

A top-down view of a glass jar filled with a golden-brown, bubbling liquid, likely broth. A metal spoon is resting inside the jar, partially submerged in the liquid. The text "The Broth Bible" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

The Broth Bible

WELLBYLARISSA

A Note from Larissa

If you have been hearing about bone broth for a while now and keep meaning to make it but have not quite gotten there yet, this guide is for you. Not because you need a complicated system or a special kitchen or hours of free time. But because making broth is one of the simplest, most forgiving things you can do in a kitchen, and once you start, it becomes one of those habits that feels almost too easy to be doing something this good for you.

This guide covers everything: why broth exists in every culture on earth, what is actually inside it, why women in particular need it, how to make it well, and how to use it every single day. You do not need to read it front to back. Open it wherever you are curious and start there.

Make a pot this weekend. Your body will know what to do with it.

...

With warmth,

Larissa

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Why Every Culture on Earth Made Broth

There is something remarkable about the fact that people on every continent, across every era, in every climate, made broth. Not because they read about it. Not because a wellness account told them to. But because their bodies knew, and their grandmothers knew, that simmering bones in water produced something that healed.

In France they called it *fond*, the foundation, because it was the base of everything worth eating. In Korea they simmered ox bones for twelve hours until the broth turned milky white and rich with marrow. In Mexico a pot of *caldo de res* meant someone was being taken care of. In Jewish households across Eastern Europe, chicken soup was not a comfort food, it was medicine, and everyone knew it.

In China specific bones were prescribed for specific ailments. In West Africa slow-cooked pepper soup from whole animals was daily nourishment and ceremonial healing. In India Ayurvedic tradition gave new mothers broth for weeks after birth because restoring what the body had given was considered sacred.

What is striking is that none of these cultures were in contact with each other when they arrived at the same conclusion. They were not sharing recipes or reading the same texts. They were simply paying attention to what happened when sick people drank broth, when new mothers were fed it, when exhausted workers came home to a bowl of it. They got stronger. They healed faster. They slept better. The tradition was passed down without question.



We now know why. Bone broth is dense with collagen, gelatin, glycine, proline, and minerals that are almost impossible to get in meaningful amounts any other way. These are the building blocks of your gut lining, your joints, your skin, your sleep, and your hormones.

The modern world changed that. We stopped cooking whole animals. We started buying boneless, skinless everything. We threw away the carcass, skipped the marrow bones, and replaced generations of nourishing tradition with collagen peptide packets that are a pale shadow of what a real pot of broth can do.

This guide is about coming back to something old. Not because old is automatically better, but because in this case the wisdom was real, it worked, and we lost it for no good reason.

What Is Actually in Bone Broth

When you simmer bones in water for a long time, something changes in the liquid. It thickens slightly. It takes on a golden or milky color. And when you refrigerate it overnight, it gels. That gel is the thing. That is what tells you you made real broth, and that gel is where most of the healing lives.

The reason broth gels is collagen. Bones, connective tissue, cartilage, and skin are all rich in collagen, and when you cook them low and slow in water, the collagen breaks down into gelatin. Gelatin is what gives broth its body, its richness, and most of its therapeutic properties. It is the same substance that lines and seals your gut, cushions your joints, and gives your skin its elasticity. Most people are profoundly deficient in it because we no longer eat the parts of the animal where it lives.

The nutrients inside

Collagen and gelatin. The structural proteins that make broth gel when cold. Collagen supports skin elasticity, joint cushioning, gut lining integrity, and connective tissue repair throughout the body.

Glycine. An amino acid that supports stomach acid production, blood sugar regulation, deep sleep quality, and the liver's ability to clear excess hormones, particularly estrogen. Women who drink broth regularly often notice they sleep more soundly within a few weeks.

Proline. Critical for collagen synthesis in the body. Your skin, arterial walls, cartilage, and gut lining all rely on it. If you struggle with loose skin, joint pain, or a gut that feels perpetually irritated, low proline is part of the story.

Glutamine. Feeds the cells of your intestinal lining directly. A damaged or permeable gut lining responds to glutamine better than almost anything else. Bone broth is one of the richest food sources of it.

Minerals. Calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, and trace minerals leach out of the bones during cooking. Adding apple cider vinegar before heating draws even more minerals out of the bone matrix into the liquid.

Hyaluronic acid. Found in joint-rich cuts and feet, it supports joint lubrication and skin hydration, and is one of the compounds behind the glowing skin women consistently report after making broth a regular habit.



Why food beats supplements here

You can buy collagen powder, gelatin capsules, glycine supplements, and mineral drops. All have their place. But none deliver these nutrients in the same matrix that bone broth does, bound together with natural cofactors, electrolytes, warmth, and fat-soluble compounds that help your body actually absorb and use what it is receiving.

The whole is genuinely greater than the sum of its parts here. Your grandmother did not take collagen packets. She made a pot of soup and fed it to everyone who was sick, tired, or healing. The tradition was intuitive and it was right.

Broth for Women Specifically

Bone broth is nourishing for everyone, but there are specific reasons it matters so much for women. Your hormones, your gut, your skin, your sleep, your cycle, and your ability to recover after pregnancy are all deeply connected to the nutrients inside a well-made pot of broth.

Hormones and the liver

One of the most important and least talked-about roles of glycine, which is abundant in bone broth, is supporting liver detoxification. Your liver is responsible for clearing excess hormones from the body, particularly estrogen. When the liver is under-supported, estrogen does not clear efficiently and recirculates instead.

This is one of the root causes of estrogen dominance, which shows up as heavy or painful periods, PMS, bloating, breast tenderness, mood swings, and difficulty losing weight. Glycine supports Phase 2 liver detoxification, the step where the liver packages up hormones for elimination. Drinking broth regularly is one of the most ancestral and effective ways to support your liver's hormone-clearing capacity.

Gut health and the hormone connection

Your gut and your hormones are in constant conversation. A damaged gut lining allows substances into the bloodstream that should not be there, including a bacterial enzyme that sends estrogen back into circulation instead of out through elimination.

The glutamine and gelatin in bone broth feed and repair the intestinal lining directly. Women who drink broth consistently often notice improvements in bloating, regularity, food sensitivities, and skin clarity, all of which are downstream effects of a healthier gut.

Skin, hair, and nails

Collagen is the most abundant structural protein in your body and your skin is about seventy percent of it. Production begins declining in your mid-twenties and drops sharply in perimenopause when estrogen, which stimulates collagen synthesis, begins to fall.

Eating collagen-rich foods is the most direct way to give your body the amino acid building blocks it needs to keep making its own collagen. Women across every traditional culture who ate whole animals and simmered bones had better skin at every age than women who did not. Broth is the original beauty supplement.

Sleep and the nervous system

Glycine has a well-documented calming effect on the central nervous system. It works partly by lowering core body temperature, one of the signals the body uses to initiate deep sleep. Women in the luteal phase, in perimenopause, or under chronic stress often struggle most with sleep quality and night waking.

Glycine from broth supports deep, restorative sleep where the body actually repairs itself. The minerals in broth, particularly magnesium and potassium, support the nervous system's ability to move out of stress activation. Many women are chronically low in both.

