



## Soups, Stews and One Pot Meals

When you hear the call, Soup's On, think of the cook, the nutrient dense vegetables, the essence of quality meat from sustainable farms. When pot of stew is place in the center of the table know enjoy the anticipation of goodness to come.

Think of the great comfort of these age old culinary treats that have nourished mankind for centuries. You won't be in the soup or stewing over misfortune. You'll be with friends and family.

With elbows planted firmly on the table, lean over a bowl that will bring good nourishment and wonderful pleasure.

These dishes or cooking processes are certainly related. Nearly all require a good stock and the aromatic vegetables of onion, carrot and celery. Giving a clear definition to each is probably impossible. A debate about their proper definitions could easily become an argument.

Usually soups are served as a first course. The portion is reasonable at around 6-8 ounces or a cup. With plenty of good bread and a salad to follow a generous portion of soup makes for a good lunch.

A stew, on the other hand, is a main course offering and the portions are usually quite generous. Usually larger piece of vegetables and meat, poultry or seafood are included. A stew resembles meat, vegetables and gravy served in a large bowl.

One pot meals are self defining. Although some of the ingredients may have been cooked separately or prior to the final preparation, the meat, vegetables and potatoes, rice or pasta are combined in one pot for the final preparation. The cooking liquid in the “one-pot” becomes the broth, the sauce or the gravy.

But rather than quibble over semantics, we should focus on good cooking and stick to a very general definition that allows everyone to add his particular interpretation, his special twist and his flavor tweaking.

### **There Really Are No Rules**

A recipe gives us the security to get started, to try something new or different, to use a new ingredient or offer a new dish to our family and friends. Nevertheless, cooks usually like to make a few adjustments, especially after they have used a recipe several times. A little more seasoning, a little less garlic or a pinch of red pepper flakes to add a little heat or a slower cooking process to bring out more flavor are typical changes good cooks like to make.

And there is no better example of your influence in the cooking process or adjusting a recipe than there is in the making of soup, of stew or that one pot meal. With these age old concoctions the cook’s personal taste and creativity are part of the process.

I am always pleased when experts say in print what I have already believed—based on my own experience. As New York Times writer and cook, Mark Bittman, and the cook book author Deborah Madison remind us, soups, stews and one pot meals offer every possibility and few restrictions. You are in charge. You are the decision maker.

Any ingredient can be omitted or added according to the season or your personal taste preference. These kinds of dishes can range from hearty meat and vegetable combinations,

served with crusty bread, to a refined, creamy French style velouté. Both meat stocks and vegetable stock can be used.

If there is one thing that is a must, a required part of good soup making it would be a good meat or vegetable stock. The stock or broth is the very foundation on which a good bowl of soup is built.

Making good stock deserve more attention than most people think. It's much more than throwing meat, bones, vegetable and herbs into a pot of water and boiling the broth for several hours. The stock pot is not a receptacle for products that are on the edge of being spoiled. Don't put items in the stock pot that you would not otherwise cook and eat.

## **THE STOCK POT**

Here is where they all begin. Soups, stews and one pot meals are all dependent on the stock as the foundation.

### **MEAT STOCK**

Place the bones and meat in a heavy bottom pan. Fill the pan with enough water to rise two or three inches above the bones. Bring to the boil. Begin skimming the foam that comes to the top. Stir the bones a couple of times as this will bring more foam, which is really, scum, to the top. Continue skimming until nearly all foam has been removed. There will always be a bit remaining. This is OK.

Now add a carrot and an onion that have been peeled and chopped and a stalk of celery that has been chopped. Add a bay leaf and teaspoon of thyme. Lower the heat to medium/medium-low depending on your stove. The stock should bubble but not boil hard.

After about four hours, use a pair of tongs to lift pieces of bones. These should fall apart. Any meat on the bones should fall from the bones. The vegetables should be very soft. Turn off the heat and let the stock cool to warm. Strain it through a damp cloth that has been placed in strainer. When the stock is a room temperature, place it in the refrigerator overnight.

The next day or within a couple of days, carefully remove the fat from the top of the stock. If the stock is thin and there are pieces of fat floating on top you can repeat the process of straining through a damp cloth.

