

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF *Bone Broth*

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As we cozy up by the fire in these frigid temperatures, cravings for Mom's homemade chicken soup begin. It warmed you after a cold day of sledding and snowball fights and was an elixir for your colds and flus. Ever wonder why you don't crave Mom's homemade lasagna when you are sick? Could there really be more to her soup than just the love she put in it? You bet there is!

It turns out the mystifying health benefits of Mom's chicken soup are not so mysterious after all. The answer can be found in the stock (and the love, of course) that the soup was made with.

Homemade soup stocks are bubbling with good nutrition, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, trace minerals and gelatin that help boost the immune system and heal the digestive system.

In comparison, store-bought look-a-likes fall short of Mom's soup. Although these imposters may look the same as their homemade counterparts, one tasty slurp will be all you need to tell the difference. Most canned soups are not made with bones; therefore, they lack many of the vitamins and minerals that can only be found in bone broths. Most commercial soups are also artificially flavored with MSG, sodium and laden with preservatives and synthetic vitamins. Put that can of soup back on the shelf, walk a few aisles over to the butcher's counter and proudly ask for soup bones. Keep in mind that depending on which butcher's counter you find yourself at, you may need to ask for "dog bones." But don't let that scare you; walk away happily with your soup (or dog) bones. Before you know it you will be keeping all sorts of bones in your freezer like the carcasses from whole chickens, turkeys, roast and ham bones. If you have bones and are not quite ready to make your soup yet, don't fret. Toss your

bones into a jar or zip lock bag and into the freezer they can go until you are ready.

If you really want to boost your bone broth, add vegetables to your stock. Yes, you can add whole carrots, celery and other vegetables. In lieu of putting in whole stalks of celery or carrots, I keep a glass jar of "scraps" in my freezer at all times. Into it goes all the vegetable scraps that may have otherwise been discarded—the leafy parts of celery, carrot tops, ends of zucchini, herb stems, onion and garlic skins. Put any vegetable scraps that you want to flavor your broth into your "scraps jar." Keep adding to your jar and putting it back in the freezer (next to the soup bones, of course) until you are ready to make your homemade broth.



Now, you are ready with

your bones and vegetable scraps; all you need is a pot. Any large pot or soup stock pot will do. I use a pressure cooker as it takes less time and yields a darker, richer more flavorful broth, but this is not a necessity. Put your bones and scraps into the large pot or pressure cooker and fill $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way with water. Bring to a boil and then simmer your stock for 3 hours (add water as needed) or for 1 hour in your pressure cooker. After 1 to 3 hours, depending on the method you used, remove from heat, strain your bone and vegetable scraps. ***You will be left with a delicious, nutritious, homemade, "just like Mom used to make it" soup stock.*** Your stock can be frozen at this time or used to make soup. If you want to freeze it, I recommend filling glass jars two-thirds of the way full and cooling them in the refrigerator overnight before putting them in the freezer. If you don't follow these freezing recommendations, all your hard work may go to waste as your glass bottles (and your heart) break.

There are many recipes and entire books written about making soup stocks, so have fun with your newfound delicious, nutritious soup-stock skills. ■