

YOU SAY BONE BROTH, I SAY STOCK

PART I

by Janice Cook Knight

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIN FEINBLATT



Everyone's talking about bone broth.

"I just read a recipe for bone broth on the Internet," my daughter said, a few months back. "It's supposed to be so good for you."

"You mean stock?" I asked.

"I guess so," she said.

"Stock is just broth made from meat bones, usually with vegetables and herbs added," I said.

Eventually we determined that we were talking about the same thing. The only thing new about "bone broth" is, apparently, the name, since humans have been making the stuff for literally thousands of years.

But I can't fault the younger generation for thinking they reinvented the wheel. Unfortunately many of us living in modern Western civilization only know broth that comes from a can or a box. Not everyone has continued the age-old tradition of making broth from bones and vegetables, because we've gotten out of the habit, and even thought it was too much work.

Of course, at fine-dining establishments, good chefs are making their soup broth from scratch, because the resulting broth is very flavorful. The broth is also being used as the base of many a delicious sauce.

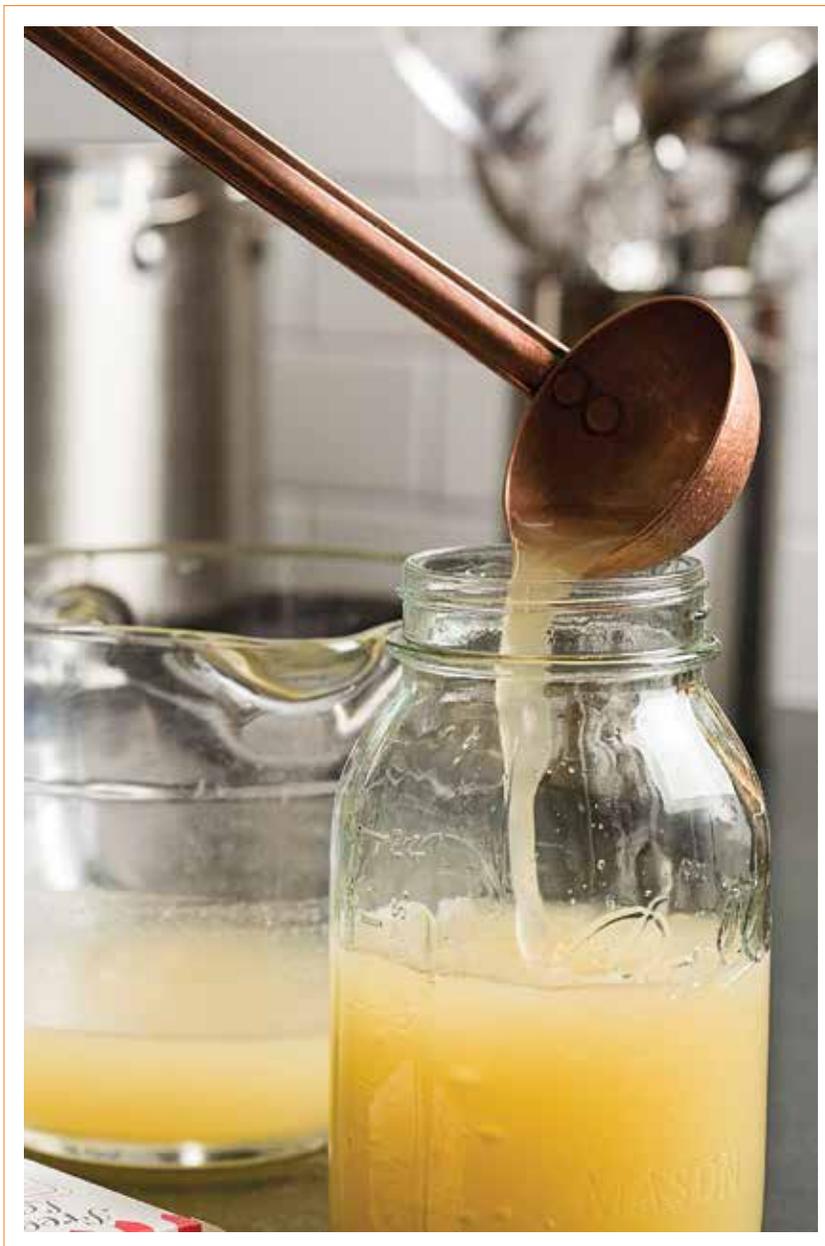
Open a can or box of prepared chicken broth. Taste it. Some taste alright, though remarkably weak, as though a chicken had been swished through water for about a minute, with a lot of salt added.

