

Stocks are the lifeblood of any kitchen. Mastery of basic stocks is a must for would be cooks. They are the foundation of excellent cooking. Stock is so important that it's the first thing a chef is taught to make. Stocks are so simple to make but do take a good amount of time. The solution that I employ is to let stocks simmer overnight. Turn the heat down real low and go to bed. When you get up there will be **liquid gold in that pot. I can't emphasize enough** what a difference fresh stocks will make in your kitchen.



longer spoils the flavor. Concentrated fish stock is called "fish fumet". In Japanese cooking, a fish and kelp stock called dashi is made by briefly (3–5 minutes) cooking skipjack tuna flakes in nearly boiling water.

Jus is a rich, lightly reduced stock used as a sauce for roasted meats. Many of these are started by deglazing the roasting pan, then reducing to achieve the rich flavor desired.

Ham stock, common in Cajun cooking, is made from ham hocks.

## What is Stock?

Stock is a flavored liquid. It forms the basis of many dishes, particularly soups and sauces. Stock is prepared by simmering various ingredients in water, including some or all of the following:

**Bones:** Veal, beef, and chicken bones are most commonly used. The flavor of the stock comes from the cartilage and connective tissue in the bones. Connective tissue has collagen in it, which gets converted into gelatin that thickens the liquid. Stock made from bones needs to be simmered for longer than stock made from meat (often referred to as broth).

**Mirepoix:** a combination of onions, carrots, celery, and sometimes other vegetables.



**Herbs and spices:** The herbs and spices used depend on availability and local traditions. In classical cuisine, the use of **a sachet d'épices (or bundle of herbs)** consisting of parsley, bay leaves, a sprig of thyme and possibly other herbs, is common. This is often wrapped in a cheesecloth "bag" and tied with string to make it easier to remove it once the stock is cooked.

Broth is very similar to stock, and often the terms are used interchangeably. Usually, broth refers to finished product while stock is used as an ingredient (thus stock may become broth). Other times, broth is used to refer to a liquid made in the same way as stock but meat is substituted for bones. However, with some stock/broth made from vegetables and some made from both bones and meat, this cannot be considered a hard-and-fast rule.

## Types

**Fond Brun, or brown stock,** is the most common type used. The brown color is achieved by roasting the bones and mirepoix. This also adds a rich, full flavor. Veal bones are the most common type used in a fond brun. Veal or beef stock should be cooked anywhere from 8 hours to overnight.

**Fond Blanc, or white stock,** is made by using raw bones and white mirepoix. Chicken bones are the most common for fond blanc. Chicken stock should be cooked for 4–5 hours.

**Fish stock** is made with fish bones and finely chopped mirepoix. Fish stock should be cooked for 30–45 minutes—cooking any

Prawn stock is made from boiling prawn shells. It is used in Southeast Asian dishes such as laksa.

Vegetable stock is made only of vegetables. It is common today, but is not a traditional type of stock.

## Tips

The stock ingredients are brought to a boil starting with cold water. This promotes the extraction of protein, which may be sealed in by hot water. Stocks are simmered gently, with bubbles just breaking the surface, and not boiled. If a stock is boiled, it will be cloudy.

The most important step to follow in cooking the stock is to skim it thoroughly and often so that it will look beautifully clear and have the purest flavor. While you're bringing it to a boil, lots of fat and frothy impurities will rise to the surface, so you'll have to skim frequently at this stage. Then, continue skimming from time to time while also checking that the stock remains at a very gentle simmer, a strategy that prevents any more impurities from accidentally being swept back into the liquid.

Once the stock is done cooking and you have let it come to room temperature, you can store it, covered, in the refrigerator and use it for up to three days. Better still, stock freezes well for up to three months. Pour the cold stock, first removing the fat that solidifies on the surface, into half-pint or pint-sized plastic freezer bags, taking care to eliminate any air. Or use one of my favorite tricks: Pour the cold stock into plastic ice cube trays and then freeze them. When you're ready for stock, all you'll need to do is pop out the cubes, seal them in a plastic freezer bag and defrost in the microwave. It's a lot easier than loading up a giant stockpot every morning - or even opening up a can at home.

Most butchers will gladly save you carcasses for the chicken stock. Or you may save the bones from raw or cooked chicken yourself, sealing them in an airtight plastic bag before freezing.

Salt is usually not added in great amounts to a stock, as this causes it to become too salty, since most stocks are reduced to make soups and sauces.