The menstrual cycle

Broth is particularly useful in the days before and during your period when the body is doing significant work. The anti-inflammatory compounds in broth help modulate the prostaglandins that drive period pain. The minerals support muscle contractions involved in menstruation and help reduce cramping.

The warmth itself supports circulation and helps the uterus move through its work more easily. Traditional Chinese medicine explicitly prescribes warming, cooked foods during menstruation for exactly this reason.

Postpartum: the most important time of all

If there is one life stage where broth is not optional but truly essential, it is postpartum. Every traditional culture on earth understood this. In China the practice of sitting the month involves thirty days of rest and nourishing foods for the new mother, with bone broth at the center of every meal. In Korea new mothers are given seaweed soup made in bone broth for weeks after birth. In Mexico it is caldo de pollo. In India it is broth-based dal with warming spices.

The tradition varies but the logic is identical everywhere: the mother gave everything she had growing and birthing that baby, and now she must be deeply restored. Pregnancy and birth deplete collagen, minerals, blood volume, and virtually every nutrient the body holds. The postpartum period is when the body tries to rebuild all of it simultaneously while producing milk, healing tissue, and regulating a completely new hormonal landscape.

Bone broth in the postpartum period supports tissue healing, including repair of the uterus and any perineal or surgical incisions. It supports milk production because collagen and protein are the raw materials the body uses to build breast milk. It supports the dramatic hormonal shifts of early postpartum by giving the liver what it needs to process the rapid drop in progesterone and estrogen. And it supports sleep, even in broken fragments, by providing glycine and minerals that help the nervous system recover between wake-ups.

If you are pregnant now, one of the best things you can do is make broth part of your weekly habit before the baby arrives. And if you know a woman who has recently given birth, bring her a jar of broth. It is one of the most nourishing gifts you can give.

Perimenopause and beyond

The years leading into menopause bring a cascade of changes that bone broth is uniquely positioned to support. Declining estrogen means declining collagen production, reduced bone density, more volatile sleep, more gut permeability, and a liver working harder through the hormonal fluctuations of this transition.

Broth addresses almost all of these simultaneously. The collagen supports skin and bone density. The glycine supports sleep and liver function. The minerals support the nervous system through the mood and temperature dysregulation that many women experience. And the ritual of it, a warm nourishing cup made for yourself, is itself a form of self-care that the perimenopause years call for in abundance.

This is the season of life where what you eat and how you nourish yourself becomes more visible, more immediate, more felt than it was in your twenties. Broth belongs in every stage of a woman's life. But in perimenopause it becomes especially potent.



Stock vs. Broth vs. Bone Broth

These three terms get used interchangeably in most kitchens, and while they are closely related they are not the same thing. Understanding the difference helps you know what you are making, what to expect from it, and what it can and cannot do for you.

Stock

Stock is made primarily from bones and is usually cooked for two to six hours. It is the backbone of French cooking, the base for sauces, soups, and risottos. A good stock is rich, savory, and adds depth to everything it touches. It contains some collagen and good flavor, but not the deep gelatin concentration that comes from much longer cooking times.

Broth

Broth is typically made from meat rather than bones, or from bones with a significant amount of meat still on them. It cooks for a shorter time and the result is lighter and more clearly meat-flavored. Most cartons of chicken broth at the grocery store are this: thin, because they were made quickly without much collagen release.

Bone broth

Bone broth is what this guide is about. It is made from bones with connective tissue and cartilage, and it is cooked for a long time. For chicken that means eight to twelve hours minimum. For beef or bison that means eighteen to thirty-six hours or more. When your broth gels solid in the refrigerator, you made something genuinely therapeutic.

- Stock: bones, two to six hours, culinary base, some collagen
- Broth: meat-forward, shorter cook, lighter, minimal gelatin
- Bone broth: bones and connective tissue, long cook, gels when cold, deeply therapeutic

You can start anywhere on this spectrum. Even a simple stock is better than nothing. But this guide will teach you to make the real thing.



Bone Quality Matters

Not all bones are equal. The quality of the bones you use directly affects the quality of what ends up in your cup. Our great-grandmothers were making broth from animals that lived outside, ate what they were designed to eat, and grew slowly. The difference in the resulting broth is significant.

Pastured and grass-fed animals

Animals raised on pasture have fundamentally different bones than animals raised in confinement. Their bones are denser, harder, and richer in minerals because the animals moved, bore weight, and ate a varied diet. Grass-fed and pastured animals also have higher levels of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, and K2 in their fat and marrow.

When you make broth from these bones, you get a more mineral-rich, more nutrient-dense liquid. A well-made broth from pastured chicken bones and conventional chicken bones will taste noticeably different. The pastured broth will typically gel more firmly and have a deeper, more complex flavor.

Organic matters too

Conventional animals are routinely given antibiotics and raised in conditions that create chronic stress, which means their bodies produce more cortisol and inflammatory compounds than well-raised animals do. These things do not all disappear when you make broth. Choosing organic when you can, even just for the bones you use for broth, is a meaningful upgrade.

Where to find good bones

Your local farmers market with meat vendors is the best place to start. Farmers who raise animals on pasture are usually proud of it and happy to tell you about their practices. Many will sell soup bones and carcasses inexpensively.

- Ask your local butcher what they have in the back. Bones often never make it to the display case.
- Call farms directly. Many sell to consumers and will include bones with an order.
- Look for local food co-ops or buying clubs that source from regional farms.
- Online farms and meat delivery services have expanded and often ship frozen bones.
- If budget is a constraint, prioritize quality for the bones and use more affordable cuts elsewhere.

You do not need to source perfectly every single time. The best broth is the one you actually make. But when you can access well-raised bones, use them. Your body will notice.



Which Bones to Use and Where to Find Them

The most collagen-rich parts of an animal are the ones with the most connective tissue: joints, knuckles, feet, necks, backs, and oxtail. These unglamorous cuts are exactly what your grandparents kept and what the butcher used to practically give away.

For chicken broth

- Chicken feet are the gold standard for gelatin. Almost entirely cartilage and collagen, they will turn a thin broth into something that sets like jello. Use them every time you can find them.
- Chicken backs and necks are widely available at most butchers and produce a beautiful, rich broth.
- Leftover carcasses from a roasted chicken work beautifully and cost nothing. Freeze them as you accumulate them.
- Chicken wings add good gelatin and are easy to find anywhere.

For beef or bison broth

- Knuckle bones and neck bones are your best sources of collagen and gelatin. Ask for these specifically.
- Oxtail adds exceptional richness and gelatin and produces a deeply flavorful broth.
- Marrow bones add richness and fat-soluble nutrients. Combine them with joint bones for the best result.

- Spare ribs and short ribs left over from cooking add good flavor and collagen to a batch.

For pork broth

- Pork feet and trotters are exceptional for gelatin, used in Korean and Chinese traditions for exactly this reason.
- Pork neck bones are inexpensive and produce a wonderfully rich, slightly sweet broth.
- Pork spare rib bones left over from a meal are worth saving and adding to a batch.