Return the stock to a heavy bottom pan and set over low heat. Do not boil the stock. Reduce the stock to concentrate the flavor. Cool and place in small containers and freeze it.

Any bones and meat can be used for making stock—chicken or other poultry, beef and pork or a combination of these. One does not have to add meat if the bones still have bits of meat on them. If you prefer a darker and usually richer stock you can brown the bones in the oven or in the heavy bottom stock pot. If you brown bones in the oven, you should add some water to the pot after the bones have been transferred to the stock pot. Scrap the brown bit from the bottom of the roasting pan and add these to the stock pot.

You can use this same deglazing process by adding wine to the roasting pan or the stock pot in which you have brown the bones. Beef and pork bones go well with Madeira wine. White wine is best for chicken.

Lamb bones, bones from smoked meat products can also be used to make stock. These, however, should be used only when you intend to make a dish that contains lamb or smoked meat.

One of my favorite all purpose meat stock is made from the FFM turkey packs. Instruction follow.

## **VEGETABLE STOCK**

Making a vegetable stock follows the same general process although there will not be an issue with scum forming on top nor will there be any fat to remove. Without meat their will not be the depth of flavor that comes from the bones. Nevertheless, there are many tricks and techniques for moving a vegetable stock from flavored water to rich, unctuous broth.

Here is a basic recipe: 1 large onion, 2 large carrots, 2 stalks of celery with leaves, one leek, 6-8 garlic cloves, 6-8 branches of parsley, ½ tsp dried thyme and 2 bay leaves. Use about 2 tsp of salt for 2 quarts of water.

Scrub the vegetables, do not peel, and chop them in 1 inch pieces. Discard the root from the onion. Pay special attention to the leek. Remove half of the dark green. Remove the root. Split the leek length wise and wash thoroughly as there is usually dirt and sand between the leave. After washing, chop the leek in 1 inch pieces. Place the vegetables in a stock pot and cover with 2-3 quarts of water.

Bring the stock to a boil and then lower the heat to medium-high or medium. Cook for about an hour.

For a darker, richer stock add some olive oil or vegetable oil to the stock pot. Heat the oil and add the vegetables and herbs. Stir for about 15 minutes over medium-low heat being careful not to burn the edges of the vegetables. Add the water and salt and the cook the stock for an hour.

Depending on how the stock will be used and with what vegetable dishes more earthy vegetables can be added. These include turnips, rutabaga, parsnips and celery root. A tomato that has been cut across and squeezed to remove juice can be added to a vegetable stock if a tomato flavor will be part of the dish in which the stock is used.

You can add to the stock some of the major ingredient(s) that will be in the final dish. If you are making mushroom soup or a mushroom dish add cleaned and washed mushroom stems to the vegetable stock.

## USEFUL TERMS AND TECHNIQUES

*Sweating Vegetables:* This process usually applies to root vegetable that respond well to slow cooking. Vegetables are minced, diced or chopped and then placed in a heavy bottom pan with butter or oil or lard. The pan must be covered for this process. Check often and stir to make sure the vegetables are not browning or burning on the edges. The vegetables can serve as the base for a soup or in the case of root vegetables, such as turnips, the vegetable can be completely soften in this process before liquid is added.

In the classic system of sweating vegetables, a buttered or oiled piece of parchment paper is placed directly on the vegetable. A small plate is turn upside down on the parchment to hold it on the vegetables. The lid is placed on the pan.

*roux:* Often soups and stews are thickened with this mixture of butter, flour and milk or stock. The amount of flour will determine the thickness. A standard ratio is 2 TBS butter, 2 TBS flour and 1 cup milk or stock. Prepared properly a *roux* can give a smooth, thick texture to a soup or sauce. Improperly prepared, the *roux* leaves an uncooked flour taste in the dish.

Melt the butter in a small sauce pan and then add the flour. Cook the ingredients together over medium heat making sure there is no flour that has not be moistened by the butter. Lower the heat and continue cooking while whisking for several minutes. This will begin to cook the flour. Cook longer if you want more color. Add the milk. Raise the heat to medium-high. Continue whisking. When the *roux* has thickened, lower the heat and cook for an additional 5 minutes. This final process will cook the flour and eliminate the taste of uncooked flour.

