1g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 4g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 240mg, Total Carbohydrate 25g, Sugars 11g, Dietary Fiber 6g, Protein 2g, Vitamin A 290%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 8%, Iron 6%



Lightning Bolts

4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

3 carrots, peeled, trimmed and sliced in half lengthwise

1 small head of cauliflower, cut into florets

1 cup corn kernels (cut off a cob or frozen)

3 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread, melted

1/8 tsp. salt

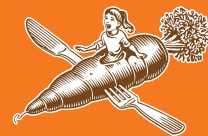
1/8 tsp. white pepper

Cut carrot slices into zigzag shapes to resemble lightning bolts.

Place 1 or 2 inches of water in a large pot. Place carrots, cauliflower and corn in steamer basket and place in pot. Cover and steam for 7-10 minutes until vegetables are tender. Drain vegetables.

Place carrot pieces on plate. Place cauliflower florets above carrots so they resemble a cloud. Sprinkle corn kernels over top to resemble raindrops. Continue with the rest of the vegetables.

Drizzle Country Crock® Spread on top and sprinkle with salt and white pepper.



To save on prep time, look for bagged, pre-cut cauliflower florets at your grocer!

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 120, Calories From Fat 60, Saturated Fat 1.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 6g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 200mg, Total Carbohydrate 16g, Sugars 3g, Dietary Fiber 4g, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 160%, Vitamin C 60%, Calcium 4%, Iron 4%



Bear Paws

4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 40 minutes

3 medium sweet potatoes or yams,
scrubbed clean and sliced lengthwise
into 1/2-inch slices

3 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread,
melted

1 Tbsp. grated orange peel (optional)

A pinch grated nutmeg

30 whole cashews

Preheat oven to 350°.

Arrange sweet potatoes in one layer in a shallow baking dish. Drizzle Country Crock® Spread over sweet potatoes. Sprinkle orange zest (if using) and nutmeg over sweet potatoes. Toss to coat.

Bake for 40-45 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Remove from oven. Place sweet potato slices on a serving tray or individual plates. Insert three or four cashews into the end of each potato slices to resemble bear claws.

Have a nut allergy? Simply substitute golden raisins for the cashews.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 210, Calories From Fat 100, Saturated Fat 2.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 11g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 180mg, Total Carbohydrate 24g, Sugars 7g, Dietary Fiber 3g, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 360%, Vitamin C 30%, Calcium 4%, Iron 8%



Mt. Veggie Volcanoes

4 servings

Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 40 minutes

4 yams or sweet potatoes

1/4 cup Country Crock® Spread

1/4 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon

1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg

1/2 cup cranberry sauce

Preheat oven to 400°.

Pierce yams with a fork and place on a baking sheet.
Bake 40 minutes or until soft.

Slice open yams and scoop flesh into a bowl. Mash with
Country Crock® Spread, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg.

Using very clean hands, mold into four cone shapes on
a serving plate. Make a small indentation in tip of each
cone. Spoon cranberry sauce into indentation and let
drip down sides to resemble "lava."

**Insert whole fresh herbs into the base of the
volcano to create grass!**

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 240, Calories From Fat 70, Saturated Fat 2g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 8g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 330mg, Total Carbohydrate 40g, Sugars 19g, Dietary Fiber 4g, Protein 2g, Vitamin A 380%, Vitamin C 6%, Calcium 4%, Iron 4%



Hashbrains

4 servings

Prep Time: 25 minutes
Stand Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 30 minutes

2 large baking potatoes, peeled

1 tsp. grated onion

1 egg, slightly beaten

1/4 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. ground black pepper

1/4 cup Country Crock® Spread,
melted

Preheat oven to 400°.

Line baking sheet with parchment paper, set aside.

Grate potatoes using food processor fitted with a shredding disk or with a box grater. In large bowl, combine the potatoes with enough cold water to cover and let soak for 10 minutes.