Some canned broths, especially the vegetable and mushroom variety, taste insipid. Yuck. Why add that to a soup or pot of beans that I'm taking the time to make from scratch? Why use prepared broth when I could make *the real thing*?

I was once a recipe tester for a food magazine. All of the testers complained about the quality of canned chicken stock, which many of the recipes we were testing called for.

It just didn't have much flavor, which prompted our boss, several years later, to go into the frozen broth business. The product she created, Perfect Addition, did taste great, is simple and healthy and is still available, but it's expensive and you'd have to buy many containers of the stuff if you are going to make a big pot of soup.

Several years ago I started making my own stock. Making broth from scratch, besides being delicious, really is good for you. When you boil the bones, minerals are released, and also collagen, which transforms after cooking in water to become gelatin. That's why a rich broth, when chilled, turns to a gel. That collagen/gelatin helps strengthen our bones and cartilage. The younger the animal the bones come from, the more



Jim's Chicken (or Turkey) Stock.

collagen there is—in older animals the bones become more mineralized—one reason why veal stock is especially prized.

When we buy premade chicken broth that does not have that rich flavor, and does not gel when cooled, we know that we are missing out on some of the best reasons to eat broth: flavor and collagen.

I love all-vegetable stocks, too. One of my favorite vegan stocks is mushroom broth. It's easy—simply boil mushrooms and onions in water for a little over an hour, with a little salt and lemon juice. The resulting broth has a full, mushroomy taste, perfect to add to soups and stews, or a flavorful base for a risotto or paella. It is so flavorful that you will not miss the meat.

Years ago I worked at the vegetarian restaurant Follow Your Heart in Canoga Park. We rarely made separate vegetable stocks for our soups (for which the restaurant was justifiably famous). However, the vegetable soups we made incorporated classic stock-making techniques. We started our soups at 6 or 7 in the morning, to have ready to serve by 10am when the restaurant opened. The soups had three or four hours to simmer and build flavor.

Paul Lewin, one of the owners of the restaurant, had very specific things he liked to use to start a soup. His Cream of Green Things soup began with a handful of split peas in the base, and he felt that the cabbage, spinach, watercress and summer squash were essential to add first—because of the way they deeply flavored the soup. He was not extracting collagen, obviously, but he was extracting vitamins and minerals, and giving these ingredients a longer cooking time to deepen their flavor.

You can make a vegetable broth with carrots or cabbage or onions for sweetness, celery for its saltiness and aromatic greenness; you can add celery root for a more pronounced celery flavor, burdock root for a woody earthiness, parsnips for sweetness with a woody background note. Each vegetable or herb adds something—you determine what flavor you'd like to create in your stock, and then what kind of soup or other recipe you'll use it for.

Having stock on hand has become an essential in my kitchen—chicken stock always, and vegetarian stocks often. Turkey stock is one of my favorites, but since we only have turkey bones around in the winter, it's more seasonal. Beef stock is more useful to me in fall and winter, when we feel like heavier, richer cooking.

More delicate seafood stock is prized any time of the year, for lovely cioppinos or seafood risottos. Having stock on hand saves me a lot of time in the long run, and the prep it takes to make it, once you get the hang of it, is surprisingly minimal. You can make stock out of anything: duck, goose, pork, shrimp shells; an endless array of vegetables; or even seaweed and dried bonito flakes, which results in the Japanese stock called dashi, essential to making miso soup.

