

Salt and Serenity

Roasted Vegetable Stock

This recipe is the creation of Mark Bittman, from his wonderful book, "How to Cook Everything Vegetarian." (Wiley Publishing 2007). Mark says that roasting the vegetables first to brown them well adds a complex family of flavours. This stock freezes well, so feel free to make a double batch.

Makes 3 Quarts

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 well-washed leeks, cut into chunks, or 2 large onions, quartered (don't bother to peel)
4 carrots, peeled and cut into chunks
2 celery stalks, cut into chunks
1 parsnip, peeled and cut into chunks (optional)
2 potatoes, peeled and quartered
6 cloves garlic
15 white button mushrooms, halved
¼ cup of parsley leaves, plus 10 parsley sprigs
3 sprigs fresh thyme
¼ cup soy sauce
10 black peppercorns, whole
½ cup white wine
1 teaspoon kosher salt

1. Preheat oven to 450° F. Combine oil, leeks, carrots, celery, parsnips, potatoes, garlic and mushrooms in a large roasting pan. Stir to coat all the vegetables with oil. Put the pan in the oven and roast, shaking the pan occasionally and turning the ingredients over once or twice until everything is nicely browned. This will take about 45 minutes. Don't rush it.
2. Using a slotted spoon, scoop the roasted vegetables into a large stockpot. Add herbs, soy sauce, peppercorns, wine, kosher salt and 2 quarts of water. Turn the heat to high.

3. Put the roasting pan over a burner on high heat. And add 2 to 4 cups of water, depending on depth of pan. Bring it to a boil and cook, scraping off all the bits of food that have stuck to the bottom. Pour this mixture into the stockpot (along with 2 more cups of water if you only used 2 for deglazing).
4. Bring stockpot to a boil, partially cover and adjust the heat so the mixture sends up a few bubbles at a time. Cook until the vegetables are very soft, 30 to 45 minutes. Strain, pressing on the vegetables to extract as much juice as possible. Taste and add more soy sauce, salt or pepper if needed before using or storing. Will keep in the fridge for 3 days or in the freezer for up to 3 months.