Drain the potatoes and then layer them between kitchen towels and squeeze to remove any excess water. In a large mixing bowl, mix the potatoes, onion, egg, salt and pepper. Gather a handful of potatoes and place on baking sheet in a mound. With your hands form an oval half-dome. With a spatula press a 1-inch crevice down the center of the oval lengthwise to define the two lobes of the “brain.” Make three more brains. Brush tops and sides of brains with Country Crock® Spread.

Bake 30-40 minutes until golden brown. Remove from oven and serve.

Pairing scrambled egg whites with Hashbrains is a smart way to start the day! Use Country Crock® Spread for extra fluffy eggs!

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 220, Calories From Fat 80, Saturated Fat 2.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 9g, Cholesterol 45mg, Sodium 270mg, Total Carbohydrate 30g, Sugars 1g, Dietary Fiber 3g, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 20%, Calcium 2%, Iron 4%



Beautiful Butterflies

4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

6 small or medium crookneck squash

3 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread

2 Tbsp. finely chopped garlic

12 baby carrots

4 chives, cut into 24 1/2-inch pieces

2 Tbsp. finely chopped assorted fresh herbs (parsley, mint, tarragon, dill, chives)

1/8 tsp. of salt

1/8 tsp. of pepper

Slice fat part of squash into 24 slices (save the necks for another recipe).

Melt Country Crock® Spread in large skillet. Add garlic and cook until golden, about 5 minutes. Add squash and carrots, sauté until tender, about 7 minutes.

Arrange carrots on serving dish or individual plates. Place two squash rounds on either side of carrots. Using a toothpick, poke two holes in the tops of each carrot and insert chive pieces as “antennae.”

Sprinkle remaining herbs on squash “wings.” Add salt and pepper.



If you want these to hold together, add toothpicks – but don't forget to remove them before eating!

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 100, Calories From Fat 50, Saturated Fat 1.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 6g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 180mg, Total Carbohydrate 10g, Sugars 5g, Dietary Fiber 3g, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 100%, Vitamin C 60%, Calcium 6%, Iron 6%



Pasta Full of Posies

8 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

2 yellow and/or orange bell peppers

1 package (16 oz.) whole wheat penne
(or pasta of your choice)

3 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread

1 Tbsp. olive oil

3 garlic cloves, minced

3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

5 cherry tomatoes, halved

7 basil or baby spinach leaves

Chop off top and bottom of peppers. Slice down the side, remove the seeds and lay pepper flat. Cut into petal shapes.

Boil pasta according to package directions; drain.

Melt Country Crock® Spread and heat olive oil on the stove over medium heat in a pan big enough to hold pasta. Cook garlic and peppers together for about 5 minutes. With tongs, remove pepper petals and set aside.

Add pasta and cheese to garlic and toss together. Put pasta in shallow serving dish. Arrange tomato halves on top and surround them with pepper petals to make "flowers." Add a basil or baby spinach leaf to each flower.

There's no need to limit yourself to orange or yellow peppers – use any colors you'd like!

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 300, Calories From Fat 70, Saturated Fat 2.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 8g, Cholesterol 5mg, Sodium 160mg, Total Carbohydrate 47g, Sugars 2g, Dietary Fiber 6g, Protein 11g, Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 150%, Calcium 10%, Iron 10%



Monogrammed Parsnips

4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

4 large parsnips, peeled and chopped

1 medium yellow onion, chopped

1 cup frozen green peas

1/2 cup fat-free half and half

2 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread

1/4 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. ground black pepper

Put the parsnips and onion in a saucepan with cold water to cover. Bring to a boil, then lower heat and simmer until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain, reserving some of the cooking liquid.

Meanwhile, place green peas in a small saucepan and cover peas with water. Bring to a boil, lower heat and cook until tender, about 3-5 minutes; drain.

Process parsnips, onions, half and half, Country Crock® Spread, salt, pepper and 1/4 cup of peas in a food processor or blender. Process until smooth, adding reserved cooking liquid if needed.

Put puree in individual bowls or a serving bowl. Use reserved peas to write letters in each bowl.

