

## Beef, Bison or Moose Stock

Hunters, bring home your moose or caribou leg bones. Non-hunters, most butchers sell beef bones; they're often called "soup bones". If your local butcher doesn't usually carry them, ask her or him to save them for you next time. Soapbox moment: humanely raised, humanely slaughtered meat is always the best way to go, for the animal and for you. If you ever do a farm-gate purchase of a domestic animal, the farmer will ask if you want the bones and the offal. Say yes.

6 lbs. (2.8 kg) moose, bison or beef marrow bones

Olive oil

2 medium cooking onions, chopped

½ fennel bulb, chopped

2 medium carrots, chopped

2 stalks celery, chopped

1 large leek, chopped

2 bay leaves

1 tsp. (5 mL) juniper berries, crushed

3 cloves

5 peppercorns

½ cup (125 mL) red wine

1. Preheat oven to 400F (200C). Soak bones in cold, salted water (about 1 tbsp. (15 mL) per litre of water) for 15 minutes to draw out some of the blood and remove impurities. Drain, rinse and pat dry. Spread bones on a rimmed baking sheet.
2. Toss vegetables in oil and spread on a rimmed baking sheet.
3. Roast vegetables and bones in the oven until browned and aromatic, anywhere from 40 to 60 minutes. The vegetables sometimes take longer; if so, they can finish browning while you boil the bones and skim the scum.
4. Place bones in a large saucepan and cover with 6 quarts (about 6 L) of cold water. Deglaze the baking sheet with a few tablespoons of red wine and add to the pot. Bring to the boil over high heat, and skim the frothy scum until it stops rising to the surface, about 10 minutes.

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5. Turn down the heat to medium-low, add the browned vegetables, deglazing the baking sheet as above, and add bay leaves, cloves, juniper berries and peppercorns.
6. Bring the stock to a slow simmer, uncovered. The bubbles should be large and slow and barely break the surface. More scum will probably rise to the surface; at this point I tend to ignore it—after a while it stays near the edges and can be skimmed off easily at the end. I never stir the stock, because that brings the scum back into the liquid and increases the likelihood of cloudiness.
7. Simmer uncovered for 4 hours. Strain through a colander lined with cheesecloth. Remove fat—either immediately with a fat separator, or by chilling overnight and skimming off the hardened fat next day.
8. When the fat is removed, pour stock into a clean saucepan and reduce by half over low heat.
9. Let cool to room temperature. Decant into storage containers—1-pint (500 mL) is a useful size--and refrigerate or freeze.

Makes 2 to 3 quarts (about 2 to 3 L).

