



THE  
LITTLE FRENCH BAKERY

## VEGETABLE SOUP

### Chicken Stock:

In a big stock pot (as big as you have), add 1-2 chicken carcasses or 1 whole chicken. Wings, necks and backs are great to keep in the freezer for stock day.

### Add:

2-3 carrots, cut into thirds

2-3 stalks celery, cut into thirds

1-2 medium onion, quartered

1-2 cloves of garlic, smashed

8-10 whole peppercorns

1 bay leaf

1-2 turnips or parsnips if you have them

1 leek, if you have one - cut into pieces and very well washed. You don't want grit in your stock.

If you have any leftover roasted vegetables from your chicken, add those too.

Any combination of herbs including rosemary, thyme, oregano (I add a spring of fresh thyme and a small spring of rosemary)

Fill the stock pot with cold water, about 2 inches from the top. Depending of the size of the stock pot, you'll have a few quarts of liquid.

Turn on the heat, and bring the stock to a very long simmer. You may have some scum float to the top. Skim that off and discard.

Don't stir the stock, just let it simmer undisturbed. Be sure not to let it boil to hard, or that will make it cloudy. You can put a cover over the pot, but keep it ajar. Check it periodically, adjust the heat to maintain the low simmer. There should be tiny bubbles around the edges and near the surface, but nothing too forceful. You can let the stock simmer for several hours. The longer it simmers, the deeper the flavor and richness of the stock. You will lose some of the liquid. It may reduce, but you can add more water if desired.

When you're ready to finish the stock, line a colander with cheesecloth or a clean handkerchief that you don't mind getting "stocky". Using a large bowl or another pot under the colander, gently press a ladle against the surface of the stock removing the broth, and strain through the cheesecloth into the bowl. Try not to stir. You'll get some chicken bones and vegetable pieces in the colander. It's okay.

When you have most of the liquid out of the pot in the second bowl or pot, discard the solids.

Here's an important food safety tip: Get the stock COLD quickly. Bacteria will double every twenty minutes when the temperature is between 40 and 140 degrees F. I make an ice bath with cubes and water, and place the bowl with stock in the bowl of ice water. If you have a lot of stock you may have to work in batches. It may also take more than one batch of ice water. When the stock feels barely warm to the touch. Transfer to the storage container, label and place in the refrigerator for three days or into the freezer. I like to put it in the freezer overnight, and skim off any fat that floats to the top, then freeze.

When you're ready to use it, I run the container under warm water, release the stock cube, and put it in the soup pot frozen. It melts quickly and cuts the time needed to defrost. For risottos and dishes requiring warm stock, I thaw in the microwave or in the refrigerator overnight.