This root vegetable is a good source of Vitamin C, fiber and folic acid.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 200, Calories From Fat 45, Saturated Fat 1.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 5g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 290mg, Total Carbohydrate 37g, Sugars 12g, Dietary Fiber 8g, Protein 5g, Vitamin A 20%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 10%, Iron 8%



Veggie Stoplights

4 servings

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

1 medium red bell pepper

1 medium yellow bell pepper

1 medium green bell pepper

1 roll (24 oz.) prepared polenta

4 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary

1/2 tsp. ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400°.

Cut tops and bottoms off bell peppers. Slice down one side and remove seeds and ribs. Lay peppers flat. Use a 2-inch cookie cutter or small sharp knife to cut out four circles from each pepper.

Slice polenta lengthwise to make four slices. Trim the rounded edges of the outside slice to make those flat.

In a small bowl, mix together Country Crock® Spread, garlic, rosemary and black pepper. Spread mixture on both sides of polenta and pepper circles.

Place polenta on parchment lined baking sheet. Place pepper circles on polenta slices like a stoplight (red on top, yellow in center, green on bottom). Bake for 30 minutes.

See nutrition information for sodium content.

Experiment with different herbs for this recipe, any green herb will do!

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 230, Calories From Fat 70, Saturated Fat 2g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 8g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 506mg, Total Carbohydrate 32g, Sugars 6g, Dietary Fiber 4g, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 40%, Vitamin C 290%, Calcium 2%, Iron 6%



Rocket Ships

4 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

2 ears corn-on-the-cob

2 zucchinis or cucumbers

2 cherry tomatoes, halved

2 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread, melted

1 lemon, sliced in half and seeds removed

Cut the ends off the corn and then cut corn-cobs in two pieces. Cut ends off the zucchini or cucumber (about 2-inch long pieces.) Cut the very tip off the zucchini or cucumber ends (1/2-inch.) Cut center pieces of zucchini or cucumber on the diagonal to make four triangle shapes. Slice those to make three triangle slices.

Bring a couple inches of water to boil in a pot with a steamer basket. Place corn and zucchini pieces in basket (if using cucumber, keep raw.) Cover pot and let cook 10 minutes. Remove zucchini pieces from basket. Cover pot and let corn cook 5 more minutes.

Remove corn with tongs and place pieces on end on plates. Stand three triangle zucchini or cucumber pieces around the base of each corn cob for rocket “wings.” Place ends of zucchini or cucumber on top of corn-cobs for rocket “noses.”

Place a cherry tomato half on the very tip. Brush rockets with Country Crock® Spread. Squeeze lemon juice over rockets.

Want to get everyone involved? Grab some plastic knives so the whole family can help cut out the parts.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 100, Calories From Fat 40, Saturated Fat 1g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 4.5g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 65mg, Total Carbohydrate 13g, Sugars 4g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 45%, Calcium 2%, Iron 4%



Zucchini Boats

Preheat oven to 350°.

Bring a large pot of water to boil. Cut zucchinis in half lengthwise. Cut 2-1/2 inches off bottom of carrot and cut in half lengthwise, then cut each half on the diagonal.

Boil zucchini and carrot “sails” for 5 minutes. Remove and let cool until you can handle them. With a small knife or pointed spoon, scoop center of zucchini out (leaving 1/2 - inch thickness to zucchini “boat”).

Dice scooped out zucchini and remaining end of carrot. Heat Country Crock® Spread in skillet. Add onion and garlic, cook until onion is soft, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes. Add carrots and zucchini and cook for about 7 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Remove from heat and add to cooked couscous. Stir in feta cheese, herbs, salt and pepper.

Place zucchini halves on baking sheet. Scoop couscous mixtures into zucchini halves, pressing firmly to form mounds. Bake 25 minutes. Remove from oven. Carefully place carrot ends on small skewers or toothpicks and stick sails in boats.