*Simmering:* This process like sweating is done over low heat. In this case liquid has been added to the pot.

Although we usually think of combining all ingredients of the soup and cooking them together there are times when vegetables are cooked separately and then combined for the final part of the cooking. An example would be adding caramelized onion to a soup. The onion is done separately and then added to the soup.

*Food Mill:* pass cooked soup through a food mill to create a smooth soup that will retain a bit of texture. In a root vegetable soup, one can still see flecks of carrot.

*Purée:* Use a standing blender or a food processor to create a perfectly smooth soup without texture. If using a food processor you may need to pass the soup through a screen to achieve a purée. Pureed soups are often referred to by their French name of velouté.

*Using cream:* If cream is added to a soup it is best not to boil the soup after the addition as the cream or half and half may curdle. When using *crème fraîche* it can be added as a garnish in the center of the soup portion.

*Bisque:* A soup that usually contains seafood and includes cream or a *roux* to finish it. The most well known is lobster bisque. It is not thick like a velouté, but the liquid is somewhat thick or creamy.

*Mince, Dice, Chop:* These terms refer to the size of the pieces of onions, carrots and celery for the most part. Chopping would yield the largest pieces—creating 1 inch pieces. Dice would yield pieces about ¼ inch in size and mince refers to the smallest pieces; small enough that they could be sprinkled over a dish. Shallots and garlic are usually minced.

## SOUP

### CORN CHOWDER

A chowder of any kind, and there were probably many before the most popular version with clams was created, is named for the vessel in which it is cooked—a cauldron. This original one pot meal was born out of necessity. A large cast iron pot was placed over a fire. Probably the only technique one needed to know was “in what order does one add the ingredients” to assure that they will all be done at the same time without any being severely over cooked.

Frozen corn, removed from the cob, and ready to use corn broth made from the cobs certainly put a modern make ahead spin, and less work, on this classic dish. Optional additions to the stew are your choice.

2 slices of bacon, in one inch pieces (omit for a vegetarian version)  
1 medium onion, peeled and diced  
1 carrot, peeled and diced  
1 celery stalk, diced  
2 cups (approximately) frozen corn  
2 cups corn broth (approximately)  
3 or 4 large potatoes peel and diced (yellow flesh potatoes are best)  
1 tsp dried thyme  
1 bay leaf  
1 cup of cream or half and half (optional)

Place the chopped bacon in a heavy bottom pan (large enough to accommodate the entire chowder) Cook the bacon over medium-low heat to render the fat. Don't let the bacon become crisp. If you are not using bacon, substitute butter or oil.

When the bacon has rendered its fat, pour off most of this fat. Add the onion, carrot, celery and thyme. Raise the heat to medium and cook while stirring for about ten minutes. Add the corn, the broth, potatoes and bay leaf.

Cook the chowder over a low-boil until the vegetables are soft but still have some texture. Add the cream or half and half and continue cooking but do not boil.

You can add some color to the chowder with the addition of diced sweet red pepper. Add the pepper with the corn and broth.

Frozen tomatoes can be used in the same way that you use canned tomatoes. Peeled or unpeeled will make little or no difference; however, unpeeled tomatoes are the perfect motivation for investing in a food mill.

Gadgets and electric appliances often dominate the modern kitchen at the expense of good tools like the box grater, the food mill or a set of scales, the most accurate way of measuring.

You will find that a food mill is a handy tool when making winter food. When purchasing a food mill go for the most basic, the classic. Look for a mill that has three removable inserts: course, medium and fine. Multiple inserts offer more options and make for easier cleaning.

A food mill can change a collection of simmered vegetables and herb flavored into a classic *potage*. Use a course disk to keep a textured quality to your soup. On the other hand, passing cooked green beans through the fine disk will create a classic puree that can be enhanced with the addition of cream.

### **Winter Tomato Soup with Thyme**

- 1 package of FFM frozen tomatoes
- 2 TBS olive oil or butter
- 1 cup, peeled, diced onion
- 1 cup diced celery
- 2 cups chicken stock or vegetable stock
- 1 TBS dried thyme
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced

Place the tomatoes with juices in a baking dish and sprinkle with the dried thyme. Roast the tomatoes in a 350 degree oven for about 45 minutes. Stir often to evaporate most of the juice.