For fish broth

- Fish broth cooks quickly, usually under an hour, because fish bones are small and release their gelatin fast.
- Fish heads and frames make extraordinary broth. Ask your fishmonger for them. Often free or very cheap.
- Shrimp, lobster, and crab shells make a deeply flavorful, mineral-rich broth for soups and sauces.
- Fish broth is particularly high in iodine, which supports thyroid function.

A note on mixing bones

You do not need to stick to one animal per batch. Many traditional broths combine chicken feet with beef knuckles, or pork bones with chicken backs. Mixing bones produces a more complex, layered flavor and a higher total collagen content.

Tools Worth Having

You do not need a specialized kitchen to make excellent broth. You need a few basic tools that most kitchens already have, or that are easy and inexpensive to acquire.

The pot

A large, heavy-bottomed stockpot in the eight to twelve quart range. Stainless steel and enameled cast iron are both excellent choices. Avoid aluminum, which can leach into acidic liquids, and thin pots that create hot spots and scorch the bottom during a long simmer.

A slow cooker

Genuinely useful for bone broth because it maintains a low, consistent temperature over many hours without any attention from you. Set it before bed and wake up to finished broth. A six to eight quart size works well for most batches.

A fine mesh strainer

Essential for straining out the spent bones, vegetables, and sediment at the end of cooking. A large fine mesh strainer set over a wide-mouth bowl makes this step fast and clean. Line it with cheesecloth for extra clarity if you want a very clean, clear broth.

Wide-mouth mason jars

The best storage container for broth. Glass does not absorb odors or leach anything into the liquid. Wide-mouth jars are easy to fill, easy to scoop from when the broth has gelled, and safe in the freezer as long as you leave headspace for expansion.

A ladle

A good ladle makes transferring hot broth from pot to jars much easier and less messy. Small but meaningful.

A fat separator

Optional but useful if you want to separate the fat from the broth immediately rather than waiting for it to solidify. A fat separator looks like a measuring cup with a spout at the bottom, allowing broth to pour from underneath the floating fat layer.

Silicone freezer trays

If you want to freeze broth in small portions for adding directly to pans and recipes, silicone trays with larger cavities work beautifully. Pop out a cube or two and drop them directly into whatever you are cooking.

The Acid Soak and Why It Matters

Before you add heat to your broth, there is one step that makes a quiet but meaningful difference: soaking your bones in cold water with a splash of acid before you ever turn on the stove.

Soaking the bones

When you place raw bones in cold water and let them sit for thirty minutes to an hour before applying heat, blood and water-soluble impurities begin to draw out of the bones and into the water. This reduces the amount of gray foam you have to skim later and results in a cleaner, clearer final broth.

Some people prefer to soak, drain the water completely, rinse the bones under cold running water, and then start fresh with clean cold water before adding the acid and beginning to cook.

Rinsing and blanching the bones

Rinsing your bones before cooking comes directly from Asian broth traditions, particularly Chinese and Korean cooking, where a very clean, clear broth is the goal. You cover the bones in cold water, bring them just to a boil, drain the entire pot, rinse each bone under cold water, and then begin again with fresh cold water.

This removes blood, impurities, and any bone fragments that would otherwise cloud the broth or contribute to off-flavors. For lighter chicken and pork broths where you want a very clean result, blanching the bones first is the move.

The acid

After soaking or blanching and rinsing, you return the bones to the pot with fresh cold water and add your acid. Apple cider vinegar is the most common choice, typically one to two tablespoons per gallon of water. The mild acidity helps break down the collagen matrix in the bones more efficiently and draws additional minerals into the liquid during the long cook.

The acid does not make your broth taste sour. By the time you have simmered for eight to thirty-six hours, any acidic sharpness has completely cooked off and is undetectable in the finished broth.

Why cold water matters

Starting with cold water allows the proteins and minerals to draw out of the bones slowly and gradually as the temperature rises, which produces a cleaner extraction and more nuanced flavor. Hot water shocks the exterior of the bone and can cause proteins to seize up on the surface rather than releasing gradually.

- Soak bones in cold water for 30 to 60 minutes before cooking
- Optionally blanch: cover with cold water, bring to a boil, drain, rinse bones, start fresh
- Add one to two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar per gallon of water
- Let bones sit in cold water and acid for 30 minutes before turning on the heat
- Always start with cold water for a cleaner, more gradual extraction



The Master Method

Once you understand the logic of bone broth, the actual method is simple. There are a few steps that make a meaningful difference, and then mostly it is just time.

Step one: roast your bones

Spread your bones on a rimmed baking sheet and roast them in a 400 degree oven for thirty to forty-five minutes until browned and caramelized. This develops the deep, savory, complex flavor that separates a truly rich broth from one that tastes flat and pale. For chicken you can skip this if using a leftover cooked carcass. For beef and pork, roasting is strongly recommended.

Step two: soak in cold water with acid

Put your roasted bones in your pot and cover generously with cold water. Add one to two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar. Let this sit for thirty minutes before turning on the heat. The cold water and acid together begin drawing minerals out of the bone matrix before any heat is involved.

Step three: bring to a gentle simmer and skim the foam

Bring the pot slowly to a gentle boil and watch it carefully for the first twenty to thirty minutes. A gray or brownish foam will rise to the surface. This foam is coagulated proteins and impurities releasing from the bones and blood. It is not harmful but it affects flavor and clarity, so skim it off with a wide flat spoon and discard it.

- The foam is coagulated protein from the bones and blood, not harmful but worth removing
- Skim with a wide flat spoon or small ladle, not a strainer

- Once the foam stops rising the hard part is over
- If you blanched and rinsed your bones beforehand you will have almost no foam

Step four: add aromatics

Once skimmed, add your aromatics. The classic set is onion, carrot, celery, a few peppercorns, a bay leaf or two, fresh parsley if you have it, and a generous pinch of salt. These are a starting point, not a rule. Add ginger and scallion for a Chinese-style broth, cinnamon and allspice for something Middle Eastern, turmeric and black pepper for an Ayurvedic influence.

Step five: the long simmer

Reduce to the lowest simmer possible. You want just a few lazy bubbles breaking the surface, not a rolling boil. Low and slow is the ancestral method and the correct one. High heat makes broth cloudy and can break down the delicate proteins that give it its healing quality.

- Chicken: 8 to 12 hours minimum, up to 24 for a deeply rich result
- Beef or bison: 18 to 36 hours, the longer the better
- Pork: 12 to 24 hours
- Fish: 45 minutes to 1.5 hours only, do not overcook or it turns bitter
- Top up with water if bones begin to emerge from the liquid

Step six: the fat cap

When you refrigerate your finished strained broth, a layer of solid fat will form on the surface. This is tallow from beef, lard from pork, or schmaltz from chicken. It is a sign of a rich, well-made broth. Do not discard it. This fat layer acts as a natural seal that keeps the broth below it fresh and protected.

You can stir the fat back into the broth as you warm it, adding richness and fat-soluble vitamins A, D, and K2 to every cup. You can skim it off and save it in a separate jar for cooking. Or you can do a combination. What matters is that you recognize the fat cap as a feature, not a flaw.

Step seven: strain and cool

Strain through a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth-lined colander. Discard the spent bones and vegetables. Pour the broth into wide-mouth mason jars, leave the lids off, and let it cool to room temperature before refrigerating. Cooling uncovered prevents condensation from diluting the broth.