4 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 42 minutes

- 2 medium zucchinis
- 1 large carrot, peeled
- 2 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread
- 1/2 small onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 cup cooked couscous
- 1/4 cup reduced fat feta cheese
- 1 Tbsp. fresh parsley, oregano or mint, finely chopped
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. ground black pepper



For a change of pace, try other grains – quinoa, bulgur wheat, brown rice – in place of couscous.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 130, Calories From Fat 45, Saturated Fat 2g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 5g, Cholesterol 5mg, Sodium 260mg, Total Carbohydrate 16g, Sugars 3g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 5g, Vitamin A 70%, Vitamin C 35%, Calcium 6%, Iron 4%



Peas & Thank You

4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 16 minutes

7 carrots, peeled

2 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread

2 shallots, finely chopped

1/4 cup water

1 pound frozen green peas, thawed
(or about 3 cups fresh peas)

1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley
or mint

1/8 tsp. ground black pepper

Using a small paring knife cut a small “v” shaped wedge out of the length of carrot. Trim the lower two sides of the carrot to make a point (this will be the bottom of the heart). Slice carrot into pieces. Repeat these steps with remaining carrots.

Heat Country Crock® Spread in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add shallots. Cook, stirring occasionally, until shallots are soft, about 5 minutes.

Add water and carrots and continue to cook until carrots are tender, about 8 minutes. Add peas and cook until heated through, about 3-5 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in parsley or mint and black pepper.



If your family loves green peas,
try Stroganoff-Style Peas
and Mushrooms at
www.CountryCrock.com.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 190, Calories From Fat 40, Saturated Fat 1g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 4.5g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 250mg, Total Carbohydrate 30g, Sugars 12g, Dietary Fiber 8g, Protein 8g, Vitamin A 420%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 8%, Iron 15%



Hippo Dip

16 servings (2 cups)

Prep Time: 30 minutes

For Hippo:

- 1 small spaghetti squash
- 2 small or 1 large crookneck squash
- 4 whole cloves
- 4 slivered almonds

For Dip:

- 2 8-oz. packages light cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup Country Crock® Spread
- 1/2 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 cup loosely packed parsley
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. salt

To make the hippo, with a large knife, cut the side off spaghetti squash to make a bowl and the “belly” of your hippo. Scoop out seeds, saving two for the hippo’s “ears.” Cut the large end off one of the crookneck squash. Cut it at an angle so that it will be flush to the acorn squash. Cut it half lengthwise to make the hippo’s “mouth.”

Insert two cloves on top of crookneck squash as “eyes.” Insert two near the tip as “nostrils.” Insert four slivered almonds on the inside of the mouth (two on bottom, two on top) as “teeth.” With a small knife, make two little slices behind the hippo’s eyes. Insert squash seeds for ears.

Attach both pieces of head to acorn squash with toothpicks. Cut remaining squash into four pieces. Attach to bottom of acorn squash with toothpicks as “legs.”

For dip, process cream cheese, Country Crock® Spread, basil, garlic, parsley, pepper and salt in food processor and pulse until combined. Carefully scoop into the hippo. Serve with vegetables (celery, carrots, etc.) as a dip.

Station this fun dip display front and center at your next animal-themed birthday bash, and watch the veggies get gobbled up!

Nutrition Information per 2 Tbsp serving: Calories 50, Calories From Fat 20, Saturated Fat 0.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 2g, Cholesterol 5mg, Sodium 300mg, Total Carbohydrate 3g, Sugars 2g, Dietary Fiber 0g, Protein 5g, Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 8%, Calcium 10%, Iron 2%

Green Bean Campfires

4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 12 minutes

1 large red bell pepper

1 large orange bell pepper

1 large yellow bell pepper

2 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread

2 cloves garlic, minced

1-1/2 lbs. green beans, trimmed and blanched

1 tsp. grated lemon peel

Cut tops and bottoms off peppers. Cut a slice down one side and remove seeds. Lay peppers flat and cut into triangular flame shapes.

Melt Country Crock® Spread in a large nonstick skillet and add garlic. Cook over low heat until golden, about 2 minutes. Add peppers and sauté until crisp-tender, about 7 minutes. Add green beans and toss over medium heat until hot. Remove from heat and stir in lemon peel.

Arrange green beans in circular piles on four serving plates, then arrange “flames.”

Intersperse small sautéed strips of lean chicken breast with the green beans for a punch of protein!

