

CHICKEN STOCK

A good chicken stock is crucial. Great in “vegetable” soups, bang on for quick sauces, a great base for so many stews and curries. This is my basic nuts-and-bolts concoction, geared specifically for the home chef. You will love it.

Use scraps from two or three chickens (wings, bones, backs, and feet if you can get your hands on them), and roast at 350 until browned (about 1/2 an hour).

Toss them in a large stockpot and add 5 litres of cold water. Crank your gas, or turn your element to high.

While the bones come to a boil, prepare:

2 or 3 well-scrubbed carrots, chopped
a large sweet onion (2 or 3 cooking), peeled and quartered
a celery butt, or two stalks, washed and chopped
one leek, REALLY washed, and yes, chopped
a head of garlic, peeled

By this time, the bones should be boiling, so skim any foam off the top of the pot with a large serving spoon.

Now add your chopped veggies and garlic, along with:

a bouquet garni (or ‘garnished bouquet’) of parsley and thyme
a couple of bay leaves
a dozen or so whole black peppercorns

Bring the heat down to a medium low, and simmer for about two hours, or until the smell compels you to grab a spoon and take a big shlrup (watch out, it’ll be hot).

Cool the stock, and then strain through a fine sieve if you have one, or a basic colander for a more rustic version.

Finally, portion your stock off. Keeps in the fridge for a week, and the freezer for at least a month.

