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UPGRADE YOUR *Broth*

By Jennifer Burcke

Until a few years ago, I had never made homemade bone broth. I *had* created my own stock and quick broth with good success, but I didn't realize I could make something with more flavor and nutrition without creating any extra work for myself in the kitchen.

Since then, I find myself unable to pass up the opportunity to turn the leftovers from a roast chicken into a batch of bone broth. I love transforming something that used to be discarded into a bone broth full of healthy calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, collagen, and a host of other nutritious. Bone broth is the simplest of preparations and yields delicious and nutritious results. Preparing a batch requires no special equipment or fancy ingredients and doesn't demand your constant attention. Given enough time and heat, the bones will break down and release all of their gelatin and minerals into the filtered water. The resulting bone broth is rich in nutrients and adds a beautiful color and flavor to any dish.

To make a batch of bone broth following our meal of [roast chicken](#), I transfer the roasting pan's drippings to the ceramic insert of a large slow cooker before adding all of the bones, skin, and small bits of meat that might be attached. Filtered water is added to completely cover the bones and vegetables, like onion and celery, along with two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar. The vinegar helps extract the calcium from the bones, resulting in a richer and more nutritious bone broth. I place the lid on the slow cooker and allow the ingredients to rest for about an hour.

After the bones have spent an hour in the water and vinegar, I turn the slow cooker on at high heat. Once the liquid has come to a boil, I reduce the heat to low. The liquid should remain at a simmer as the broth cooks. Leave the lid securely on the pot to reduce the amount of liquid that evaporates away from the pot. If you notice the liquid level has dropped dramatically as the broth cooks, you can add more water as needed.

The longer the broth simmers, the richer the broth becomes in flavor, color, and nutrition. While you can stop the process at any point, I like to let the broth. To determine if it's ready, remove a large bone from the pot and allow it to cool slightly before applying firm pressure with your fingers. When the bones have released all of their mineral content, they will crumble in your fingers. If it crumbles, it's finished cooking.

At this point, the slow cooker can be turned off. I allow the broth to cool to room temperature before straining it through a colander lined with cheesecloth. Discard any bones, vegetables, or scraps, straining the broth a second time if any solids or sediment remain. Strained bone broth can be stored in the fridge in a large Mason jar with a tight-fitting lid. I keep a jar in our refrigerator at the ready, using it in any recipe that calls for stock or broth. I freeze the remaining bone broth in ice cube trays for long term storage. After the cubes of bone broth are frozen solid, I transfer them to a freezer bag. When I need bone broth for a recipe, I simply remove the frozen bone broth cubes from the freezer before warming them in a small saucepan.



Our bone broth doesn't last long in the freezer as we continue to find new ways to incorporate it into our favorite recipes. The flavor, aroma, and color are so superior to standard broth that I only regret that I didn't start making bone broth sooner. Once you discover the simplicity of making homemade bone broth and its amazing depth of flavor, you'll be finding new ways to use it in your favorite soups, stews, and sauces all year long.

Jennifer spends her days living and writing at 1840 Farm with three generations of her family and their dogs, chickens, ducks, goats, and rabbit. She loves to create homegrown recipes in their farmhouse kitchen and dream up new handmade products for their [Etsy Shop](#). You can follow their daily adventures on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and enjoy a collection of homemade recipes on their [blog](#).