The three cooking methods

Stovetop. The traditional method. Use your largest heavy-bottomed pot. Gives you the most control and produces a beautiful clear broth if you skim well.

Slow cooker. The most hands-off option. Set it and leave it for twelve to twenty-four hours. The low consistent heat is ideal. Best option if you want to make broth while you sleep.

Instant Pot. Faster but with trade-offs. A two-hour pressure cook produces a decent broth but does not extract gelatin as efficiently as a long slow simmer. Use it when you need broth quickly.



What Good Broth Looks Like

One of the things that makes bone broth feel mysterious when you first start is not knowing whether you did it right. Here is what to look for, and how to troubleshoot when something is off.

The gel test

This is the only test that matters. Pour a small amount of finished broth into a bowl and refrigerate it for a few hours. A properly made bone broth will gel, setting into a soft, jiggly consistency. The firmer the gel, the higher the collagen content and the more therapeutic the broth. If it stays liquid, something needs adjusting.

Color

Chicken broth ranges from pale gold to a deeper amber depending on whether you roasted the bones first and how long you cooked it. Beef broth is dark brown and rich-looking. Pork broth tends to be milky and slightly opaque. Fish broth is light and almost silvery. You are looking for a broth that looks alive and full-bodied, not watery and thin.

Clarity

A well-skimmed broth cooked at a very low simmer will be relatively clear. A broth that was boiled vigorously or pressure cooked will be cloudier. Clarity does not affect nutritional value, but it does affect the visual appeal of the finished dish.

The fat cap

A solid layer of fat on the surface of your refrigerated broth is a sign of success. It tells you the animal was well-raised and that you extracted real richness from the bones. Leave it in place as a natural seal until you are ready to use the broth, then stir it back in, skim and save it for cooking, or a combination of both.

Troubleshooting

My broth did not gel. Not enough collagen-rich bones, cooking time too short, or simmering at too high a temperature. Add chicken feet to the next batch and extend the cook time.

My broth is very cloudy. Usually from boiling too vigorously or not skimming the foam. Does not affect flavor or nutrition. Try blanching the bones first and keeping the simmer very low.

My broth tastes weak or flat. Not enough bones relative to water, or not enough cook time. Use more bones next time and reduce the finished broth to concentrate the flavor.

My broth tastes bitter. Vegetables cooked too long can contribute bitterness, as can fish bones cooked beyond ninety minutes. Add vegetables in the last two to three hours for meat broths.

There is a strange smell. Check that your bones were fresh when you started. Bones that have been in the refrigerator too long will produce an off-flavored result. Freeze them if not using within a day or two of purchase.

How to Store, Freeze, and Use It Every Day

Making a big batch of bone broth is worth nothing if it sits in the back of your refrigerator and goes unused. The women in the generations before us kept broth available constantly because it was used constantly.

Refrigerator storage

Bone broth keeps in the refrigerator for five to seven days. Store it in wide-mouth mason jars with the lids on. The fat cap on top acts as a natural seal and helps preserve the broth below it. If your broth has gelled, it will look like a solid block of jiggly gold or brown. Scoop out what you need and warm it gently.

Freezer storage

Broth freezes beautifully and keeps for up to a year without significant quality loss. Freeze it in portions that match how you actually cook.

- Quart jars for soups and larger recipes
- Pint jars for smaller portions and sipping
- Silicone freezer trays for small cubes you can pop out and add directly to pans
- Leave an inch of headspace in glass jars before freezing to allow for expansion
- Crack lids slightly before freezing, then seal fully once frozen solid

Reducing for storage

If freezer space is limited, simmer your strained broth uncovered until it reduces to about one quarter of its original volume. What you get is a thick, intensely flavored concentrate that can be frozen in ice cube trays and reconstituted with hot water. The ancestral version of a bouillon cube and exponentially better than anything that comes in a packet.

Using it in everyday cooking

- Cook your grains: rice, quinoa, and oats in broth instead of water
- Deglaze pans after cooking meat for an instant pan sauce
- Add a cup to any soup or stew in place of water or commercial stock
- Poach eggs directly in simmering broth for a deeply nourishing breakfast
- Use it as the liquid base for scrambled eggs instead of milk
- Braise vegetables in a shallow pool of broth instead of roasting them dry
- Make a quick sauce by reducing broth with butter and herbs
- Sip a warm mug plain with good salt and a pat of butter as a morning or evening ritual

A batch system that actually works

Make broth in large batches once every one to two weeks, strain it all at once, and divide between the refrigerator and freezer. Keep a bag in your freezer for vegetable ends, herb stems, and leftover bones throughout the week. When the bag is full, make a pot. That is the whole system.



The Morning Broth Ritual

Of all the ways to use bone broth, the simplest and perhaps the most powerful is also the one that feels most foreign to most modern women: drinking it plain in the morning. Not as part of a recipe. Just warm broth in a mug, the way women across Asia and Europe and South America drank it for centuries before breakfast as we know it existed.

Instead of reaching first for caffeine, which spikes cortisol before the body has had a chance to ease into the day, you reach for something warm and mineral-rich that nourishes rather than stimulates. The broth grounds you. It warms your gut before you put anything else in it. It delivers glycine and minerals to a body that has been fasting for eight hours.

What to add to your morning cup

- A small pat of butter or a drizzle of ghee for richness and fat-soluble vitamins
- A pinch of good sea salt, always, because broth without enough salt tastes flat
- A squeeze of lemon for brightness and vitamin C, which also supports collagen absorption
- Fresh grated ginger for warmth and digestion
- A small amount of turmeric and black pepper for anti-inflammatory support
- A drizzle of olive oil if you want something more substantial
- Nothing at all, because sometimes plain salted broth is exactly what the body wants

Making it a habit

The women who did this consistently throughout history did not do it because they were disciplined. They did it because the broth was always there and it was the easiest warm thing to reach

for in the morning. That is the real secret: having it available. If you have a jar of good broth in the refrigerator, warming a mug of it takes less than three minutes.

Start with two or three mornings a week and see how it feels. Notice if your digestion shifts, if your energy feels more even, if your skin starts to change. Most women who build this habit report that they feel the difference within two to three weeks. Not dramatically, not overnight, but in the quiet accumulating way that real nourishment works.

The ancestral morning

In many traditional cultures the first thing consumed in the morning was warm, savory, and liquid. Miso soup in Japan. Congee in China. Broth-based soups across Korea and Vietnam. Warm bone-broth porridge in West Africa. The idea that breakfast should be sweet, cold, or eaten from a box is entirely modern and entirely at odds with how our bodies are designed to receive food after a night of fasting.

A warm cup of broth in the morning is not a wellness trend. It is a return to something our bodies have always known how to use. The trend is actually the cold cereal and the protein bar. Broth is what came before.

The Science of Gelatin: Why Broth Gels

You already know the gel test matters. This chapter is about why it happens at all, and why two batches made the same week from the same kitchen can come out completely different.

