

WINTER WELLNESS, PART 1 – BONE BROTHS

Staying healthy through Winter is about strengthening your immune system and, in order to do that, you need a strong digestive system. According to Dr. Alejandro Junger, author of *Clean Gut*, 80% of your immune system is located in your gut. The way to maintain optimal digestive health this Winter is by consuming bone broths and ferments each day.



Broths and stocks, particularly bone broths, are nutrient-dense. Made correctly, they are packed full of compounds that protect gut health:

MINERALS - MAGNESIUM, POTASSIUM, PHOSPHORUS, ZINC, CALCIUM

These substances are mandatory for electrolyte balance/rehydration, cell membrane integrity and ATP (energy) production.

AMINO ACIDS - GLUTAMINE, GLYCINE, PROLINE

Essential amino acids (EAA) must be taken in the diet as we cannot synthesise them in the body from other substances. These three EAA's reduce gut inflammation and protect intestinal lining.

VITAMINS - VITAMIN C

Vitamin C acts as an antioxidant, reducing unstable chemicals called free radicals in the body which can damage cell membranes and other tissues.

Most importantly bone broths contain COLLAGEN (GLEATINE). Collagen is soothing and healing to the intestinal lining, helping to maintain the gut wall's structural integrity. If this one-cell-thick structure breaks down gut permeability increases.

When making broths there are a couple things to remember : always use high quality bones from organic, grass-fed animals as unwanted toxins can be stored in bone; and, always add an acid – lemon juice or apple cider vinegar – to help release the minerals from the bones.

The best broth to start with is CHICKEN AND VEGETABLE:

Bones of one chicken left over from Sunday's roast or one chicken frame

Vegetables – onions, carrots, celery, shallots, leeks, green onions – whatever you have on hand (generally, when cooking I keep vegetable peelings and offcuts, add them to a cloth bag with a drawstring top that I keep in the freezer. When I'm ready to do a stock, I just use all the scraps, then start over again)

Herbs and spices – salt, bay leaves, peppercorns, rosemary, thyme, oregano, parsley-again, whatever you have on hand or in the garden is fine



Place your bones in a heavy-bottom stock pot, or slow-cooker if you prefer, and fill with water to cover the bones. Add 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar or lemon juice and let sit for 30 minutes.

Then, add vegetables, herbs, spices and enough water to reach nearly the top of your pot. If you are using a stock pot, place on heat – electric or gas stove or on wood heater – leave on high until boiling, then reduce to a gentle simmer for desired length of time. Stocks can be cooked from 8 hours to 48 hours, depending on how much time and patience you have. Mine tend to cook for 24-36 hours.

If you are using a slow-cooker, put it on high until the stock boils, then put on low or 'keep warm' setting, whichever keeps it at a simmer.

You may need to top up your bone broth once or twice with water, but keeping the lid on will reduce evaporation.

Once your stock is finished, let cool, then drain through a sieve, keep in the fridge, or place in containers and store in the freezer until needed.

Note: if you are vegetarian you can make broths, too. Just omit the bones and acid, add additional vegetables such as mushrooms, kale, tomatoes – again, whatever you have around - and cook for about 4 hours. This broth will be high in minerals and vitamins, too, but will not contain collagen; although, you can add collagen through vegetarian/vegan seaweed collagen supplements.

To use the bone broth – just add to soups, gravies, sauces, bean or rice dishes – basically anywhere you would normally use water. You can also drink it as a tea; my favourite is to add fermented turmeric (recipe follows), ground cumin and fennel, sea salt, and lemon juice. This tea is very satisfying just after you have finished making your bone broth and can finally enjoy it after smelling the amazing aroma through the entire house for a day!

For additional information on bone broths/stocks:

Nourishing Traditions by Sally Fallon

The Bone Broth Secret by Louise Hay and Heather Dane

<http://peteevans.com/recipes/>

For additional information on gut health:

Clean Gut by Dr. Alejandro Junger

Gut by Giulia Enders

The Microbiome Solution by Dr. Robynne Chutkan

<http://www.drperlmutter.com>

Cheers to good health –

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