While the tomatoes are roasting heat the oil or butter in the soup pot. Add the onion and celery. Heat over medium-low stirring often. Cook for about 20 minutes and add the stock.

Remove the tomatoes from the oven and add them to the soup pot with the garlic. Cook the soup for about 45 minutes.

Pass the soup through a food mill and season with salt and pepper.

Optional: add a little cream and heat without boiling.



**TURKEY PACKS:** wing, back and leg provide an excellent poultry stock.

There are several ways to deal with the challenge of using these pieces that are usually ignored. You'll have excellent stock, a little richer than chicken and four or five cups of turkey meat. Shredded meat can be taken from the bones after making stock.

Cover the bottom of an oven proof pan for which you have tightly fitting lid. Cover the bottom of the pan with chopped onion, carrot and celery, a teaspoon of dried thyme and a bay leaf. Cover with a couple of inches of water or a combination of white wine and water.

Dry the turkey pieces and lay them on the chopped vegetable. Cover and roast in a 350 degree oven for two to two and one half hours or until the meat can be easily pulled from the bone with a fork. Remove from the oven and cool. When the pieces are cool enough to handle, remove the skin from each piece and then take off the meat.

Place all the bones, the vegetables and liquid from the roasting pan into a small stock pot. Add water to cover the bones by 3-4 inches. Bring to a boil and skim several times. Lower heat to medium and cook for 2-3 hours. You may have to add more water to keep the water level at least an inch above the bones. Cool and strain through a damp cloth. Refrigerate for later use.

The stock and the turkey meat can be frozen in small amounts to use later.

### **TURKEY NOODLE SOUP**

1 cup each of diced peeled onion, carrot and celery  
2 TBS oil or butter  
1 tsp dried thyme  
2 cup turkey stock  
salt, pepper  
shredded meat from the turkey parts  
2-3 handfuls of egg noodles (depends on amount of liquid)

Place a heavy bottom pan over medium heat and add the butter or oil. Add the vegetables. Stir the vegetable and cook until they begin to color and soften 10-15 minutes. Add the thyme and turkey stock and raise the heat to medium high. Add 2-3 cups of water and the shredded turkey meat. Cook until the vegetable are soft then add the noodle.

Cook until the noodles are soft. Season the soup with salt and pepper. Serve in heated bowls with crusty bread fried in olive oil.

## VELOUTE OF GREEN BEAN

Although the name may not be immediately appealing the smooth creamy texture and deep rich flavor will win you over.

One package FFM frozen green beans, thawed  
2 TBS butter  
½ cup each of peeled, diced onion and carrot  
1 cup diced celery  
1 tsp dried thyme  
1 large potato (yellow type preferred)  
2 cups meat or vegetable stock  
1 cup cream (optional) or crème fraîche

Heat the butter and add the onion, carrot and celery. Cook over medium-low heat for about 15 minutes stirring often.

Add the beans and the thyme and raise the heat to medium-high. Stir while cooking for about 2-3 minutes and then add the stock. Lower the heat to medium and cook until all the vegetables are very soft. Add more water during the process if necessary when the stock evaporates.

Cool for a few minutes and then puree in a blender or processor.

Return the soup to the pot and reheat. Season with salt and pepper. Add the cream (in using) and reheat, without boiling, until the soup is very hot.

Serve immediately in warm bowls.

If you are using crème fraîche or yogurt omit the regular cream. Reheat the soup and ladle it into warm bowls and place a tablespoon of crème fraîche or yogurt in the center of each portion.

## **TURNIP SOUP**

2-3 TBS butter or oil

1 cup onion, peeled and diced

2 large carrots, peeled and diced

1 stalk celery, diced

2 tsp dried thyme

1 bay leaf

5-6 turnips or 3 large rutabagas (see note below)

3-4 cups stock

Melt the butter in a heavy bottom pan set over very low heat. Add the onion, carrot, celery, thyme and bay leaf. Place the turnips and/or rutabaga, sliced thin, on the vegetable mixture. Place a piece of buttered parchment paper directly on the vegetables and then lay a saucer or plate turned upside down on the paper. Now place the lid on the pan.