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 120, Calories From Fat 40, Saturated Fat 1g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 4.5g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 65mg, Total Carbohydrate 19g, Sugars 8g, Dietary Fiber 6g, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 70%, Vitamin C 310%, Calcium 8%, Iron 15%



Broccoli Swamp

4 servings

Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 50 minutes
Stand Time: 5 minutes

2 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread

1 large bunch broccoli, about 1-1/2 pounds, divided into florets

3 Tbsp. water

1 clove garlic, finely chopped

5 large eggs

1/2 cup fat-free half and half

3/4 cup low-fat Swiss cheese, shredded

1/4 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. nutmeg

1/8 tsp. ground black pepper

Assorted fresh herbs (tarragon, basil, chives, rosemary, etc.)

Preheat oven to 350°.

Spray 9-inch pie pan with no-stick cooking spray.

On the stove top melt Country Crock® Spread in a pan. Add broccoli and cook for 2 minutes, then add water and garlic and cook, covered for 5-7 minutes until broccoli is bright green but firm.

Remove from heat. Set aside 1/3 of the broccoli florets for garnish and finely chop remaining 2/3.

In a mixing bowl, beat the eggs and half and half. Stir in cheese and mix well. Stir in the chopped broccoli, salt, nutmeg and pepper. Pour into pie pan and bake for about 35-40 minutes until a knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Remove from oven and let stand for 5 minutes. Insert fresh herbs and reserved broccoli florets into the sides of your "swamp."

See nutrition information for cholesterol content.



Serve with grilled lean chicken breast or salmon for a complete meal the whole family can dig into.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 230, Calories From Fat 100, Saturated Fat 4g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 11g, Cholesterol 240mg, Sodium 410mg, Total Carbohydrate 12g, Sugars 5g, Dietary Fiber 3g, Protein 19g, Vitamin A 30%, Vitamin C 170%, Calcium 35%, Iron 10%



Molecular Model Brussels Sprouts

4 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 20 minutes

1 lb. Brussels sprouts

3 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread,
melted

1/8 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400°.

Cut off the brown ends of the Brussels sprouts and pull off any yellow leaves. Put them on a rimmed baking sheet and drizzle with Country Crock® Spread. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Toss to coat.

Roast for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until crisp on the outside and tender on the inside.

Remove from oven, let cool slightly for easier handling. Connect a few together using toothpicks or skewers to resemble molecular models.

Make this a quick, weeknight side dish by using frozen Brussels sprouts, which are already trimmed and cleaned.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 100, Calories From Fat 50, Saturated Fat 1.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 6g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 180mg, Total Carbohydrate 10g, Sugars 3g, Dietary Fiber 4g, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 25%, Vitamin C 160%, Calcium 4%, Iron 8%



Asparagus Bouquet

4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 6 minutes

2 lemons

3 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread

1 bunch asparagus, 1-2 inches
trimmed from bottoms

1/4 tsp. of salt

1/8 tsp. of pepper

A few sprigs flat-leaf parsley

4 wooden skewers

Use a small sharp knife to make zigzag cuts around each lemon as far into the center as possible. Once you have made it all around the lemon, carefully separate the halves, trimming any pieces that need it. Insert skewers into the uncut side of lemon halves.

In a skillet, melt Country Crock® Spread. Add asparagus and cook for 3-6 minutes until bright green and can be pierced with a fork. Add salt and pepper. Remove from heat.

Arrange asparagus, lemon “flowers” and parsley in a clean glass vase. Serve and encourage everyone to squeeze lemon flowers on their asparagus.

Asparagus is an ancient vegetable that is a good source of vitamins A and C.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 70, Calories From Fat 50, Saturated Fat 1.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 6g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 220mg, Total Carbohydrate 8g, Sugars 1g, Dietary Fiber 4g, Protein 2g, Vitamin A 20%, Vitamin C 80%, Calcium 4%, Iron 10%



Veggie Wagon

4 servings

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

1 large eggplant

1 medium zucchini

1/4 cup Country Crock® Spread

1 small onion, diced

4 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 bell pepper, diced

1/2 cup tomato sauce

1 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil leaves

1/8 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. ground black pepper

4 toothpicks or skewers

Cut top quarter off eggplant lengthwise, leaving stem intact. Dice this piece (leave skin on). Scoop out eggplant from remaining piece (leaving 1/2-inch thick wall of eggplant), and dice.

