

# Stocks

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## What is stock?

Stock is a liquid containing some of the soluble nutrients and flavours of food, extracted from the food by prolonged and gentle simmering (with the exception of fish stock which takes just 20 mins).

## What is it used for?

Stock is the foundation of soups, sauces, and gravies, they are the foundation of many important kitchen preparations; therefore the greatest possible care should be taken in their production.

The French word for stock is; '*fond de cuisine*' which, translated literally, means "foundation of the kitchen."

## How is stock made?

Homemade stock is made by boiling up all those vegetable scraps, those chicken backs, those choking fish bones that are left over in the kitchen. The smell of roasting veal, beef, even lamb bones is divine, and when sucked dry in boiling water with pungent spices can create a great flavour.

However professional soup bases, prepared bouillon cubes, bags of powdered stock, or liquid and canned stocks work too, and produce wonderful soups that, well flavoured, that can be hard to tell the difference between a homemade stocks.

The history of concentrated stock is interesting. Count Rumford (1753-1814), an American-born physicist and inventor, is credited with inventing "portable soup" or "pocket soup" while in the service of the Duke of Bavaria, made of a solidified stock of veal, meat trimmings, pork off cuts, and other ingredients. In fact, portable soup has been around much longer as a mainstay of nomadic cultures, including medieval Magyar warriors.

## Types of stocks

White stocks made from beef, mutton or chicken, can be used in white soups, sauces or stews.

Brown stocks made from beef, mutton, veal, chicken or game can be used in brown soups, gravies, sauces and stews.

## What is the difference between White and Brown stocks?

It's in the colour and the taste. White stocks are clear to light yellow while brown stocks are brown. In terms of flavour, high quality brown stocks have a completely different flavour profile. They boast complex roasted flavours that are absent in the more "simply" flavoured white stocks. Perhaps the best way of understanding the difference in flavour between the 2 stocks is to compare the flavour differences between a boiled chicken (that being white stock) and a roasted chicken (that being the brown stock).

## Misconceptions

**Stock** is the liquid extracted from foods slowly cooked in water and/or wine and used as a foundation for soup and other things;

**Broth** is an English term for the liquid extracted from meat cooked slowly with water, which is then concentrated and used either as a foundation for soup or as a simple soup itself (pretty much like the French *bouillon* and the Italian *brodo*;

**Consommé** is a double-strength stock "finished" into a clear soup; and *double consommé* is a consommé that has been clarified.

## Important points to remember when making a stock:

- Unsound meat or bones and decaying vegetables will give stock an unpleasant flavour and cause it to deteriorate quickly.
- Scum should be removed; otherwise it will boil into the stock and spoil the taste and colour.
- Fat should be skimmed; otherwise the stock will taste greasy.
- Stock should always be simmered slowly otherwise it will evaporate and go cloudy.
- It should not be allowed to go off the boil, otherwise it will go sour.
- Salt should not be added
- When making chicken stock if raw bones are not available, a chicken fowl can be used
- If stock is to be kept, strain, re-boil, cool quickly and place in the refrigerator.
- Stocks should not be reheated more than once
- When reheating they should be boiled for no less than 2 mins