ABOUT VEGETABLE STOCK:

Three reasons to make your own stock:

1. Storebought stock tastes like dishwater.
2. Food you make with storebought stock tastes like it is made with dishwater.
3. Storebought stock tastes like dishwater.

BUT: *I don’t have room to store it or a pot big enough to make it.* The recipe makes 2 quarts. It can be frozen. You can make half a batch. If you have room, double the batch, and optimize time spent on making it.

BUT: *I don’t have time to make stock.* I’m not going to lie. Making stock takes time. Do you watch t.v.? Multi task. Take ten minutes to throw some vegetables in a pot and cover them with water. Watch your favorite show. When the Mad Men episode is over the stock is ready.

BUT: *I hate all that chopping and peeling.*
You don't have to be too precise in the chopping; the aim is just to get the pieces small enough (1-2 inches) so you can extract maximum flavor out of them. It's more like hacking than chopping. Just rinse the vegetables. You don't need to peel, though it is easier to cut onions if they are peeled.

*These are not rules; they’re guidelines.*

TWO KINDS OF STOCK:

LIGHT VEGETABLE STOCK:The vegetables are covered with water, some part of which can be white wine (2 cups to 10 cups water for example). This is good for delicate soups or risottos that need a flavor boost.

RICH (BROWN) VEGETABLE STOCK:The vegetables are roasted in the oven first, for a darker, more intensely caramelized flavor. Good for winter stews and hearty risottos or farro dishes.
BEST VEGETABLES FOR STOCK

As you will see from the ‘recipe’ much of what you might ordinarily throw away can go into stock, especially if you are a Frugal Frieda and tuck away bits and pieces in your freezer. Vegetables that are on their last legs are sometimes the best candidates for stock because as they dry out their flavors become more concentrated. Day-old mushrooms, for example, are a steal at the grocery store. Avoid vegetables with overpowering flavors in your stock. Yes, you are using stuff you might throw away otherwise, but not everything.

GOOD for stock

Onions
Carrots
Celery
Leek greens
Scallion greens
Parsley stems
Thyme stems
Garlic
Mushrooms (optional)
Tomatoes (optional)
Ginger root (for Asian soups)
Kale stems (in moderation)
Celery root

NOT GOOD for stock

Strong tasting veggies (overpowering flavors)
Broccoli
Cauliflower
Cabbage
Turnips
Parsnips (too strong, use in moderation)
Squash (will make stock cloudy)
Potatoes (will make stock cloudy)

THE SHORT VERSION (BY THE SEAT OF YOUR PANTS): cut up carrots, celery, onions, etc. Cover with water. Simmer for 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Strain. Refrigerate or freeze until needed.

TIP: When straining stock, place the ‘receptacle’ pot in the sink and set a strainer over it. Then pour the stock into the pot. This enables you to pour at below waist level, instead of trying to heft a large pot of liquid at countertop level.
VEGETABLE STOCK RECIPE
Makes 2 quarts
6 cups of sliced onions, leek greens and/or scallion greens
4 medium carrots, scrubbed but not peeled and thickly sliced, to make about 1 1/2 cups
3 to 4 celery stalks including leaves, sliced, to make about 2 cups
4 cups (12 ounces) sliced mushrooms, optional
3 tomatoes, diced, optional
1 small head of garlic, separated
1 large handful fresh parsley, or an equal amount of parsley stems
1 teaspoon black peppercorns
3 bay leaves
1 teaspoon kosher salt
12 cups water (or 10 cups water plus 2 cups white wine)
3 to 4 tablespoons olive oil if making rich stock

LIGHT VEGETABLE STOCK
1. Place onions, carrots, celery, mushrooms, tomatoes, garlic, parsley, peppercorns, bay leaves, and salt in a large pot. (A small amount of salt enhances the flavor of the stock, without compromising it if you plan to reduce it. If you add too much salt at the beginning and want to reduce the stock later, it may be too salty.) Add the water, and wine, if using.

2. Bring stock to a boil over high heat. Adjust the heat so that the stock simmers. Cook, uncovered, for at least 1 hour. If you have more time, cook longer, up to 1 1/2 hours is sufficient.

3. Strain and store in containers in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days, or in the freezer for up to 3 months. Season with salt when ready to use.

RICH (BROWN) VEGETABLE STOCK:
1. Heat the oven to 400 degrees.

2. Spread the onions, carrots, celery, mushrooms, tomatoes, and garlic on 2 rimmed baking sheets. Drizzle with olive oil and toss to coat. Roast for 30 minutes, or until browned.

3. Tip vegetables into a large pot. Pour a little hot water onto the sheet pans, and scrape up the brown bits on the bottom with a flat-ended wooden spoon or spatula. Pour the water into the pot.

4. Add the parsley, peppercorns, bay leaves, salt, water, and wine, if using, to the pot. Bring stock to a boil over high heat. Adjust the heat so that the stock simmers. Cook, uncovered, for at least 1 hour. If you have more time, cook longer, up to 1 1/2 hours is sufficient.

5. Strain and store in containers in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days, or in the freezer for up to 3 months. Season with salt when ready to use.

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