Cut four (1/2-inch – thick) slices from zucchini (for “wheels”) and dice remaining zucchini.

Melt Country Crock® Spread in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook until onion is starting to color, about 5 minutes. Add diced zucchini, bell pepper, and diced eggplant and cook until soft, about 5 to 7 minutes.

Add tomato sauce, basil, salt and pepper and cook until liquid evaporates.

Attach zucchini wheels to eggplant using toothpicks or skewers. Fill eggplant with cooked mixture. Depending on size of eggplant you may have a little extra filling.

**Eggplants are fat-free and sodium free,
and a great addition to your family’s diet!**

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 110, Calories From Fat 70, Saturated Fat 2g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 8g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 330mg, Total Carbohydrate 8g, Sugars 4g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 2g, Vitamin A 25%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 2%, Iron 4%



Cabbage Nests

4 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 16 minutes

3 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread

8 to 12 pearl onions

1 head red cabbage, cored and sliced into 1/4-inch strips

2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar

2 Tbsp. honey

1/2 tsp. caraway seeds

1/4 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes

In a medium saucepan, melt Country Crock® Spread. Add the onions and sauté until soft, about 5 to 7 minutes. Remove and set aside. Add cabbage to saucepan and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Cover and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 6 minutes.

Stir in remaining ingredients except onions.

Mound cabbage mixture onto plates in little piles. Using the back of a spoon, make an indentation in the center of each mound so it resembles a nest. Carefully place two or three onions into each nest.

Pre-shredded carrots can be sautéed with the cabbage and added to the "nests" for extra color.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 160, Calories From Fat 50, Saturated Fat 1.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 6g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 280mg, Total Carbohydrate 27g, Sugars 17g, Dietary Fiber 5g, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 60%, Vitamin C 200%, Calcium 10%, Iron 10%



Crocky the Caterpillar

Preheat oven to 375°.

Cut off one slice from each beet so that they will not roll when you set up your caterpillar. Place beets in a foil-lined baking dish. Drizzle Country Crock® Spread on top of beets and toss to coat. Add salt and pepper. Cover beets with foil and roast, stirring occasionally, for 40-50 minutes until beets are tender when you poke them with a fork or knife.

Meanwhile, boil a little water in a saucepan. Place green beans in steamer basket and place basket in pan, cover and steam for about 8-10 minutes or until tender. Remove from heat and drain.

Remove beets from oven and toss with dill. Let stand so that you can handle, and then place beets in a “S” shape on serving dish. Using a small knife or chopstick, poke two holes in the sides of six beets (leave one on the end to be the “head.”) Stick green beans in holes to make caterpillar “legs.”

Using a small knife or chopstick, poke four holes in head of caterpillar for “eyes” and “antennae.” Cut two 1/2-inch slices out of remaining green beans and put these in lower holes on head for eyes. Stick dill springs in top holes for antennae.

4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 50 minutes

- 7 medium beets, peeled
- 3 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread, melted
- 15 green beans, trimmed
- 1/8 tsp. of salt
- 1/8 tsp. of pepper
- 1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh dill, plus two sprigs for garnish

With the help of easy-to-use kitchen shears, the whole family can lend a hand trimming the green bean stems.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 120, Calories From Fat 50, Saturated Fat 1.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 6g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 260mg, Total Carbohydrate 15g, Sugars 10g, Dietary Fiber 5g, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 15%, Calcium 4%, Iron 8%



Cabbage Leaf Presents

Melt 3 tablespoons Country Crock® Spread in a large skillet over medium heat. Add chopped green onion,

carrots and garlic and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Add broth, rice, tomato paste, and oregano. Stir until tomato paste is liquefied and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until

liquid has been absorbed, about 40 to 50 minutes. Add green peas and stir until thawed.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add cabbage leaves and cook until soft, about 3 minutes; lift out of water with a slotted spoon and set aside. Using tongs, dip reserved green onions in boiling water for a few seconds until they soften; set aside.