Why broth gels in the first place

Collagen is a long, tightly wound protein found in bones, tendons, skin, and cartilage. On its own it is not soluble in water. Heat and time are what change that. As your broth simmers, the heat slowly breaks the collagen's triple helix structure apart, and it unwinds into gelatin, a protein that does dissolve in hot water and that reforms into a loose, jiggly network as it cools. That network is the gel. It is trapping water inside a mesh of protein, the same way a sponge holds water inside its structure.

The firmer the gel, the denser that protein mesh is, which means the more gelatin made it into your pot. That is why gel strength is the single most useful, at-a-glance signal you have for how much collagen your broth actually contains.

What affects how firm your broth gets

Factor	Effect on Gel
Bone selection	Feet, knuckles, and necks are collagen-dense and gel strongly. Marrow bones and meaty cuts barely gel on their own.
Cook time	Collagen conversion is slow. Longer cooks release more gelatin and produce a firmer set.
Water ratio	More water dilutes the same amount of gelatin, weakening the set. Less water, firmer gel.

Factor	Effect on Gel
Temperature	A hard boil damages the proteins you're extracting. Low and slow protects the gel.
Acid	Vinegar doesn't create gelatin, but it helps draw minerals out of the bone, making collagen more accessible to heat.



Why some broths never gel, and that's fine

A broth made entirely from marrow bones, or a very short stock, or a broth stretched with too much water, may never set firm, and that does not mean you did something wrong. It means you made a lighter product, and it still carries flavor, minerals, and some nutrition. Gel is a marker of gelatin concentration, not a pass or fail grade on whether your broth is worth drinking.

Gel strength isn't the only marker of quality

A broth can gel firmly and still be mineral-poor if it was made from low-quality bones. A broth can be looser and still be rich in glycine, glutamine, and minerals if it was simmered a long time from good bones with a modest amount of water. Use the gel test as one data point, not the only one. Color, aroma, and how the bones themselves looked and smelled going in all matter too.

Why chicken feet create such a firm gel

Chicken feet are almost entirely skin, tendon, and cartilage, with very little meat and almost no marrow. That composition means an outsized proportion of what goes into the pot is pure collagen. Ounce for ounce, nothing in a home kitchen converts to gelatin as efficiently. This is why a handful of feet added to an otherwise average batch of backs and necks can turn a soft broth into one that holds a knife-cut shape.

Why marrow bones don't gel much on their own

Marrow bones are prized for richness, not gelatin. The center of the bone is mostly fat and a small amount of blood-forming tissue, not connective tissue. They add body, a silky mouthfeel, and fat-soluble nutrients, but very little of what you get from them will show up as gel. Use marrow bones for what they are good at, and pair them with feet, knuckles, or necks for the gel.

Why oxtail is such a great compromise

Oxtail sits at the intersection of everything you want. It carries meat for flavor, marrow for richness, and a dense network of connective tissue and cartilage around the vertebrae for gelatin. A broth built around oxtail alone will gel well and taste like something, which is why it shows up as a workhorse ingredient across so many traditional cuisines, from Jamaican oxtail stew to Korean kkori gomtang.

Every Bone, Ranked

Not every bone earns its place in the pot for the same reason. Some are there for gelatin, some for flavor, some for minerals, some for the fat they carry. Use this chart when you're deciding what to combine.

Bone	Collagen	Flavor	Minerals	Fat	Best Use
Chicken feet	Very high	Mild	Moderate	Low	Pure gelatin
Chicken wings	High	Good	Moderate	Moderate	Everyday chicken broth
Chicken carcass	Moderate	Very good	Good	Moderate	Everyday broth
Necks and backs	High	Good	Moderate	Moderate	Gelatin plus flavor
Beef knuckle bones	Very high	Mild	Good	Low	Gelatin in beef broth
Beef neck bones	High	Good	Good	Moderate	All-purpose beef broth
Oxtail	Very high	Excellent	Good	High	Rich, restaurant-style broth
Marrow bones	Low	Excellent	High	Very high	Richness, always paired
Pork feet / trotters	Very high	Mild, sweet	Moderate	Moderate	Gelatin in pork broth
Pork neck bones	High	Very good	Moderate	Moderate	Everyday pork broth
Fish heads / frames	Moderate	Good, briny	High (iodine)	Low	Quick mineral broth
Shellfish shells	Low	Very good	High	Low	Stocks and sauces

The takeaway

If you remember nothing else from this chart, remember this: feet and knuckles for gel, carcasses and necks for everyday flavor, oxtail when you want both, and marrow bones only ever as a supporting player. Every great batch of broth is a balance of these roles, not one bone doing all the work.



Bone Combinations Worth Building a Batch Around

Once you know what each bone contributes, you can start combining them with intention instead of just grabbing whatever the butcher has that week. Here are combinations that consistently produce a specific result.

The Ultimate Chicken Broth

- 1 whole roasted carcass
- 2 pounds chicken feet
- 1 pound chicken wings
- 1 pound chicken necks

A carcass for flavor, feet for gel, wings and necks to round out both. This is the broth that gels like jello and still tastes like something worth sipping plain.

Restaurant Broth

- 1 carcass
- 1 pound chicken wings
- 1 pound chicken feet

A leaner, faster version of the above, built for a kitchen that needs a dependable, professional-tasting result without sourcing four different cuts.

The Healing Broth

- 2 pounds chicken feet
- 2 pounds beef knuckle bones
- 1 pound oxtail

Maximum gelatin, built specifically for gut repair, joint support, and postpartum or recovery use. This is the batch to make when you or someone you love needs the most therapeutic version possible.

The Budget Broth

- 1 leftover roasted carcass, saved from dinner
- Vegetable scraps saved from the week, from your freezer bag
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

Costs almost nothing because it is built entirely from what you would otherwise throw away. Lighter on gel, still full of flavor and minerals.

The High-Collagen Broth

- 3 pounds chicken feet
- 2 pounds beef knuckle bones

This is as concentrated as broth gets without added gelatin. Expect a broth that sets so firm you can turn the jar upside down and nothing moves. Best diluted slightly when sipping, used at full strength in sauces and reductions.

Rich Beef Broth

- 2 pounds oxtail
- 2 pounds beef neck bones
- 1 pound marrow bones

Built for depth and body over sheer gel strength. This is the batch for a beef bone broth you want to drink like a meal, with visible fat and real richness in every cup.

Myths vs. Facts

Broth attracts a lot of secondhand advice, some of it useful, some of it outdated, some of it simply wrong. Here is what is actually true.

Claim	Verdict	Why
"My broth didn't gel, so I ruined it."	Myth	It still has flavor, minerals, and nutrition. Adjust bones and cook time next round.
"You have to skim the fat off."	Myth, mostly	Skimming is a preference. The fat cap seals and protects the broth below it.
"Broth should be perfectly clear."	Myth	Clarity is about presentation, not nutrition. Cloudy from a slow cooker is just as nourishing.
"You can reuse the same bones for a second batch."	Fact, with caveats	Called a remouillage. Lighter and less gelatinous, but not wasteful.
"Bone broth is high histamine and can be an issue."	Fact for some	Very long cook times raise histamine. Sensitive people should cook shorter and freeze promptly.
"You can't pressure cook real bone broth."	Myth	An Instant Pot produces a genuinely good broth in a fraction of the time.
"Broth doesn't freeze well."	Myth	Freezes beautifully for up to a year with no meaningful nutrition loss.
"48-hour simmers just keep getting better."	Myth, mostly	Beyond about 36 hours for beef and 24 for chicken, you risk bitterness, not benefit.
"No apple cider vinegar means don't bother."	Myth	Vinegar helps draw minerals but is not required. Lemon juice works as a substitute.

