

Inexpensive Eating

Basic Chicken Stock

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The whole point of making your own stock economically is to use the normally discarded raw vegetable parts that are left over when cooking. I stick them into a zip top freezer bag and stash them in the freezer until I'm ready to make stock. I then look through what I have and add fresh ingredients to come near the list below.

If you are making stock from these scraps, you will never truly have the same proportion of ingredients twice – and that's OK. The stock will still taste better than the stuff off the store shelves, and it will cost you next to nothing.

The carcass of a 3-4 lb. chicken
6 carrots
2 onions
6 celery stalks
1 head of garlic
1 bunch of fresh parsley
2 tomatoes

4 bay leaves
2 T dried thyme
1 T whole black peppercorns
½ t whole allspice
½ t whole cloves
2 gallons of fresh water

Roughly chop all the ingredients and place them into a 16 qt (or larger) stock pot. Fill the pot with fresh water and place over high heat until it comes to a boil.

Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 4 to 5 hours. Periodically skim any foam and excess fat as it floats to the top. Remove the pot from the heat.

Strain the stock through a large colander. You can line the colander with a couple of layers of cheesecloth to catch all the small sediment, if you'd like. *(I don't use the cheesecloth – I like it a little rustic looking.)*

Portion the stock out into quart-sized, freezer-safe storage containers. Make sure you leave room for the liquid to expand when it freezes.

To use, move a container of stock to the refrigerator and thaw overnight. If you're in a hurry, you can always use the Defrost setting on your microwave.

Makes approximately 6 quarts

