

Melanie's Chicken Stock

TIME:

10 "active" minutes to prep stock

6+ hours to simmer on stove by itself

30 minutes to portion finished stock into containers for freezing/refrigeration

EQUIPMENT:

Large stock pot - 12-16 quart

Fine mesh sieve

Ladle

Freezer-safe plastic containers with lids (or freezer Ziploc bags)

INGREDIENTS:

1 deli (fully cooked) rotisserie chicken

1-2 onions, cut in half

3 carrots, washed but leave unpeeled and simply break in half

3 stalks celery with leaves, washed but leave unpeeled and simply break in half

4 cloves garlic, unpeeled and slice in half or smash with flat part of knife

Optional additions!

Mushrooms and/or mushroom stems

5-8 sprigs fresh parsley

5 sprigs fresh thyme

2-3 dried bay leaves

2-3 lemon slices

3 teaspoons whole black peppercorns

Parsnips, unpeeled and cut in half

Parmesan rind (could use rind of another hard cheese, like Asiago or Gruyere)

Like it spicy? Try throw in a halved jalapeno!

Method:

Remove meat from chicken and reserve for another use. Freeze if you won't use immediately.

Remove as much skin, membranes and other particles from bones as possible.

Place the chicken bones, onions, carrots, celery, garlic and other optional additions in a large stockpot. Add enough water to cover solids and come within 1 inch of top of pot. Bring to boil (about 45 minutes), then turn down to gentle simmer, uncovered, for minimum of 4 hours up to 12. During the simmer phase you want the pot to have steam evaporating with just a few bubbles on top here and there, so do check in on it occasionally to make sure it isn't bubbling too vigorously as it reduces. Turn off heat and allow to cool on the stove for about 45 minutes.

Once slightly cooled, remove large solids from pot with tongs and discard. Ladle stock through fine mesh sieve into freezer containers, leaving about ¼" at top to give room to expand in freezer. Freeze for up to 4 months, or refrigerate for up to 4 days.

Thaw in refrigerator 24 hours before you want to use it, or use the defrost setting on your microwave to thaw for more immediate use.

YIELD: About 3-4 quarts (if your stock pot is 12-16 qt size)

TIPS:

For vegetable stock, follow all those same steps, simply omitting the chicken, and add some more of your vegetables. I would suggest adding mushrooms to give it a richer flavor.

Remember, this is a great use for past-prime veggies, as well as discarding trimmings from carrots, onions, leeks, cheese wedges, etc. Just pop those trimmings into a freezer bag every time you have a few, and then you can use the bag when you're ready to make your stock! By the same token, you can save your chicken bones this way, too. Just freeze them until the day you're ready to make your stock.

Avoid stronger flavors such as rosemary, sage, ginger, lime in your stock. Save those seasonings for your specific soups or sipping broth!