Making Vegetable Stock

You can certainly buy vegetable stock at the store, but you can make a vegetable stock for a fraction of the cost and little effort.

Use your food waste!

One of the neatest things about making your own vegetable stocks is that you can use the parts of the vegetable that we would typically not eat. Since you will be boiling and straining the stock, you can use things like onion peels or the ends of carrots. You can also use vegetables that you may have overlooked that got a bit wilted.

Things to include peels, ends, and leaves from most produce. You can use the greens that come on some vegetables, like beets, leeks or carrots. You can use peels you may otherwise discard, like parsnips or potatoes. You can use the ends of vegetables like green beans, tomatoes or summer squash. You can also use vegetables or herbs that are wilted, like parsley, cilantro, mushrooms, chard or dill.

Things to exclude would be strong flavored or colored vegetables or rotten vegetables. You should avoid broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage (the cruciferous vegetables) because they have such a strong flavor. If you are concerned about having pink broth, avoid beets. Avoiding rotten food sounds obvious but anything that is moldy or slimy should be left out. If you have vegetables that are wilted, but you think may begin to rot soon, freeze them for later stock making.

You do not need to have all of these scraps at once. Freeze these scraps (a large freezer bag works well) as you create them and use them to make broth when it is convenient for you.

Easy steps:

1. In a little oil of your choice, sauté some of your scraps (onions, garlic, carrots, etc.) until they brown a little.
2. Add remaining scraps, you should have about 2 cups for 4 cups of water, and water.
3. Simmer for about an hour. Unlike meat based broths, vegetable stock does not benefit from really long simmering times, but you can simmer it longer if it’s convenient.
4. Scoop out large pieces of vegetable with a slotted spoon. You can compost these.
5. Strain the stock (allow to cool a bit for safety) in a cheesecloth lined strainer over a large pot.
6. Optional: Return stock to hard boil to reduce it. This is great for storage, you can add water when you are using the stock to reconstitute it.
7. Use the stock within one week or store in in the freezer. Tip: you can freeze the stock in convenient portions, once they are frozen you can transfer smaller portions to one large freeze bag or storage container.

Do you have questions about using local food? Call CCE Clinton County 561-7450 or check out our website: blogs.cornell.edu/clintoncounty/

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