

Roasted Vegetable Stock

Makes about 4 quarts

Making your own vegetable stock is worth the effort because the result is fresher tasting than canned or powdered alternatives. The longer you roast the vegetables, the darker and more strongly flavored the stock will be.

Ingredients:

7 large carrots, unpeeled, cut into chunks
3 yellow onions, unpeeled, quartered
8 celery stalks, cut into chunks
1/2 lb. fresh mushrooms with stems intact, brushed clean and quartered
1 large baking potato, unpeeled, cut into chunks
2 cups plus 4 1/2 quarts water
4 to 6 fresh thyme or parsley sprigs, or a mixture
1/4 tsp. whole peppercorns, crushed
1 bay leaf

Directions:

Preheat an oven to 350°F. Coat a large roasting pan with nonstick cooking spray.

Spread the carrots, onions, celery, mushrooms and potato in the pan. Roast for 45 minutes to 1 hour or for up to 1 1/2 hours if you want a more strongly flavored stock, stirring once or twice.

Remove from the oven and transfer the vegetables to a large stockpot. Add the 2 cups water to the roasting pan, then stir and scrape the bottom with a spatula to remove any browned bits. Add to the stockpot along with the 4 1/2 quarts water, thyme and/or parsley, peppercorns and bay leaf. Bring to a boil over high heat, skimming off any scum from the surface. Reduce the heat to low, cover partially and simmer for 2 hours.

Strain the stock through a sieve or colander into a large bowl. Discard the solids. Let the stock cool, then refrigerate for up to 4 days or freeze for up to 3 months.

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