At our house we are always saving bones for chicken stock. When we clear the table after dinner, vegetable scraps go in the compost, but chicken bones go into the freezer. Even the bones someone has gnawed on; they're going to be frozen, then simmered for many hours, so any germs will not survive. Remember that any spices left on the chicken will make their way into the broth, but since we are using quite a lot of bones the flavors tend to blend. Do think about flavor compatibility. I'd probably think twice if I had a lot of leftover hot and spicy wings. Also, if we don't have enough saved bones we buy chicken necks and backs from our local butcher. We always buy organic meats and bones. Since I'm taking the time to prepare this lovely stock, I want it to come from healthy animals. Let bone broth remind us: We are what we eat.





I keep stock in the freezer in plastic snap-top boxes that hold 4 or 5 cups. You can also freeze stock in sturdy glass Mason jars (wide mouth) if you leave enough head space—you don't want to crack the glass, as the freezing stock will expand.

It's such a joy to have stock on hand. When our freezer starts to get low—down to the last one or two boxes of stock—it's time to make more. My husband, Jim, likes this job, so he is usually the one making the chicken or turkey stock. We have a 12-quart stockpot because we like to make a large batch, and it can hold a big turkey carcass—but you can cut this recipe in half successfully. He adds the vegetables, wine, seasonings and water, brings it to a boil, then lets it simmer all day. He keeps it mostly covered with just a little bit of steam escaping. I like to crack the lid a little more to evaporate the liquid and concentrate the flavors.

Whichever broth you choose to make, you will find your way, and there are a lot of good books out there to guide you (see sidebar). You don't even need to buy a new cookbook, drat, since making stock, er, bone broth, or vegetable broth, is as old as old can be. Included here are some of my favorites: mushroom stock, Jim's classic chicken stock and a simple Asian-inspired chicken stock with ginger.

So many broths, so little time: This is only part I. In part II, in the winter issue, I'll include more tips on making stock, and recipes for beef and seafood stocks, too. May the simmering begin!

RECIPES

Ginger-Infused Chicken Stock

This makes a lovely light stock. Try it in Chinese or Thai soups.

Makes 3 quarts

1 (2½-pound) chicken, cut into 8 pieces, skin removed

2 or 3 ounces fresh ginger, sliced lengthwise

1 bunch scallions, trimmed, halved crosswise and lightly crushed

Salt and freshly ground pepper

Place chicken, ginger, scallions and 5 quarts of water in a large stockpot. Bring to a boil, skim off and discard any foam, then reduce heat to low. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Simmer, uncovered, occasionally skimming off foam.

After 1½ hours, transfer chicken pieces from stock to a cutting board. Remove meat from bones, returning bones to the stock. (After meat cools, save for another use.)

Continue simmering until stock is reduced by about 2 quarts, about 3 hours. (Note: Take care to keep stock from boiling. Disturbing the ingredients will cause the stock to be cloudy and keep it from developing a clear, clean, rich flavor.)

Strain stock through a coffee-filter-lined sieve, removing fat in the process. Discard solids. Allow the stock to cool, then refrigerate or freeze until needed.



Mushroom stock.

Mushroom Stock

Excerpted from the *Follow Your Heart Soup Cookbook* by Janice Cook Knight.

Makes 2 quarts stock

8 cups water

2 medium yellow onions, chopped (2½ cups)

2 pounds mushrooms, minced (use food processor)

2 teaspoons sea salt

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

In a large stockpot combine the water, onions, mushrooms, salt and lemon juice. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to simmer for 1¼ hours, partially covered. Allow to cool. Strain through a fine sieve, or through a double thickness of cheesecloth that has been rinsed then squeezed dry. Stock may be frozen for several months.

