

Soup Stocks

The most luxurious stocks are made from fresh soup bones, fresh meat, and vegetables. It is a good idea to make a collection in the freezer of beef, veal, and poultry bones, and meat scraps. Then when a sufficient amount has accumulated, you can boil up a stock. A few pork bones may be added to the stock kettle, but too much pork tends to give the stock a sweet flavor. Lamb or ham bones should not be used; their flavor is too strong for a general purpose stock.

Carrots, onions, celery, and leeks are the usual soup vegetables. A parsnip or two may be included if you wish. Starch vegetables will cloud the stock. Turnips, cauliflower, and the cabbage family in general have too strong of a flavor.

The pressure cooker: One would expect a pressure cooker to be the ideal stock-making instrument, but experiments have shown otherwise. After about 45 minutes of cooking under 15 pounds of pressure, a meat stock acquires its maximum pressure-cooked flavor. To reach its optimum flavor, it must then be simmered quietly in an open pot an hour or two more. *Poultry stock acquires an unpleasant flavor if cooked for more than 20 minutes under 15 pounds of pressure.*

Classic Stock

Chicken stock: 3-4 lbs bony chicken parts (necks, backs, breastbones, and wings)
2 chicken feet (optional)

Beef stock: 3 lbs meaty bones such as short ribs and beef shanks (grass fed beef works best)
Beef marrow and knucklebones if available – up to 4 pounds
1 small can tomato paste (optional)

¼ cup apple cider vinegar
4 quarts water
2 large carrots, peeled and chopped
2 large celery sticks, chopped
2 large yellow onion, ends cut off and coarsely chopped (skin may be left on)
1 head unpeeled garlic, cut in half
1 tablespoon whole black peppercorns
1 *bouquet garni* made with parsley sprigs, thyme sprigs, and a bay leaf, tied together with kitchen string

Place meat and bones in large stockpot.
Add vinegar and enough water to cover the

bones. Let stand for 30-60 minutes. Turn heat to medium and bring to a bare simmer and carefully spoon off any scum that rises to top. Add the onions, carrots, celery, *bouquet garni*, and peppercorns, return to a simmer, then lower the heat to low. Cook at a bare simmer with the lid off of slightly askew for 4-6 hours, occasionally skimming scum from the top as needed, checking to ensure that the bones remain covered with water and adding more water as needed.

Remove meat and bones with tongs and a slotted spoon. Reserve meat for other dishes. Strain the stock through a fine-mesh strainer and it is ready to use in recipes. Cover and store in refrigerator for up to 5 days or in the freezer for many months.

You can reduce the time by using a pressure cooker. Follow the guidelines above (beef – no more than 45 minutes, and chicken – no more than 20 minutes). Continue simmering for an hour or two after pressure cooking.