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## Q&A: The scoop on soup (and stock, and broth)

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While broth is the liquid leftover from short-term cooking of meat and bones, stock involves aromatics and a long simmering time.

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By **MARY ELLEN WRIGHT** | Staff

There's nothing more comforting than a pot of soup or stock simmering on the stove on these chilliest of mornings.

Soup is a food staple that crosses cultures and palates. And its pale cousin, broth, has become so trendy that at least one New York eatery has begun selling the stuff from a take-out window in to-go cups, like lattes.

But what is the essence of broth, and how does it differ from stock or consommé?

Chef Robert Poulton, program director for the culinary arts/restaurant management program at YTI Career Institute in Lancaster, teaches the chefs of tomorrow the fundamental skills of making broth, stock and soup.

So we asked him to talk about these warm, comforting foods, and to offer home cooks some tips for making them.

What is the difference between broth and stock?

Broth typically doesn't have the intense flavors a stock would have. It really is the liquid left after you cook a piece of meat. (Or it can be vegetable broth as well.) You poach off a little bit of fish or you poach off a chicken breast, and the broth is left over.

You can make a light broth by cooking chicken bones for 15 minutes. But it's not as concentrated as if you cook a chicken stock for four to six hours or veal stock for eight to 10 hours.

Broth doesn't have the cooking time to extract all the flavors out of the meat bones or the chicken bones. You also typically don't have the other aromatics involved — the onions, the flavorings, the spices, your celery, your carrots, your bay leaf — that you would have in making a stock, which really impart those strong flavors.

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### Chef Robert Poulton's Roasted Veal Stock

- 4 pounds veal bones
- 2 gallons water
- 2 onions, medium dice
- 3 carrots, medium dice
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste

Sachet (in a leek leaf, add bay leaf, parsley sprigs, cracked black peppercorns and a sprig of thyme, tied with cheesecloth)

Pre-heat oven to 450 degrees. Lightly oil a roasting pan

Roast the veal bones in the oven, turning occasionally, for about 45 minutes.

Add the bones to a large enough pot and bring to boil, reduce to a simmer and skim the surface.

Cook for 4-6 hours on a very slow simmer, continually skimming the surface.

For the last hour of cooking, add the tomato paste, vegetables and sachet. (Roast the vegetables before adding them if you want a darker stock).

Strain the stock. (The finer the strainer, the better the stock; I strain it through cheesecloth).

This will produce about a half-gallon of stock — less if it is boiled too quickly.

You can also make a remouillage, which is a second batch of stock made from bones that have been used once for a primary stock. It helps make complete use of the bones.

And stock is usually used as a base for something else, like a soup or a sauce.

How do you make consommé?

When you cook a stock, the bones will throw off quite a bit of particles into the stock that are going to make it cloudy.

A consommé is clarified, meaning that you typically take ground shin of beef, mix it with egg whites and celery, and it forms something called a raft. I actually add some eggshells, and maybe a bit of tomato.

You put that in the bottom of a pot. And then you pour in your cold stock. What I do is cook it slowly, and this raft sort of congeals on the bottom of the pan, and it starts to float up slowly through the stock.

It filters all those particles in the stock, and what you're left with after slowly cooking it for about two hours is this absolutely clear, almost rust-colored broth, and that's a true consommé. And it's very concentrated, and it takes a while to make it.

What are some tips for making good stock?

The first thing is, if you put trash into something, you're going to get trash out of it. A stock pot should not be like a garbage container — "Hey, I got all this stuff in my fridge; I'll boil it up and it'll all be good."



If you've got some celery hearts that have been in there a while and they're starting to go limp, that's fine to put in. If you've got celery hearts in there that are starting to get a little moldy, then throw them away. Don't expect something to get better just because you're going to boil it for four hours.

I think one of the other key elements of the stock is never to put something in a stock that's going to overpower the sort of neutral base you're going for. You'd never add red or green peppers into a chicken stock. Never add garlic to it. Never add salt to a stock, because when you reduce it down, it's just going to get saltier. Never impart something in there that's going to take it to a specific color.

How long should you cook stock?

It depends on what it is. If you're cooking fish bones, you boil it for 17 minutes, or it will start to sour on itself. Seventeen minutes, get it off, get it strained and chill it down as fast as you can.

A veal stock, four to six hours and, if the bones are really big, cook them up to 10 hours. We may cook them overnight, real slow, and just let all that flavor impart into the stock. Chicken, anywhere from two to four hours.

We always wash the bones off first. If there are any particles or bits of fat that are just going to cloud up your stock, you don't need them. They're not going to bring the flavor.

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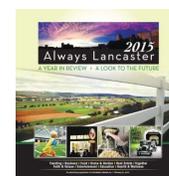
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