

Natural Health News

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EVERGREEN SPA & WELLNESS
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THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF STOCKS AND BROTHS

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As the days are getting colder and winter is fast approaching, I would like to remind you about a lost art in our fast-paced and hurried lifestyle. Preparing stocks and broths right in your kitchen does not only require very little time and money but has tremendous health benefits. In the old days, people made soups and stocks out of animal bones and cartilage. *"Good broth will resurrect the dead"*, says a South American proverb. Properly prepared meat stocks are extremely nutritious, containing the minerals of bone, cartilage, marrow and vegetables as electrolytes, a form that is easy to assimilate. They also contain nutrients such as chondroitin and glucosamine, which are now sold as expensive supplements for arthritis and joint pain. Acidic wine or vinegar added during cooking helps draw minerals, particularly calcium, magnesium and potassium, into the broth. The use of homemade meat broths to produce nourishing and flavorful soups and sauces has almost completely disappeared from the American kitchen. Unfortunately, the elimination of soups and stocks from our diet has contributed to digestive problems as well as joint problems. Stocks and soups made from animal bones are anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, and contain many nutrients which help build the integrity of the digestive tract. If you are suffering from a digestive disorder, a soup based on bone stock and rich in gelatin can bring fast relief. In fact, it will bring about results similar to those used by doctors who give drug therapies to fight inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. While medications simply mask the problem, soups or stocks get to the root of the digestive disorder, soothe and help bring healing to the condition. Other important ingredients that go into broth are the components of cartilage, which recently have been used with remarkable results in the treatment of cancer and bone disorders, and of collagen, used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and many other ailments. In folk wisdom, rich chicken broth is a valid remedy for the flu. Modern research has confirmed that broth helps prevent infectious diseases. Therefore, the use of gelatin-rich broth on a daily or frequent basis will provide continuous protection from many health problems. The wonderful thing about stocks is that, along with the many health benefits, they also add immense flavor to our food. In European cuisine, rich stocks form the basis of exquisite sauces. If you ever had the pleasure of visiting the kitchens of fine restaurants in Europe, you probably have observed the huge pots of broth simmering on the back burner of huge cook stoves. We carry out this tradition at the "Organic Roots Bistro" and all our soups and sauces are prepared the old-fashioned and nutritious way. When the broth is enriched with herbs or wine and reduced by boiling down, the effects of the gelatin and flavors of meat and bones become concentrated. The result is a wonderful sauce, both nutritious and delicious. It is worth while taking time and putting effort into making meat stocks on a regular basis. You and your family will gain amazing health benefits, and you will earn the reputation of an excellent cook. The recipe on the next page will guide you to prepare these nutritious and delicious stocks. ENJOY!

How to make nutritious BONE BROTH

Stock or broth begins with bones, some pieces of meat and fat, vegetables and good water. For beef and lamb broth, the meat is browned in a large roasting pan in a 450 degree hot oven for about 40 minutes to form compounds that give flavor and color (in fact, you can also roast the vegetables for added flavor). When the bones have thoroughly browned (you should periodically turn them over and baste them with any accumulated fat drippings), you pour the bones and vegetables into a very large stockpot. Then set the pan with the drippings on the stovetop and pour in some water and bring it to a simmer. Then scrape up the browned bits and add the water and bits to the stockpot. At this point you can add the remaining ingredients such as more water, vegetables, herbs, 2 TBSP. of vinegar or 1 to 2 cups of wine. It is best to use fresh vegetables, but also broccoli that is about to flower; carrots gone floppy; peppers, tomatoes, and onions growing soft on the kitchen counter; and any leftover cooked vegetables or vegetable peelings can be used. If you add dried herbs, make a sachet of cheesecloth so that they can be easily removed. For fresh herbs make a bouquet garni by tying the herbs together with a piece of kitchen string. Then rest the stock for 30 minutes to 1 hour to cool it down. The water should be cold, because slow heating helps bring out flavors. Heat the broth slowly and once it begins to boil, reduce the heat to simmer so the broth just barely simmers. After a while scum will rise to the surface. A lot of impurities are distributed through the scum. One of the basic principles of the culinary art is that this scum should be carefully removed with a spoon. Otherwise the broth will be ruined by strange flavors. Two hours simmering is enough to extract flavors and gelatin from fish broth. Larger animals take longer—all day for broth made from chicken, turkey or duck and overnight for beef broth. However, it is best to simmer the stock for 12 hours minimum up to 72 hours. Remember to keep a sufficient fluid level. The stockpot can simmer all day, be turned off at bedtime, and then be turned on again the next morning. If the liquid level gets below the top of the bones, then just add more water. The broth should then be strained. Remove and discard the bones. The left over vegetables and meat can also be used for terrines, tacos or casseroles. It is best to chill the broth to remove the fat. Stock will keep several days in the refrigerator or may be frozen in containers or plastic bags. If you boil the broth down it will concentrate and will become a jellylike substance or demi-glace that can be reconstituted into a sauce by adding water. The test of whether your stock contains liberal amounts of gelatin is carried out by chilling the broth. It should thicken, even to the point of jelling completely, when refrigerated. ENJOY!

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spring a watercolor,
summer an oil painting
and autumn a mosaic of
them all."*

- Stanley Horowitz