
Stock

The simple truth is that the flavor of many of the best dishes and sauce we prepare results largely from the stock used in its cooking and flavoring and nothing is as good as a home made stock. Stock may be used in sauces, gravies, and braising. Stock adds flavor and aroma to soups, stews and casseroles. Add stock to dishes made with rice, dried beans, grains and pasta.

CATCH ALL KITCHEN STOCK

This is not so much a recipe as a guide. One of the wonderful things about stock is its infinite variety. Made this way, you'll never get bored with the same old flavor because you never know in advance what it will taste like. Vary the proportions and types of ingredients and experiment as much as you like. Once you have tried homemade stock you will never want to go back to the commercial stuff. You will need a 7-quart or larger pressure cooker. Do not exceed the 2/3 full rule, if necessary cut the ingredients in half and make two batches.

Vegetables

1 lb of coarsely chopped mixed root vegetables, use at least 2:

Parsnips, turnips, rutabagas, celery root, carrots are a must (us old, wilted veggies, and the trimmings and parings you have saved in the freezer, anything is fine)

½ lb of coarsely chopped aromatic vegetables, use at least 3,

onions are a must (any variety or mixture of white, brown, shallots, green, purple, etc.), garlic, celery and celery leaves, parsley and/or cilantro stems and leaves, leeks, fennel (use the trimmings and parings you have saved in the freezer)

½ lb of coarsely chopped leafy vegetables, use at least 1,

greens, beet, mustard, spinach, turnip, kale, collard, chard, etc. (wilt the large bulky leaves in boiling water first so they take up less room), use the trimmings and parings you have saved in the freezer

½ lb of coarsely chopped assorted mixed vegetables, but no potatoes (potato is a thickener) use at least 2:

broccoli stems, corn, corn cobs, tomatoes, eggplant any variety of squash, peppers, green beans, mushrooms, pea pods, asparagus stalks (use the trimmings and parings you have saved in the freezer). You can also add some fruit peelings and trimmings from apple, pears, plums and so on.

herbs and spices

Use the ones that you have on hand or the ones that appeal to you most to make up your bouquet garni. No salt; add salt when you are making the final recipe rather than at the stock stage. Choose at least 5 items:

2 large bay leaves (counts as one item)

1 teaspoon of Thyme, rosemary, oregano, basil or sage (count each item separately)

10 whole black peppercorns (counts as one item)

meat and bones

Use any combination of meat and bones that will equal 2 lbs. If you have been saving bones and meat scraps in the freezer, you're off to a great start, just include at least 1 item from the list below. If buying bones choose at least 2 items from the list:

1 lb beef, veal, venison or lamb- marrow bones, or shanks, or neck bones, or oxtails, or calves foot, or knuckle (soup) bones.

1 lb chicken, turkey or game bird parts such as backs, or wings, or necks. Also any bones, fat, skin or carcass you have saved.

1 lb. pork (no smoked meats), pigs feet, or neck bones, or shanks,

directions

Heat the oven to 400°F. Clean and oil the bones, break them up if they are large -- the smaller they are, the more flavor would be extracted. It's great if there is meat and gristle on the bones, but we don't want more meat than bones. Place a layer of onions and carrots on a greased roasting pan, and reserve the remaining veg. Add the bones in 1 layer on top of the onions and carrots and put in the pan oven to brown. Bake about 40 minutes, turning often to avoid burning, and bake until the bones are nicely browned. The vegetables may char a little as they begin to caramelize, but if they start to get too blackened scoop them out of the pan and let them drain on paper towels while the bones finish. Place the browned bones and vegetables into a large pressure cooker. Deglaze the roaster, scraping up the bits and pieces in the bottom of the roasting pan with wine or water and then pour all of that into the cooker. Drop in the bouquet garni, and add 3 quarts of water. Bring to a boil without the lid, skimming off impurities and foam as they rise to the surface otherwise it will make the stock cloudy. Lock the lid in place. Bring to 15psi over high heat.

Reduce the heat to maintain that pressure. Cook 50 minutes and use the natural release method before opening the cooker at once. Strain the stock through a fine sieve or several layers of cheesecloth in a colander and toss the solid ingredients or save the bones for the family pooch. Refrigerate several hours or overnight and the fat will congeal at the top and can be easily removed. Your stock is now ready for use or store in the freezer.

VEGETABLE STOCK

2 large onions, quartered
2 large garlic cloves, mashed
3 large carrots, cut into chunks
3 large celery stalks with leaves, cut in large chunks ¼ cup (¼ ounce)dried porcini mushrooms, sliced
2 large bay leaves
20 fresh parsley sprigs or a small bunch of parsley stems
8 cups assorted vegetables, such as corncobs and husks, asparagus stalks, broccoli stems, leek greens, leafy greens and peeled winter squash - use what you have or like best. Bring the water to a boil in the pressure cooker while you trim and cut the vegetables. Add all the ingredients to the pot. Add 2 quarts water. (Do not go over the maximum fill line indicated by the manufacturer.) Lock the lid in place. Bring to 15psi over high heat. Reduce the heat to maintain that pressure. Cook 20 minutes and use the natural release method to open the cooker. Let the stock cool slightly before straining, pressing the vegetables against the side of the strainer with a large spoon to extract all the liquid. Refrigerate for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months.