I make stock not so much by recipe, as by ratio. When making stocks in a restaurant, you're not measuring out water. You start with a certain poundage of bones, a ratio of mirepoix to the bones, and you build on that. It's still a recipe, in a manner of speaking, but it's a little different. It still comes out the same everytime, but you're not filling measuring cups of water, there is no time for that in a restaurant kitchen, or in my home kitchen for that matter.

## Chicken Stock

*Yield: 1 Gallon*

8 lbs. Chicken Bones  
1 lb. Mirepoix  
Salt

6 Qt. Cold Water  
1 Sachet d'Épices

Rinse the bones and place them into a stock pot with the water and salt and bring them to boil slowly. Skim the surface. Simmer for 4 hours. Add the mirepoix and the sachet and simmer for 1-2 more hours. Strain and cool. Save the bones and vegetables for a remouillage.

## White Beef or Veal Stock

*Yield: 1 Gallon*

8 lbs. Bones  
1 lb. Mirepoix  
Salt

6 Qt. Cold Water  
1 Sachet d'Épices

Rinse the bones and place them into a stock pot with the water and salt and bring them to boil slowly. Skim the surface. Simmer for 6 hours. Add the mirepoix and the sachet and simmer for 1-2 more hours. Strain and cool. Save the bones and vegetables for a remouillage.

## Brown Beef or Veal Stock

*Yield: 1 Gallon*

8 lbs. Bones  
6 Qt. Cold Water  
6 oz. Tomato Paste  
1 lb. Mirepoix  
1 Sachet d'Épices  
Oil as needed  
Salt to taste

Preheat oven to 400°. Rinse the bones and put them onto a roasting pan. Roast the bones in the oven until they are well browned. Place the bones into a stock pot with the water and salt and bring them to a simmer slowly. Skim the surface as necessary. Simmer for 6 hours. Combine the mirepoix and the tomato paste and roast until well browned. Add the Mirepoix and the sachet to the pot. Deglaze the roasting pan with some of the stock and add to the pot. Simmer for 1-2 more hours. Strain and cool. Save the bones and vegetables for a remouillage.

## Fish Stock

*Yield: 1 quart*

2 lbs. Fish Bones  
4 oz. Mirepoix

1 1/2 Qt. Cold Water  
Salt to taste

Place all of the ingredients into a stock pot and bring them to a simmer slowly. Skim the surface. Simmer for 30-45 minutes. Strain and cool.

## Shrimp or Lobster Stock

*Yield: 2 Cups*

2 lb. Shrimp Shells or Lobster Bodies  
1 oz. Onion

3 cups Water  
1 oz. Celery

1 oz. Carrot  
1 tsp. White Wine

1 tsp. Tomato Paste  
Oil as Needed

Heat the oil in a medium sized pot. Sauté the vegetables until the onion is opaque. Add the shrimp or lobster and cook until they turn red. Add the rest of the ingredients and simmer for 15 minutes. Strain and cool.

## Vegetable Stock

*Yield: 1 gallon*

6 oz. Onion, chopped  
4 oz. Celery, chopped  
2 oz. Tomato, chopped  
1 oz. Garlic, chopped  
1 gal. Water  
Salt to taste

4 oz. Carrots, chopped  
2 oz. Turnip, chopped  
4 oz. Leeks, chopped  
**1 Sachet d'épices**  
2 Tbsp. Oil

Heat the oil in a stock pot and sweat the vegetables for 5 minutes. Do not brown. Add the water, sachet and salt and simmer for 45 minutes.

## Mirepoix

2 Parts Onion  
1 Part Celery

1 Part Carrot

Peel and Chop the Vegetables into large pieces.

## Sachet d'Épices

Parsley Stems  
Bay Leaf  
Cheesecloth

Thyme  
Cracked Peppercorns  
String

Place the spices in the middle of the cheesecloth and make a pouch. Tie the cheesecloth with the string, be sure to cut off enough string to tie the bag to the handle of the pot so you can remove it.

## Remouillage

*Yield: 1 Gallon*

Bones and Vegetables from Stock  
8 Qt. Cold Water

Combine the water and bones and slowly bring to a boil. Simmer for 5-6 hours. Strain and cool. Discard the bones.

## Glace

*Yield: 1/4 Cup*

1 Gal. Remouillage

Place the remouillage in a heavy pot and simmer until reduced by half. Keep repeating the process until thick and syrupy. Glace makes a great flavoring for sauces.