Jim's Chicken (or Turkey) Stock

Makes about 6 quarts

Approximately 8 pounds chicken bones (saved from meals, or use backs, necks, feet, etc., or the carcass of 1 large turkey)

1 large onion, sliced

4 large carrots, cut into 1-inch chunks

1 bunch parsley, chopped

3 celery stalks with leaves, cut into 2-inch pieces

½ bottle white wine

Juice from 1 lemon

2 bay leaves

Bouquet garni of thyme and rosemary (tie a 4-inch piece of fresh rosemary with several sprigs of thyme)

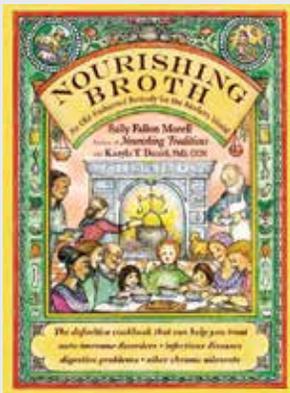
15 whole peppercorns, lightly crushed in a mortar

Salt and pepper to taste

Place all ingredients except salt and pepper in a 12-quart stockpot. Cover with water. Bring to a boil, then turn down to a low simmer, cracking the lid just a tiny bit, and let it simmer for 10–12 hours. Turn off heat. Taste and add salt and pepper if desired. We often omit salt, since bones we've saved from cooking usually have already been seasoned enough.

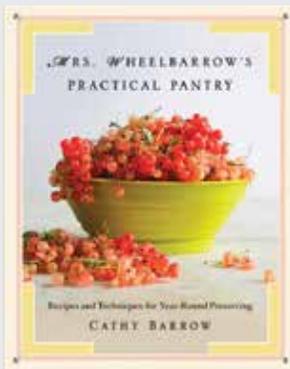
Let the stock cool down. Take the lid off and let it cool—it's important that steam can escape or your stock will stay warm too long, which will cause it to go bad. After it's cooled a bit, strain liquid off into another smaller pot, and let it continue to cool. You can set the pot in ice water in the sink to cool it down. When cool, place stock in the refrigerator to chill for several hours. If it's still a little warm leave off the lid. The stock will start to gel and the fat will rise to the top. After a few hours, skim off the fat and discard, or save for cooking—you could freeze it and use it for frying potatoes, etc. Ladle the stock into freezer containers or Mason jars, leaving ample head space, then label with date, and freeze. Keeps for several months, frozen.

Reading List



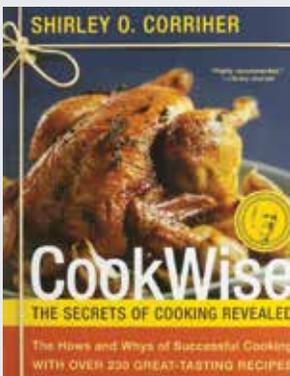
Nourishing Broth: An Old-Fashioned Recipe for the Modern World by Sally Fallon Morell and Kaayla T. Daniel, PhD, CCN (Grand Central Life and Style, 2014)

Sally Fallon Morell and Kaayla Daniel tell the story of bone broth—why it's good for us, and the science of extracting collagen and other ingredients from bones. They include recipes for many types of stock, plus more recipes that stock can be used in. Sally is also the author of the classic health and diet book *Nourishing Traditions*.



Mrs. Wheelbarrow's Practical Pantry by Cathy Barrow (Norton, 2014)

Clear recipes for making basic stocks, plus how to pressure-can your own homemade stocks if you are so inclined (I find freezing a lot easier).



CookWise: The Hows and Whys of Successful Cooking with over 230 Great-Tasting Recipes, by Shirley Corriher (William Morrow, 1997)

All the classic stock recipes, with great explanations of the science behind the steps. A useful book for explaining all kinds of cooking mysteries.

Janice Cook Knight is the author of *Follow Your Heart's Vegetarian Soup Cookbook* and *The Follow Your Heart Cookbook: Recipes from the Vegetarian Restaurant*. She has taught cooking for over 25 years and currently teaches a cookbook-writing workshop. Her article in the fall 2014 issue of *Edible Santa Barbara*, "Hurray for the Orange, Red and Gold: The Season for Persimmons," won the 2015 M.F.K. Fisher Award in the Print Category. JaniceCookKnight.com



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