

Chicken Soup

Roasted bones and feet, cold-started for a broth that sets to jelly. The meat poached apart and folded in tender. Fish sauce and parmesan rind for umami that never shows itself.

Yield: **10–12 bowls** (2.5 L stock) Active: **45 min** Total: **4 hr** (3 hr simmer) Simmer: **85–90°C** (185–195°F) Thigh done: **74°C** (165°F)

WHERE IT WAS BORN

Ashkenazi Eastern Europe — the shtetl pot that stretched one old hen into broth. Older roots run through Maimonides' 12th-c. *broth of hens* to a 2nd-c.-BC Chinese *yang* food.

EATEN, AUTHENTICALLY

Over egg noodles, matzo balls, or rice — the convalescent's bowl and the Friday-night starter; the matzo-ball version is Shabbat and Passover itself.

HOW IT'S USED NOW

The world's comfort broth: *brodo* with tortellini, Cantonese jook, and the same clear stock spiced into Vietnamese *phở* (below).

INGREDIENTS

WEIGHT PREFERRED · VOLUME IN RIGHT COLUMN

STOCK

Chicken carcasses + wings (roasted)	2kg	100%
Chicken feet (blanched)	300g	~6 feet
Cold water (always cold)	4L	~1 gal
Yellow onion, halved (skin on)	300g	2 med
Carrot	200g	2 med
Leek green tops	150g	2 leeks
Celery	100g	2 ribs
Garlic head, halved	1	—
Parmigiano rind (glutamate)	30g	1 rind
Bay · peppercorns · thyme · parsley stems	—	—

CHICKEN (POACHED APART)

Bone-in skin-on thighs	800g	~4
Bone-in breast (optional)	400g	1 split
Fine sea salt (poach water)	10g	2 tsp

SOUP & FINISH

Leek white / carrot / celery (5mm)	550g	—
Fennel (optional)	150g	½ bulb
Fish sauce (invisible umami)	15g	1 tbsp
Lemon juice (at service)	20g	1 lemon
Schmaltz (from the stock)	20g	1 tbsp
Egg noodles (or matzo / rice)	200g	—

THE RATIO — BONES = 100%

Bones 100 · Feet 15 · Water 200 · Salt by taste.

The feet are the gelatin multiplier — ~2 kg bones to 4 L cold water yields 2.5 L of stock that sets to jelly when chilled. Salt is never on the ratio; a stock you reduce over-salts itself.

Kit: 8 L stockpot · 4 L poach pot · 4 L soup pot · fine mesh + cheesecloth / superbag · skimmer · instant-read probe · fat separator

METHOD

- Roast the bones.** 220°C (425°F), single layer, 25–30 min to deep mahogany, turning once. Colour, not carbon.

Maillard reactions build the smell of roast chicken — aromatics raw-bone stock never has. — McGee 2004, pp. 778–782
- Blanch the feet.** 60 sec rolling boil, shock in ice; the membrane peels in sheets, trim the nails. Into the stock raw.

Feet are ~70% collagen by dry weight — 300 g doubles a 4 L stock's gelatin without changing flavour. — Keller, Bouchon, 2004
- Deglaze + cold-cover.** Bones to the pot; scrape the roasting tray in with a cup of water. Cover with **cold water** by 5 cm (~4 L). Never hot.

Collagen hydrolyses 70–90°C; the slow climb coagulates skimmable albumen instead of emulsifying fat into a cloud. — McGee 2004, pp. 599–605
- Climb, skim, simmer 3 hr.** ~90 min to a bare simmer, skimming. At **85–90°C** add feet, vegetables, parm rind, aromatics. Uncovered 2 hr 30–3 hr. Don't stir.

A rolling boil emulsifies fat permanently. The 2000 Nebraska assay found the anti-inflammatory activity in this clear broth. — Rennard, Chest 118(4), 2000
- Strain, chill, lift the fat cap.** Through cheesecloth — **do not press**. Ice-bath, chill; lift the set schmaltz (~80 g) and jar it.
- Poach the chicken apart.** Bare-simmer 2 L water + 10 g salt; thighs skin-up 18–22 min to 74°C (breast 14–16 min, 63°C). Cool, pull into pieces.

Muscle squeezes water out past 65–70°C; meat simmered in stock turns to thread. Pulled gentle, it stays juicy. — McGee 2004, pp. 148–152

Build the bowl — layers, seasoned last

- Sweat diced leek, carrot, celery, fennel in 20 g schmaltz 8–10 min, no colour. Salt lightly.
- Into the warm stock; simmer 10 min. Fold the pulled chicken in the **last 2 min only**.
- Off the heat:** grated garlic, 15 g fish sauce, 20 g lemon juice, parsley, dill. Taste, adjust salt. *Citrus volatiles die with heat — lemon goes in last.* — Nosrat 2017
- Assemble:** noodles cooked **apart** in the bowl, soup ladled over, a teaspoon of schmaltz to bloom the aroma.

Done: broth clear, gelatin-bodied (it should jelly when chilled); thigh 74°C (165°F), juicy not stringy; schmaltz blooming on top.

Serve: over egg noodles / matzo balls / rice cooked separately, lemon wedge on the saucer. Never hold starch in the broth.

ONE BASE, TWO DISHES — THE BROTH BECOMES PHỞ

The same clear, gelatin-rich stock spices into a Vietnamese-leaning **phở**. Steep 1.5 L with toasted cinnamon, star anise, cloves, charred ginger + onion 30 min; strain. Push fish sauce to 30–40 g/L + a pinch of sugar. Build cooked rice noodles + sliced poached chicken in the bowl, pour very hot broth over; finish with sprouts, basil, lime, chilli at the table. *One extraction, two cuisines.*

ELEVATION

TIER 1 — NO EXTRA TIME

- Charred onion** — black-char a half in a dry pan before the stock
- Schmaltz at the bowl** — 1 tsp blooms aroma on the hot broth
- White pepper + sesame oil** — a Cantonese finish

TIER 2 — WORTH IT

- Double stock (remouillage)** — spent bones + 2 L fresh water, 2 hr; combine
- Toasted rice** — 50 g dry-toasted, simmered in the stock 25 min
- Matzo balls** — whipped whites + baking powder + covered = floaters

TIER 3 — RESTAURANT

- Consommé raft** — egg-white + mince clarification, crystal-clear
- Chicken ballotine** — rolled thigh, sous-vide 62°C, seared, sliced
- Skin cracklings** — rendered glass-crisp at 160°C on top

TROUBLESHOOT

Cloudy broth	Boiled not simmered / solids pressed. Hold 85–90°C; never press.
Greasy broth	Fat emulsified by a boil. Chill, lift the fat cap; bare simmer only.
Thin, no gelatin	No feet / raw not roasted / too much water. Add feet; reduce 25%.
Dry, stringy chicken	Cooked in the stock / past 75°C. Poach apart; rescue in schmaltz.
Flat flavour	No salt / umami / acid. Salt, then fish sauce or rind, then lemon.
Gluey bowl	Starch cooked in the pot. Cook it apart; thin with extra stock.

CHARTER PREP & STORAGE

The make-ahead	The stock IS the prep. Freeze it naked, build the bowl at reheat.
Finished stock	5 d fridge / 3 mo frozen, 1 L portions, fat cap as a seal.
Schmaltz	2 mo fridge / 6 mo frozen. Strain, jar in small portions.
Poached chicken	3 d fridge in its poaching liquid; shred only at service.
Galley shortcut	Stock in vac-bags + cube trays, frozen flat. Soup in 15 min.
Never	Freeze the built soup, or hold cooked noodles in the broth.