

Bone Soup

As presented in an article Published in the Townsend Letter
“Traditional Bone Broth in Modern Health and Disease” by Allison Siebecker



Basic Broth Making and Usage

Ingredients

1. Bones—from poultry, fish, shellfish, beef, lamb*
 - cooked remnants of a previous meal, with or without skin and meat
 - raw bones, with or without skin and meat**
 - use a whole carcass or just parts (good choices include feet, ribs, necks and knuckles)
 - don't forget shellfish shells, whole fish carcasses (with heads) or small dried shrimp
2. Water—start with cold water
 - enough to just cover the bones
 - or 2 cups water per 1 pound bones
3. Vinegar—apple cider, red or white wine, rice, balsamic
 - a splash
 - 2 tablespoons per 1 quart water or 2 pounds bones
 - lemon juice may be substituted for vinegar (citric acid instead of acetic acid)
4. Vegetables (optional)—peelings and scraps like ends, tops and skins or entire vegetable
 - celery, carrots, onions, garlic and parsley are the most traditionally used, but any will do
 - if added towards the end of cooking, mineral content will be higher

Recipe

Combine bones, water and vinegar in a pot, let stand for 30 minutes to 1 hour, bring to a simmer, remove any scum that has risen to the top, reduce heat and simmer (6–48 hrs for chicken, 12–72 hrs for beef). To reduce cooking time, you may smash or cut bones into small pieces first. If desired, add vegetables in last ½ hour of cooking (or at any point as convenience dictates). Strain through a colander or sieve, lined with cheesecloth for a clearer broth. Discard the bones. If uncooked meat was used to start with, reserve the meat for soup or salads.

An easy way to cook broth is to use a crockpot on low setting. After putting the ingredients into the pot and turning it on, you can just walk away. If you forget to skim the impurities off, it's ok, it just tastes better if you do. If you wish to remove the fat for use in gravy, use a gravy separator while the broth is warm, or skim the fat off the top once refrigerated. Cold broth will gel when sufficient gelatin is present. Broth may be frozen for months or kept in the refrigerator for about 5 days.

Usage

1. Soup—Make soup by adding vegetables, beans, grains or meat to broth. Briefly cook vegetables and meat with butter or oil in the bottom of a stockpot (5 minutes). Add broth, and grains or previously soaked beans if you wish. Simmer until everything is cooked through. Time will vary with the ingredients used, but count on a minimum of 20 minutes. Season at the end of cooking with salt and pepper and spices of your choice. Consult cookbooks for specific recipe ideas.

2. Cooking Liquid—Use broth in place of water to cook rice, beans or other grains. Bring broth to a boil, add grains or beans, reduce heat and cook for instructed time. Or you can simmer vegetables or meat in a little seasoned broth until cooked. Remove to a plate, thicken broth with cornstarch, arrowroot or flour, then pour over vegetables and meat.

3. Gravy—Make gravy to put on vegetables, meat or biscuits. Put fat (removed from the broth, or use butter) in a skillet. Add any type of flour, 1 tablespoon at a time, and stir constantly until browned. Whisk in broth and cook till thickened. Add salt and pepper to taste.

4. Tea—Don't forget you can just add salt and sip broth like tea. This is especially nice in the winter or if you're feeling sick. Since broth is simultaneously energizing and calming, it can take the place of morning coffee, afternoon tea, or evening nightcap. Try it in a thermos and sip throughout the day. Of course, the most traditional use for seasoned broth is as a first course, to enhance the digestion of any meal to come.

*Pork bones are not generally recommended for prepared ahead broth, but are cooked into stew and soup recipes, and boiled pig skin is traditionally consumed for many of the same purposes as broth.

**Raw bones and meat may be browned first in the oven, or in the bottom of the stockpot to enhance flavor and color.

