ROASTED VEAL STOCK

Chef Thomas Keller / Chapter Sixteen

MASTERCLASS

ROASTED VEAL STOCK

"This is going to be the foundation for a number of different sauces that we're going to make."

CHAPTER REVIEW

Veal stock is an essential item at The French Laundry, but the method used to make it takes three days. This is a faster, simpler veal stock recipe that Chef Keller developed for home cooks. It uses a pressure cooker and takes hours—rather than days—but it also yields wonderfully versatile results. In a pressure cooker, the ingredients are steamed, not simmered, so they give off fewer impurities. As a consequence, the stock requires little to no skimming during cooking, though you will want to skim the fat after it has chilled. The stock has a beautiful clarity, and a lush color that comes from three sources: roasted veal bones, brûléed onions, and tomatoes.

The cooking time for this home recipe may vary depending on your pressure cooker and the strength of your burner. But timing isn't critical. Reading the gauge on your pressure is the key.

Chef Keller urges you to have all your ingredients prepped and ready before you start cooking. It will make the process smoother. Some of the ingredients, such as calf's feet, may be difficult to find. All the more reason, Chef Keller says, to cultivate a relationship with your local butcher or grocer, who can work with you on getting what you need. This recipe will yield around 4 liters of veal stock, which you can refrigerate or freeze.

PREP & COOK TIMELINE

Day 1

- Prep vegetables
- Cut meat from bones
- Roast bones
Start pressure cooker
- Char onion
Add tomatoes
- Add bones
to pressure cooker
- Deglaze
roasting pan
- Add liquid to
pressure cooker
- Add vegetables, aromatics,
calf's foot, hot water
- Cook stock
- Skim, strain, fine strain
- Chill overnight

Day 2

- Skim solidified fat
- Store until ready to use

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STOCK

Mise en place

Ingredients

3.2 kilograms (7 ½ pounds) veal osso bucco or meaty neck bones
60 grams (2 ounces) canola oil
500 grams (1 pound, or 5 large roma tomatoes, coarsely diced into ¾-inch pieces
1 calf's foot, split (optional but recommended)
250 grams (½ pound, or 1 medium) onion, bruléed
500 grams (1 pound, or 2 medium) onions, peeled and sliced ⅜-inch thick
500 grams (1 pound) carrots, peeled and sliced ⅜-inch thick
4 garlic cloves, smashed
10 thyme sprigs
1 fresh bay leaf
4 liters (4 quarts) water

****Ingredient note:*** substitute same beef products if veal is not available)

Equipment

14-quart stainless steel pressure cooker
Large roasting pan
Mixing bowl
Flat wooden spoon
Skimmer
Coarse strainer
Chinois
2 heat-resistant 6-quart containers

METHOD

Preheat oven to 425°F. If you have a convection oven, use convection for more efficient browning. Convection is not required, though.

Dry the bones, cut the meat away, and slice the meat into ½-inch pieces. In a large bowl, toss the meat and bones in the oil to evenly coat, then arrange in a single layer in the roasting pan. Place the bones in the oven and roast; check after about 30 minutes and stir to expose unbrowned surfaces. Cook until they are deeply caramelized to a mahogany color, about 45 minutes. Continue roasting longer if necessary to achieve the color.

While the bones are roasting, heat the pressure cooker over medium-high heat. Split one onion in half and remove the skin. Add about 3 tablespoons* oil to the pressure cooker and place the onion halves, cut side down, in the pressure cooker and swirl them around in the oil. Continue cooking until the onion is well-charred and black, about 10 minutes.
****Note:*** The exact amount is not important because the oil will all get skimmed off later in the cooking process.

Remove the charred onion brûlée and set aside. Reduce the heat to medium then add the diced tomatoes. Continue cooking the tomatoes, stirring occasionally, until they begin to caramelize and the liquid is reduced—listen for them to stop sizzling.

Deglaze the pressure cooker with a little water; then allow it to re-caramelize as before.
****Note:*** You don't see Chef Keller do this step in the video lesson, but he recommends that you do this to achieve more color and depth of flavor.

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Remove the pressure cooker from the heat and take the veal out of the oven. Add the bones to the pressure cooker. Place the empty roasting pan on the stove over medium heat and deglaze the pan with half a liter of water. Use a wooden spoon to scrape up and dissolve as much of the caramelized juices from the pan as possible.

Pour the jus into the pressure cooker. Add brûléed onions, mirepoix vegetables, herbs, and the calf's foot (if using). Add 3½ liters of hot water to the pressure cooker, submerging everything inside. Stir the contents of the pressure cooker; then put the lid on and seal it. Begin bringing to pressure over medium heat and cook until it reaches 15 PSI.

Once it reaches 15 PSI, turn down the heat and set the temperature to maintain 15 PSI for 90 minutes. After 90 minutes, turn off the heat and allow the pressure to be released naturally.

Remove the lid from the pressure cooker and scoop the bones and vegetables into a heat-resistant bowl using a skimmer. You may reserve the cooked meat for other uses or discard. Carefully strain the contents through a coarse strainer—which Chef Keller calls a China cap—into a heat-resistant container. Allow the solids to drain thoroughly. Strain the liquid again through the chinois into a second, clean container. Tap the rim of the strainer with a spoon to speed up the process. Let the container of stock cool by placing a lid or something else under part of the container, creating a passageway for air to circulate underneath the bottom. Then, transfer to an ice bath or the refrigerator and let it cool overnight.

Once chilled, remove the solidified fat on the surface of the stock and discard. The stock may now be used or divided into sealed containers and frozen for prolonged storage. If you pour it hot into a container and store in the refrigerator, it will stay good for three days; after that, reboil it and restore. In the freezer, it will stay good for a month.

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Originally known as a "steam digester," the pressure cooker was invented in 1679 by a French physicist named Denis Papin as a tool for cutting the cooking time for a variety of ingredients. Centuries later, its purpose is the same, but the pressure cooker itself has evolved. First-generation pressure cookers often only allowed for one pressure setting and had a valve that jiggled loudly when steam was released. Many home cooks found that rattling sound unnerving, and not without reason; in those early models, safety issues surrounding pressure cookers were a legitimate concern. But those concerns have long since been addressed. In modern pressure cookers, multiple safety features have made exploding lids and sauce-splattered ceilings a distant memory. Most of today's pressure cookers come with multiple pressure settings and do not release steam during cooking. More recent years have seen the advent of electric pressure cookers and multifunctional pressure cookers that can be used for braising, browning, yogurt-making, and more. Pressure cookers also come in a range of sizes that will influence, in part, what you want to make in them. Read the instructional manual on your pressure cooker so you understand its features and what they are best suited for.

You can make this recipe on the stovetop in an uncovered pot; you'll have to cook it a lot longer (about 8 hours), and due to evaporation in an open pot, you'll have to adjust by adding more water throughout the process. How much water you need to add depends on how much water is evaporating from the stock—every burner, every pot is different. A good starting point is to double the water. You'll also want to make sure that the bones are always submerged throughout the cooking process. It is also recommended that you skim impurities from the surface regularly. Cook at a gentle simmer. For a demonstration of skimming and simmering, See Chapter 17: Light Chicken Stock.

If you choose to reserve the cooked veal meat for another use, you can incorporate it into pasta filling or enchiladas. Because of the long cooking process, the meat may be stringy and not optimal as the focal point of a meal, but it makes a great filling.