

DEVON COOKERY SCHOOL

Chicken Stock

Making homemade chicken stock is easy!

Not only do you save money because you don't have to buy stock, but the stock also itself is so much healthier for you because of all the iron, collagen, and vitamin-rich marrow from the bones. There are a couple of ways to make chicken stock. Our favourite methods are presented here. Both methods can also be transferred to a slow cooker overnight, strained and then reduced the next day.

The first method uses the leftover bones from a chicken carcass and vegetables (which means it's practically free) and takes several hours of slow cooking. I often use this method when I've roasted a chicken and have a leftover carcass. It's a great way to not let good bones go to waste.

The second method uses the leftovers from portioning and deboning a chicken. It takes a little more work to pack it full of flavour before simmering away.

Method 1: Stock with leftover bones and chicken

- Leftover bones and skin from a large, cooked chicken carcass
 - Celery tops and 1 large celery rib, cut into 2-inch segments
 - 1 large onion, quartered (no need to peel)
 - Carrot, cut into 2-inch bits
 - Parsley, 1 bunch
 - Peppercorns
 - 2 Bay Leaves
1. Put the leftover bones and skin from a chicken carcass into a large stock pot. Add vegetables like celery, onion, carrots, parsley. Cover with water. Pop in a couple of bay leaves and a teaspoon of peppercorns.
 2. Bring to a boil and immediately reduce heat to bring the stock to barely a simmer. Simmer partially covered at least 4 hours, occasionally skimming off any foam that comes to the surface.
 3. Remove the bones and vegetables with a slotted spoon or spider ladle and strain the stock through a fine mesh sieve.
 4. If making stock for future use in soup you may want to reduce the stock by simmering an hour or two longer to make it more concentrated and easier to store.

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Method 2: Quick Chicken Stock using raw chicken

- Leftover bones and skin from a raw carcass after portioning
 - Celery tops and 1 large celery rib, cut into 2-inch segments
 - 1 large onion, quartered (no need to peel)
 - Carrot, cut into 2-inch bits
 - Parsley, 1 bunch
 - Peppercorns
 - 2 Bay Leaves
 - Rapeseed oil
1. Heat 1 Tbsp of oil in a large stock pot. Add one chopped onion, the carrot and celery. Sauté until softened and slightly coloured - 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl.
 2. Add the chicken pieces to the pot. Sauté until they get a nice golden colour on them, about 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer cooked chicken to bowl with onions. Return veg pieces to the pot. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook until chicken releases its juices, about 20 minutes. Add the Bay leaves, parsley and peppercorns.
 3. Top with cold water so there is about 2 inches above the chicken and veg. Simmer on a low heat for a couple of hours.
 4. Strain stock through cheesecloth or paper towel-lined large sieve, and discard solids. (It helps to remove the big pieces of bone with a slotted spoon first.)
 5. If you need to reduce the stock, then place it back into the pot and simmer until you have the amount you want.

'Skimming the fat'

I've seen a lot of cookbooks advocate the skimming of the fat from the stock. We prefer letting the fat settle in a layer on top of the stock as it cools. This way, the fat acts as a protective layer over the stock.

Bacteria need oxygen to grow, so by allowing the fat to rise to the top of the stock and settle we will create a protective barrier between the stock and the oxygen in the air above. The stock will last longer in the refrigerator if you keep the fat layer on it

Just lift up the layer of fat and remove the stock when you want to use it. Every few days, bring the stock to a simmer for 10 minutes and let it cool, again with the fat forming a protective layer. Your stock can be stored in the refrigerator and used for up to a couple of weeks this way.