Broth for Every Season

Broth does not have to taste the same every time you make it. Building your aromatics around the season keeps the ritual alive instead of routine, and lets you lean into what your body actually wants in a given month.

Season	Style	Key Additions
Spring	The mineral broth, lighter and greener	Fresh parsley, nettles if you can find them, lemon slices, spring onion
Summer	The sipping broth, light and hydrating	Shorter cook, served cool with mint, cilantro, and lime
Autumn	The immune broth, warming and protective	Extra garlic, fresh ginger, cinnamon stick, dried shiitake
Winter	The marrow broth, dense and grounding	Oxtail and marrow bones, butter or ghee, black pepper, a touch of clove

A simple rule

Lighter and brighter as the weather warms, richer and denser as it cools. Your grandmother did this without a chart. Let the season tell you what aromatics belong in the pot.

Advanced Techniques for the Devoted

Once the basic method feels automatic, these techniques let you get more out of every batch, whether that means more depth of flavor, more efficient use of your bones, or restaurant-level results at home.

Technique	What It Does	When to Use It
Double stock	Uses a previous unseasoned broth as the cooking liquid for a fresh batch of bones	When you want double the concentration of gelatin and flavor
Remouillage	Simmers spent bones again in fresh water for a lighter second batch	To use bones fully and stretch what you paid for
Concentrated broth	Reduces strained broth to a quarter of its volume	To save freezer space or build a homemade bouillon
Demi-glace	Reduces a rich stock, often with wine, into a thick, glossy sauce base	For pan sauces and special-occasion cooking
Clarifying broth	Uses an egg white raft to pull out sediment	When you want a glass-clear, restaurant-style broth
Roasted vs. raw bones	Roasting builds deep color and flavor; raw gives a lighter broth	Roast beef and pork; consider raw for delicate chicken broths
Pressure vs. stovetop vs. slow	Trade speed for control and flavor, or for hands-off convenience	Choose based on your week, not what feels most traditional

A closer look at a few of these

Remouillage. After straining your finished broth, return the same spent bones to the pot, cover with fresh water, and simmer again for roughly half your original cook time. The second batch is lighter, but far from nothing. Use it for everyday cooking liquid rather than sipping.

Clarifying with a raft. Whisk egg whites into cooled broth, bring it slowly back to a simmer without stirring, and the egg whites form a raft on top that traps sediment. Strain through cheesecloth beneath the raft for a broth that is glass clear.

Demi-glace. Start from a very rich, reduced beef stock, add wine and aromatics, and reduce further until it coats the back of a spoon. A spoonful transforms a pan sauce. This is a project for a weekend, not a weeknight.

The Troubleshooting Guide

Every broth maker runs into one of these at some point. Here's what's actually happening and what to do about it.

What You're Seeing	What's Happening	What To Do
Broth stayed liquid, no gel	Not enough collagen-rich bone, cook time too short, or too much water	Add chicken feet or knuckle bones next batch and extend the cook
Gel is soft, barely holds shape	Some gelatin extracted, just not much	Increase the ratio of feet or knuckles to water, or cook longer
Broth is cloudy, not clear	Boiled too vigorously, or foam wasn't skimmed	Keep it at the lowest simmer and skim the first 20 to 30 minutes
Broth tastes flat or watery	Too much water for the amount of bone, or cook time too short	Use more bones next time, or reduce the finished broth to concentrate it
Broth tastes bitter	Vegetables cooked too long, or fish bones past 90 minutes	Add delicate vegetables and herbs in the last 2 to 3 hours only
Strange or sour smell	Bones weren't fresh, or broth sat too long before refrigerating	Use fresher bones and refrigerate or freeze promptly
Fat cap looks thin	Leaner bones or leaner animal, not a mistake	Add a marrow bone next batch if you want a thicker cap
Broth is very dark, reduced	Simmered very long or reduced further than intended	Not a problem, just a concentrate. Dilute or use as a flavor base
Separated into layers after freezing	Completely normal	Stir or reheat gently, it comes back together

The one-line version

Weak gel means more collagen-rich bones or more time. Cloudy means gentler heat. Bitter means aromatics went in too early. Everything else is either normal or fixable next round.

The Complete Storage Guide

You already know the basics. Here is the fuller picture, so nothing you make ever goes to waste.

Refrigerator timeline

Timeframe	What To Expect
Days 1 to 3	Peak freshness, best flavor and texture
Days 4 to 5	Still good, use for cooking if not sipping plain
Days 6 to 7	Use it or freeze it, this is the outer edge
Past day 7	When in doubt, throw it out

Freezer timeline

Timeframe	What To Expect
Up to 3 months	Best texture and flavor on thawing
3 to 6 months	Still excellent, minimal change
6 to 12 months	Safe and usable, some gradual flavor fade
Past 12 months	Safe if properly sealed, but flavor softens noticeably

Signs your broth has spoiled

A sour or off smell distinct from broth's normal savory aroma, a fizzy or bubbling appearance, mold on the surface, or a slimy texture to the gel are all signs to discard it without tasting. Trust your nose before your eyes here.

Portion sizes that actually get used

Portion	Best For
Half-cup, silicone tray	Sauces and pan deglazing
One cup	A single sipping mug
Pint	Two servings, or one hearty bowl of soup
Quart	A full pot of soup or a batch of grains

Labeling the jar with the date and the animal saves you from a freezer full of mystery broth.

How to freeze flat

For the most freezer-space-efficient method, pour cooled broth into quart-sized freezer bags, lay them flat on a baking sheet, and freeze solid before standing them upright. Flat-frozen bags stack like books and thaw faster than a solid block in a jar.

Flavor Boosters From Around the World

The master method gives you a foundation. These aromatic combinations let you take that same foundation in a completely different direction depending on what you are in the mood for, added in the last two to three hours of a meat broth or the last thirty minutes of a lighter stock.

Style	Key Aromatics	Best Paired With
French	Thyme, parsley, bay leaf, black peppercorn	Sauces and soups
Asian-inspired	Fresh ginger, scallion, dried shiitake	Chicken or pork
Mexican-inspired	Dried oregano, extra garlic, cilantro stems (added at the end)	Beef
Middle Eastern-inspired	Cinnamon stick, cardamom, a pinch of turmeric	Lamb or beef
European farmhouse	Lovage, parsley root, celery root	Any long-cooked broth

A note on using these

Add delicate, leafy aromatics like parsley, cilantro, and scallion in the final thirty minutes to an hour so they stay bright rather than turning bitter. Sturdier additions like cinnamon, ginger, and dried mushrooms can go in earlier and hold up through a long simmer.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I drink broth every day? Yes. Many women make it a daily habit with no issue. Listen to your body and adjust if anything feels off.