Heat oven to 375°. To assemble, place about 1/3 cup rice mixture on a cabbage leaf. Fold in sides and roll into a compact bundle. Repeat with remaining rice and leaves. Place in baking dish. Melt remaining 1 tablespoon Country Crock® Spread, then evenly brush cabbage presents. Fill baking dish with 1/2-inch water.

Cover and bake 20 minutes or until heated through. Place cabbage presents on serving dish or individual plates. Wrap one green onion around length of cabbage present and one around the width, tucking ends underneath. Make a simple bow out of another green onion and set on top. Continue with other green onions and presents.

4 servings

Prep Time: 35 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

4 Tbsp. Country Crock® Spread, divided

20 green onions, green parts removed and reserved, white parts chopped

2 carrots, diced

2 cloves garlic, minced

3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth

1 cup uncooked brown rice

1/4 cup tomato paste

1/8 tsp. dried oregano leaves, crushed

1/2 cup frozen green peas

8 large cabbage leaves (green or purple)



Let the whole family get wrapped up in making this dish by having everyone roll the “presents” before baking.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 330, Calories From Fat 80, Saturated Fat 2.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 9g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 400mg, Total Carbohydrate 56g, Sugars 10g, Dietary Fiber 8g, Protein 8g, Vitamin A 140%, Vitamin C 70%, Calcium 15%, Iron 20%



Country Crock® is proud to partner with Clare Crespo in producing "A Very Veggie World." Together our mission is to help moms everywhere make veggies look and taste delicious.

We have created the virtual destination "Crock Country," where good habits are delicious, and families can find inspiring ways to get veggies to fly off dinner plates without having to disguise them. It's our goal to bring veggies out of hiding and into their rightful spots as celebrated stars of the family dinner table.

For information and more whimsical veggie inspiration, join our community at CrockCountry.com.

Country Crock® soft spreads provide a buttery and country fresh taste to an array of veggie dishes, and as a simple swap for butter, it's a better nutrition choice for families. It has 70% less saturated fat than butter, no partially hydrogenated oils and 0 grams of trans fat per serving. A little bit of Country Crock® can go a long way when it comes to helping your family eat vegetables.

Special Thanks

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Alice Lodge: Prop Stylist

*Country Crock® Original Spread contains 70 calories, 7g total fat (2g saturated fat) per serving.
Butter contains 100 calories and 11g total fat (7g saturated fat) per serving.

Color Your Dishes DELICIOUS!

Partnering with Country Crock®, Clare Crespo creates culinary masterpieces that make veggies look as great as they taste. "A Very Veggie World: A Delicious Rainbow of 25 Recipes Your Family Will Love" gives you and your family 25 ways to go green – and orange and red and yellow – by making good-for-you food fun AND scrumptious. From "Mushroom Gnomes" to "Molecular Model Brussels Sprouts," this collection of fanciful creations will have everyone following the veggie rainbow to taste treasures!



PRAISE FOR "A VERY VEGGIE WORLD"

"It's not always easy being green, but Clare Crespo's tasty take on vegetables has turned humble sides like me into quite a dish!"
– *Green Beans*

"Put us in Clare's kitchen anytime! She knows just how to make us popular at the dinner table – and her 'Peas and Thank You' recipe is sure to have people pining for more of us!"
– *Peas and Carrots*

"Crespo makes mealtime a blast with 'Rocket Ships,' featuring yours truly. Who wouldn't want mouthwatering veggies landing on their plates when they're served up with such far-out flair?"
– *Corn on the Cob*



Clare Crespo is obsessed with inspiring families to get creative in the kitchen. In addition to "A Very Veggie World," Clare has penned "The Secret Life of Food" and "Hey There, Cupcake!" She has also made a set of children's DVDs called "The Yummyfun Kooking Series." Clare and her fanciful creations are regularly featured on the Food Network, the Style Network, HGTV and NPR. She also feeds fun food ideas to fans on her Web site, Yummyfun.com. Clare has written recipes, activities and party ideas for many magazines and lives in Los Angeles with her husband and daughter.



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