

Chicken Bone Broth

Firstly, let's talk gear. They are an investment but here are my personal favorite items -

Strainer –

Norpro Stainless Steel Wide Mouth Strainer fits securely over most jars and the silicone sieve pops out for easy cleaning.

http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0036B9KF6/ref=sr_ph?ie=UTF8&qid=1411280541&sr=1&keywords=steel+strainer .

Jars –

I use Ball or Kerr quart, pint, and jelly jars. Different sizes depending on what I plan to use the most. The jelly jars are great for traveling since I can take and use one at a time, quarts for big batches of soup, pint to use throughout the week (bear in mind I concentrate my broth).

For the jars the plastic reusable lids such as Ball Storage Caps http://smile.amazon.com/Ball-Regular-MouthStorage-Caps/dp/B0000BYC4B/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1411280782&sr=8-3&keywords=ball+lids are much easier for storage though they are often cheaper at target or wal-mart.

Other options such as this ReCap Lid http://smile.amazon.com/reCAP-Mason-Jars-PourCap/dp/B00KBB8ZLO/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1411280852&sr=8-1fkmr0&keywords=masnr+jar+pour+lid which make pouring easier. Though the way I make my broth it gels up to firmly to use them but you can water it down to make it pourable if it suits you better.

For Chicken Broth Recipe (concentrated so it takes up less room) -

5 to 6 Carrots peel on roughly chopped (each carrot into 3 chunks)

1 large Onion or two smaller ones

1/2 teaspoon whole peppercorns (crush them with the bottom of a pan or such if you want it spicier)

2 to 4 bay leaves to taste

4 to 10 cloves garlic whole peeled

2 Whole Chicken Backs OR 8 pieces

1/2 – 1 lb Chicken Feet **very important** as they are the richest source of digestive soothers such as collagen. They can be a bit strange to people not used to a full bodied broth so you can start light if you like. Don't worry about the nails as long as they are clean.

1/4 - 1/2 lbs of chicken hearts

Around 1/2lb of various bones such as extra necks, thigh bones, wing tips, ect...

Method –

1. I use a 2 gallon pot in which I put the meat/bones in first, followed by spices, then the onion and the carrots. **Tip:** If your squeamish put all the meaty bits inside a “stock sock” or similar heat safe fabric such as cheesecloth.
2. Next cover that with water by about 2 inches being sure to leave at least 3 inches from the rim of the pot for frothing but be sure all bones are fully submerged. **Tip:** Using bottled or distilled will help it last longer in the fridge but isn't necessary.
3. Bring all of that up to a boil then reduce to a simmer and cover. You want to be able to see small bubbling around the edges of the pan to ensure the liquid is heated through to a safe temperature to maintain cooking.
4. After that I check on it every 2-4 hours and stir to make sure all parts remain submerged. After a few hours the bones will begin to break apart making them easier to keep submerged. Top off with water throughout if needed.

Optional: You can pre-soak your bones overnight in the pot in the refrigerator using enough water to cover and approximately two tablespoons vinegar to aid in releasing the minerals into the broth. Best not to add spices or vegetables until your ready to place it on the stove.

Personally I always cook mine for a minimum of 10 hours but longer is better allowing the bones to render more minerals and amino acids into the final product. Prolonged cooking also allows the natural collagen and gelatin (especially rich in the feet) to break down and combine with the liquid.

In the last 2 hours I usually stop adding liquid as long as the parts are mostly covered. I also use a spoon to partially vent the lid to allow for evaporation which concentrates the broth. After straining I typically end up with a bit over 2 quarts. Remember in the beginning I added about a gallon and a half to my 2 gallon pot along with the other ingredients.

At this point you can add salt to taste or parsley to steep if you wish. If I remember to buy some I use parsley but generally I don't. If you use parsley clean the whole bunch, tie the stems together

and dunk into the hot broth after removing from heat. Let steep like that for 15 to 30 minutes then remove the bundle.

Now it's time to strain. I set up all my jars on the counter on top of a sheet of tin foil as I tend to make a mess. Placing the funnel into the jar I ladle broth in till its two finger widths below the base of the neck (where the threads are). This leaves room for expansion when freezing so the jar won't break.

I discard the residual matter as I go reserving the larger bones such as thighs to use again. Simply cool the bones, bag them up, and put in the freezer till next time. As the bones come out you should notice some very small bones like vertebrae have dissolved and larger ones are soft and bendy at the ends indicating they have released their minerals.

Once jarred up place in the refrigerator to cool 8 hours to overnight. If you don't tolerate fat well you will have a chance to skim before freezing. Once the broth has fully chilled the fat will float and solidify like wax and is simple enough to remove with a butter knife and a spoon. Poultry fat I handle well and I need the extra calories so I leave mine intact. Also in the refrigerator broth will have a longer shelf life with the fat cap left intact.

After the jars have fully chilled they can be moved to the freezer for long term storage. **Tip:** Leave the plastic lids slightly loose as it aids in reducing the risk of a break. You can tighten up once it's fully frozen.

Finally here are a few related links I found handy -

On preparing chicken feet if your aren't pre-cleaned –

<http://nourishedkitchen.com/chicken-feet-stock/>

A crock pot veggie broth recipe –

<http://crockpot365.blogspot.com/2011/04/how-to-make-vegetable-broth-using-your.html>

A mushroom broth recipe that could be done in crock pot -

<http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/recipe/easy-mushroom-broth#sthash.N8uiHHkI.qjtu>

And a recipe for what's called "perpetual soup" (aka continuous slow cooking broth in a crock pot) –

<http://nourishedkitchen.com/perpetual-soup-the-easiest-bone-broth-youll-make/>.

A note on this one I don't aim for clear broth so I don't skim or filter I want every nutrient I can get so I am ok with dense cloudy broth. You don't need use the meaty bits for this you can use just bones if you have no want or need to eat the meat.

Notes: I am allergic or can't tolerate some things they commonly put into broth such as celery and fennel you can add them if you wish.

You can add about anything you want though a warning that anything cruciferous (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, ect...) make a pretty potent stink and can make the broth go bitter. If you can handle citrus some strips of peel would be a nice addition.

If you like a richer broth you can pre-roast the boney bits in the oven at 400F for about 15-20 minutes a side which gives the broth a more "rotisserie" flavor.

For variety you can also use turkey parts. I generally use a turkey wing (or drumstick), two necks, feet when I can get them, and 3 - 5 tails. I prefer smoked turkey for making broth.