How much should I drink? A cup, roughly eight to twelve ounces, is a good daily amount. There is no strict upper limit, but more is not automatically better.

Can children have it? Yes, and many traditional cultures start children on broth early. Keep portions smaller and skip added salt for very young children.

Can dogs have it? Plain, unsalted, onion-free and garlic-free broth is a wonderful addition to a dog's diet. Make a separate unseasoned batch if you want to share.

Can I add herbs beyond what's in the recipes? Always. The aromatics in this guide are starting points, not rules.

Should I roast the bones? For beef and pork, yes, it makes a real difference in flavor. For chicken, it is optional and depends on whether you want a deeper or lighter result.

Why is mine bitter? Usually vegetables cooked too long, or fish bones simmered past ninety minutes. Add delicate ingredients later next time.

Can I use frozen bones? Yes. No need to thaw first, just add an hour or two to your cook time.

Can I leave the fat on when I store it? Yes, and it is recommended. The fat cap acts as a natural seal.

Does broth break a fast? Broth contains calories and protein, so technically it breaks a fast in the strictest sense. Many people still include it in a modified fast because of how gently it is metabolized.

Can I mix animal types in one batch? Yes, and many traditional broths do exactly that. Chicken and beef bones together produce a genuinely delicious, complex result.

Do I need to use filtered water? It is preferred, since you are extracting minerals for many hours and do not want tap additives concentrating in the process, but it is not a dealbreaker.

Can I add salt at the start instead of the end? You can, but salting at the end gives you more control, since the liquid reduces and concentrates over a long cook.

What if my broth smells off partway through? A properly made broth should smell savory throughout. If something smells sour early on, your bones may not have been fresh. When in doubt, discard and start again.

Can I can bone broth for shelf-stable storage? Yes, using a pressure canner following USDA guidelines for low-acid foods. A water bath canner is not safe for broth.

Is store-bought bone broth worth buying? It can be a fine backup for a busy week, but check the label for real gelatin content and avoid added flavors or sugar. Homemade will almost always outperform it.

Can I use a whole chicken instead of parts? Yes, and it produces a wonderful broth with meat you can pull and use separately. Add the carcass back in after removing the meat for an even richer second simmer.

Why does my broth taste different every time? Bone source, combination, cook time, and aromatics all shift the result. This is a feature of homemade broth, not a flaw.

A FINAL NOTE

There is something quietly radical about making your own broth. In a world that sells you collagen packets and gut health powders and wellness supplements for every possible deficiency, deciding to simmer bones in a pot and use what comes out feels almost too simple to be meaningful. But it is meaningful. It is one of the oldest acts of nourishment there is.

Every culture in this guide arrived at broth independently. They did not have the science. They just had the observation that this thing, this slow-cooked liquid made from bones and water and time, made people feel better. Stronger. More whole. And they were right.

You do not have to do everything in this guide. You just have to start. Make one pot. See how it feels. Notice if your sleep changes, if your skin shifts, if your digestion settles. Let it become part of how you eat rather than something you do for a week and abandon.

The women who came before us made broth because they had to, because nothing was wasted and everything was used. You have the luxury of choosing it. Choose it because it works. Because it is real. Because your body has always known what to do with the nourishment inside a good pot of broth.

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May every pot you make be rich, warm, and nourishing.

With warmth,

Larissa

@wellbylarissa



The Bone Broth

This is the real thing. A long-cooked, deeply gelatinous broth made from a combination of collagen-rich bones that will set firm in the refrigerator and deliver everything your body is asking for. The combination of chicken feet, knuckle bones, and backs gives you both the deep gelatin and the rich flavor that makes this worth making in large batches.

Makes: 3 to 4 quarts | Active time: 30 minutes | Cook time: 18 to 24 hours

The Bones

- 2 pounds chicken feet
- 2 pounds chicken backs or necks
- 2 pounds beef knuckle bones or neck bones
- 1 pound oxtail

The Aromatics

- 1 large yellow onion, halved
- 3 medium carrots, roughly chopped
- 4 stalks celery, roughly chopped
- 1 whole head of garlic, halved crosswise
- 2 tablespoons black peppercorns
- 3 bay leaves
- A small bunch of fresh parsley, stems and leaves

The Liquid and Acid

- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- Filtered cold water to cover, about 4 to 5 quarts
- 1 to 2 teaspoons fine sea salt, added at the end

Method

Stovetop

1. Preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Spread all bones in a single layer across one or two rimmed baking sheets. Roast for 40 to 45 minutes, turning once halfway through, until deeply browned and caramelized. Do not rush this step. The color on the bones is the flavor in your broth.
2. Transfer the roasted bones to your largest stockpot. Cover with cold filtered water. Add the apple cider vinegar. Let everything sit for 30 minutes without heat.
3. Place the pot over medium heat and bring slowly to a gentle boil. Skim the gray foam continuously with a wide flat spoon for the first 20 to 30 minutes, until no more foam rises and the liquid runs clear.
4. Add the onion, carrots, celery, garlic, peppercorns, and bay leaves. Reduce the heat to the lowest possible simmer. Cover partially and cook for 18 to 24 hours, checking occasionally and topping up with water if the bones begin to emerge.
5. In the last hour of cooking, add the fresh parsley.
6. Remove from heat and strain through a fine mesh strainer, pressing gently on the solids. Discard the spent bones and vegetables. Season with sea salt to taste.
7. Transfer to wide-mouth mason jars, leaving lids off. Let cool to room temperature before refrigerating. Once chilled, a firm layer of fat will form on top. Leave it in place as a natural seal. A properly made bone broth will set solid like jello in the refrigerator.

Slow cooker

1. Roast the bones as above, 40 to 45 minutes at 400 degrees until deeply browned.
2. Transfer to your slow cooker. Add cold water to cover, about an inch below the rim. Add the apple cider vinegar and let sit 30 minutes before turning on.
3. Set to low and cook for 20 to 24 hours. Add the onion, carrots, celery, garlic, peppercorns, and bay leaves after the first hour. Add parsley in the last hour.
4. Strain, season, cool, and store as above.

Instant Pot

1. Roast the bones as above. Transfer to the Instant Pot. Add cold water to the max fill line. Add the apple cider vinegar and all aromatics at once.
2. Seal the lid and set to high pressure for 3 hours. Allow pressure to release naturally for 30 minutes before opening.
3. Strain, season, cool, and store as above. Note that pressure-cooked broth may not gel as firmly as stovetop broth. For a thicker gel, reduce the strained broth on the stovetop for 20 to 30 minutes before storing.

Note: This broth keeps in the refrigerator for 5 to 7 days or in the freezer for up to a year. The fat cap on top is a sign of a rich, nourishing broth. Stir it back in when warming or skim and save it for cooking. Do not discard it.

The Stock

This is the everyday kitchen workhorse. Lighter than bone broth, cleaner and more versatile, it is what you reach for when cooking grains, deglazing a pan, building a sauce, or making a simple soup. It cooks in a fraction of the time and still delivers real nourishment. A good stock should be clear, golden, and deeply savory.

