

MASTERING STOCKS - CHICKEN STOCK vs CHICKEN BROTH

WHY WE CARE

Stock and broth are not the same. Stock is a foundation ingredient used to build sauces and deep flavor. Broth is a finished, lightly seasoned liquid meant for soups or sipping. Knowing the difference lets you cook like a working kitchen instead of relying on boxed products.

THE EXACT DIFFERENCE

Stock - bone focused, collagen rich, often roasted, intended to be reduced or cooked into dishes.
Broth - meat focused, lighter body, gently seasoned, ready to drink or use directly in soups.

CORE KITCHEN RULES

- Stock is made primarily from bones and is normally unsalted.
- Broth is made primarily from meat and is lightly salted.
- Stock often gels when chilled because of collagen.
- Broth usually remains liquid and ready to eat.

PROPER CHICKEN STOCK (BONE BASED)

INGREDIENTS

- 3 to 4 lbs chicken backs, necks, carcasses, wings or feet
- Mirepoix with onion as the majority (about 2 parts onion to 1 part celery and 1 part carrot)
- 1 to 2 bay leaves
- 6 to 8 whole peppercorns
- Cold water to cover (about 4 to 5 quarts)
- No salt

METHOD

1. Place bones in pot and cover with cold water.
2. Slowly bring to a bare simmer. Never boil.
3. Skim foam during first 30 minutes.
4. Add vegetables and aromatics.
5. Maintain gentle simmer for several hours.
6. Pressure cooker option: about 45 to 60 minutes high pressure with natural release.
7. Strain gently and chill. Stock should gel when cold.

PROPER CHICKEN BROTH (MEAT BASED)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole 4 to 5 lb chicken or meaty thighs
- Mirepoix with onion as the majority
- 1 to 2 bay leaves

- 6 to 8 whole peppercorns
- Salt to taste
- 4 to 5 quarts water

METHOD

1. Place chicken in pot and cover with water.
2. Bring slowly to a gentle simmer.
3. Add vegetables, aromatics and salt.
4. Simmer gently about 1.5 to 2 hours.
5. Remove chicken and strain broth.
6. Adjust seasoning if needed.

SECONDARY EXTRACTION (WASTE NOT STEP)

1. Return all cooked bones and carcasses to pot or pressure cooker.
2. Cover with fresh water.
3. Cook again:
Instant Pot about 45 minutes high pressure with natural release.
Stovetop gentle simmer several hours.
4. Use this lighter liquid for rice, beans, braising, soups or thinning sauces.

COLLECTING CHICKEN FAT (SCHMALTZ)

1. Chill stock or broth until fat rises to the surface.
2. Chicken fat may stay soft and not form a hard disk.
3. Skim gently with a spoon.
4. Remove any trapped broth from the underside before storing.
5. Refrigerate about 1 week or freeze several months.
6. Use for roasting potatoes, frying eggs, sauteing vegetables or starting gravies.

STORAGE AND LABELING

- Cool liquids safely before storing.
- Freeze in usable portions or pressure can using safe procedures.
- Always label clearly. Once frozen, stock, broth and secondary extraction look very similar.

THE STOCK FREEZER BAG RULE

Keep a freezer bag labeled STOCK BAG and add backs, necks, wing tips and carcasses from roasted chickens. When the bag is full, use it to make stock. This prevents waste and builds better flavor.