

Bob's Chicken Broth (& Chicken Meat)

What do you do with chicken backs? That is a question when you find a deal at the store for 10 pound sacks of chicken hind quarters or for whole chickens that you cut up for fried chicken or some other 'exotic' fare. After slicing up things you end up with some or a bunch of backs that aren't part of what you plan for a main course.

There are three things that immediately come to my mind and they all can be started at the same time.

1. Schmaltz (rendered chicken fat with a byproduct of bribenes)
2. Chicken Broth
3. Chicken Meat pieces for something like chicken noodle soup or chicken enchiladas, etc.

This document is a recipe for Chicken Broth, but let's begin at the beginning for all three. First you need to gather up a good number of chicken backs and any other raw chicken parts. So as time goes by (or you are cutting up a full or number of 10 pound sacks of hind quarters that include backs), you need to save in the freezer all your backs until you get a good number and prepare to do up a big batch. This would also apply if you were making BRASTs, one of my other recipes. With that one you will end up with fat and skin along with thigh bones. So don't forget to save the skin and fat for the schmaltz and bones for the broth.

Because we are preparing to make all three, we start with a sack of frozen backs that you have collected. Let them partially defrost enough to be able to separate them. Remove the skin and cut off any large gobs of fat. This is best done while the fat is very cold or almost frozen. Bag all the skin and fat for another time when you will make the schmaltz.

Ingredients

- 4 to 6 pounds skinless chicken backs, pieces & bones you have collected
- Water 2 ½ gallons
- pepper corns - crushed
- 2 tbs ground marjoram
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tbs dried thyme
- 2 tbs fresh parsley
- 2 yellow onions coarsely chopped
- 2 carrots peeled and coarsely chopped
- ½ celery root or 4 stalks celery coarsely chopped
- 1 leek cut in half lengthwise, trimmed and cleaned thoroughly

Process

Take the skinless backs and any other chicken pieces and bones you have saved and place them in a large stock pot and add the water. If you are using bones without meat like thigh bones, etc., try to break up the bones with a mallet before adding them to the pot. Bring the pot to a boil then turn back the heat to a simmer, cover and cook for 10 minutes. Skim off any of the scum and throw it away (this will reduce bitterness). Add all the spices and mix well. Add all the vegetables and bring back to simmer. Make sure the water level is above all the ingredients. Cook uncovered at a simmer for 1 ½ hours.

Remove all the chicken bones that have meat and let them cool while still simmering the pot.

Remove all the good meat from the bones and put the bones back in the pot. Bag the meat in freezer bags in 1 pound amounts and freeze for another day's use. Remember you may have to season the meat when you use it as we didn't use any salt when it was cooked.

Continue to simmer the pot on medium heat uncovered for another 1 ½ hours.

Using a slotted spoon or large spider strainer, remove and discard the large 'stuff' in the pot that is easiest to remove. Then with a large colander or fine mesh strainer and a layer of cheese cloth over a large bowl strain the stock.

Return the stock to the pot and continue to simmer for another 4 hours or so to reduce the stock to about 2 ½ quarts.

Cool the stock and transfer to jars or plastic containers. They can be kept in the refrigerator for up to a week or so. The plastic containers can be frozen for a much longer time. If you wish, you can also can the stock in glass jars and a pressure cooker canner. Follow canning instructions for a meat product for this option.

Remember, we did not add salt to this broth. So, when you use it you may need to add salt depending upon how you use it.

Check out my other recipe on how to make Schmaltz with the skin and fat that was harvested and stored in the freezer.

Yes, I know this is a long process, but it yields so much better a product than the canned stuff from the store. Plus you get to use up otherwise unused chicken, have chicken for another recipe, and get schmaltz out of the deal too. The schmaltz alone makes it worth the effort! So check out my other recipes.

Don't even talk to me about bullion cubes!