Makes: 3 to 4 quarts | Active time: 20 minutes | Cook time: 3 to 4 hours

The Bones

- 1 whole chicken carcass, or 3 pounds chicken backs and necks
- Optional: 1 pound chicken wings for added body

The Aromatics

- 1 large yellow onion, quartered
- 3 medium carrots, roughly chopped
- 4 stalks celery with leaves, roughly chopped
- 1 head of garlic, halved crosswise
- 1 tablespoon black peppercorns
- 2 bay leaves
- A few sprigs of fresh thyme
- A small bunch of fresh parsley, added in the last 30 minutes

The Liquid

- Cold filtered water to cover, about 4 to 5 quarts
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt, added at the end

Method

Stovetop

1. Place the bones in your stockpot and cover with cold water. Bring slowly to a gentle boil over medium heat. Skim the gray foam that rises for the first 15 to 20 minutes until the liquid runs clear.
2. Add the onion, carrots, celery, garlic, peppercorns, bay leaves, and thyme. Reduce to a very low simmer. Cook uncovered or partially covered for 3 to 4 hours.
3. Add the fresh parsley in the last 30 minutes of cooking.
4. Strain through a fine mesh strainer, pressing gently on the solids. Discard the spent bones and vegetables. Season lightly with sea salt.
5. Let cool uncovered before refrigerating. A stock will gel lightly but not as firmly as a bone broth. Skim the thin fat layer for a cleaner stock or leave it in for richer flavor.

Slow cooker

1. Place bones and all aromatics except parsley in the slow cooker. Cover with cold water to just below the rim. Set to low and cook for 6 to 8 hours. Add parsley in the last 30 minutes. Strain, season, and cool as above.

Instant Pot

1. Place bones, all aromatics including parsley, and water to the max fill line in the Instant Pot. Seal and pressure cook on high for 1.5 hours. Natural release for 20 minutes. Strain, season, and cool as above.

Note: A stock does not need to gel to be good. What you are looking for is a clean, golden, deeply savory liquid that tastes like something. If yours tastes flat, reduce it on the stovetop for 20 to 30 minutes to concentrate the flavor before storing.

Postpartum Recovery Broth

Traditional

This recipe draws from Chinese and Korean postpartum traditions, where new mothers are fed warming, deeply nourishing broths for weeks after birth. Ginger, sesame oil, jujube dates, and long-cooked chicken bones create something that is more tonic than recipe. It is deeply warming, deeply mineral-rich, and built specifically for a body that has just done the most extraordinary thing it will ever do. Make this for yourself, or bring it to a woman you love who has just had a baby.

Makes: 2 to 3 quarts | Active time: 20 minutes | Cook time: 6 to 8 hours

The Bones and Meat

- 1 whole chicken, preferably pastured, cut into pieces, or 3 pounds bone-in chicken thighs and drumsticks
- 1 pound chicken feet for extra gelatin

The Warming Additions

- 2 inches fresh ginger, sliced into coins, unpeeled
- 10 to 12 dried jujube dates (red dates), rinsed
- 6 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 6 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil, added at the end
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt, or more to taste

The Liquid

- Cold filtered water to cover, about 3 to 4 quarts
- 1 tablespoon rice wine or dry sherry, optional

Method — Stovetop

1. Place the chicken pieces and feet in a large pot and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil and let it boil for 5 minutes. Drain, rinse each piece under cold running water, and rinse the pot. This blanching step removes impurities and gives you a very clean, clear broth.
2. Return the rinsed chicken to the clean pot. Add the ginger, jujube dates, dried shiitake mushrooms, garlic, and rice wine if using. Cover with fresh cold water by about two inches.
3. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce to the lowest possible simmer. Cook covered for 6 to 8 hours, checking occasionally and adding water as needed to keep everything submerged.
4. When finished, strain through a fine mesh strainer. You can pull the chicken meat from the bones and return it to the broth for a heartier result, or strain completely and serve as a pure broth.
5. Stir in the toasted sesame oil and season generously with sea salt. Serve warm in a deep bowl or mug. This broth is meant to be drunk slowly and frequently throughout the day, not just once.

Slow cooker

1. Blanch and rinse the chicken as above. Transfer to the slow cooker with all remaining ingredients except sesame oil and salt. Add cold water to just below the rim. Set to low and cook for 8 to 10 hours. Strain, add sesame oil and salt, and serve warm.

Instant Pot

1. Blanch and rinse the chicken as above. Transfer to the Instant Pot with all remaining ingredients except sesame oil and salt. Add cold water to the max fill line. Pressure cook on high for 2 hours. Natural release for 30 minutes. Strain, add sesame oil and salt, and serve warm.

Note: This broth is traditionally drunk several times a day in the weeks after birth. Make a large batch and freeze in individual portions so it is always available. The sesame oil and salt should always be added fresh at serving, not before storing.

Postpartum Recovery Broth — Simple

This version is for when the traditional ingredients feel unfamiliar or hard to find. It is still deeply nourishing, still warming, still built for restoration. Long-cooked chicken with ginger, garlic, and turmeric produces a broth that is rich with collagen, minerals, and anti-inflammatory compounds. Simple enough that a partner, mother, or friend could make it the day after the birth without any special ingredients.

Makes: 2 to 3 quarts | Active time: 15 minutes | Cook time: 6 to 8 hours

The Bones

- 1 whole chicken, preferably pastured, cut into pieces
- 1 pound chicken feet, optional but strongly recommended

The Warming Additions

- 3 inches fresh ginger, sliced into thick coins, unpeeled
- 1 whole head of garlic, halved crosswise
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon black pepper, freshly cracked
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

To Finish

- 1 to 2 teaspoons fine sea salt, to taste
- A squeeze of fresh lemon juice
- A drizzle of good olive oil or a small pat of butter, optional

The Liquid

- Cold filtered water to cover, about 3 to 4 quarts

Method

Stovetop

1. Place the chicken pieces and feet in a large pot. Cover with cold water and add the apple cider vinegar. Let sit for 20 minutes before turning on the heat.
2. Bring slowly to a gentle boil over medium heat. Skim any gray foam that rises for the first 15 minutes until the liquid runs clear.
3. Add the ginger, garlic, turmeric, black pepper, and bay leaves. Reduce to the lowest possible simmer. Cook partially covered for 6 to 8 hours, topping up with water as needed.
4. Strain through a fine mesh strainer. Pull the chicken meat from the bones and return it to the broth if desired. Season generously with sea salt. Finish each serving with a squeeze of lemon and a drizzle of olive oil or a pat of butter stirred in.
5. Serve warm, as often as possible, throughout the day.

Slow cooker

1. Place all ingredients except salt, lemon, and olive oil in the slow cooker. Add cold water to just below the rim. Set to low and cook for 8 to 10 hours. Strain, season with salt, and finish each serving with lemon and olive oil.

Instant Pot

1. Place all ingredients except salt, lemon, and olive oil in the Instant Pot. Add cold water to the max fill line. Pressure cook on high for 2 hours. Natural release for 30 minutes. Strain, season, and finish each serving with lemon and olive oil.

Note: For the woman who just gave birth, drink this warm throughout the day, not just at mealtimes. If appetite is low in the early days, this broth is nourishment enough on its own. Make it in large batches and freeze in individual jars or silicone cubes so it is always available at a moment's notice.