Sweat the vegetable for about one and one half hour or until they can be easily pierced with a knife. Check often and stir. Make sure heat is very low and that the vegetables do not burn.

The time needed to soften the vegetables will vary according to the heat source and the kind of pan being used. Don't worry if it takes more time.

When the vegetables can be pierced with a sharp knife, add the stock. Raise the heat to medium and cook uncovered until the vegetables are soft as when making mashed potatoes.

Cool the soup for a few minutes and then pass it through a food mill than a blender. Using a food mill will leave some texture to the soup and dots of orange from the carrots.

Season with salt and pepper and garnish with minced parsley or fresh thyme.

*Note: Peel and chop the turnips or rutabaga. When peeling remove a thick layer from the outside of the vegetable.*

### **SPICY SWEET POTATO SOUP**

3-4 TBS olive oil or butter  
3 medium onions, peeled and diced  
6 large cloves garlic peeled and minced  
3 TBS minced fresh ginger  
2 ½ -3 lbs sweet potatoes peel and chopped,  
1 TBS dried oregano  
¼ tsp hot red pepper flakes  
1 tsp of cinnamon  
A pinch or two of cayenne pepper  
5-6 peppercorn, crushed with the flat blade of a knife  
3-4 cups stock  
salt and pepper

Heat the olive oil in a heavy bottom pan set over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, herbs and spices. Heat the vegetables and seasoning while stirring for about 10 minutes. They should be coated with the oil. Raise the heat to medium-high and continue stirring for 2-3 minutes. Lower the heat and add the sweet potatoes. Continue cooking for 10-15 minutes, stirring often. Add the stock. Bring to the boil and then lower the heat to medium. Cook until the sweet potatoes are very soft.

Let the soup cool for a few minutes and then pure it in a blender. Season the soup with salt and fresh ground pepper. Taste the soup and adjust the seasoning with more salt and pepper. Add an additional pinch of cayenne pepper if you want a little more heat.

Optional: Garnish with a dollop of crème fraîche.

### **VEGETARIAN BEAN SOUP**

2-3 cups of cooked beans  
2-3 TBS olive oil  
½ cup onion, peeled and diced  
½ cup carrot, peeled and diced  
1 cup diced celery  
2 tsp dried oregano  
vegetable stock

This soup begins with an Italian vegetable technique call *Soffritto*. The heat must be high enough to start cooking the diced vegetables yet low enough to prevent their frying in oil. You must stir the vegetables often. This process will take about 15 minutes.

When you have made your *Soffritto* add the stock, herbs and spices and the cooked beans. Cook for about 20 minutes. Season well with salt and pepper.

## STEW

The flavors and taste captured in a slowly simmered stew make this kind of dish far more appealing than its humble name. Beef stew does not sound as appealing as grilled lamb and oven roasted potatoes. But a good stew will win in any contest based on flavor and comforting aroma.

Stews require an investment of time and frequent tasting and adjusting. A stew is not a dish that provides a quick fix for hungry diners. Often, a stew requires a day or even two of preparation. The rewards are, however, well worth the investment.

Keep in mind also that stews like soup can be frozen in small portions. Remove the frozen product in the morning and reheat it at dinner time. This is your quick fix, the reward for your investment.

## LAMB AND BEANS

1 cup onion, peeled and diced  
1 cup carrot, peeled and diced  
½ cup diced celery  
2 tsp dried oregano  
3 TBS olive oil  
3-4 cups cooked beans (white beans preferred)

1 lb ground lamb  
3 garlic cloves, peeled and minced fine  
½ cup minced onion  
1 tsp dried oregano  
1 egg, beaten  
3-4 TBS fine bread crumbs  
Pinch of red pepper flakes  
Salt and pepper

Place the sauce pan over medium heat and add the olive oil. Cook the vegetables for about 5 minutes. Stir often. Add the beans and lower the heat. Add two cups of chicken stock. Simmer the beans and the vegetables while preparing the meat.

Mix the lamb, garlic, onion and herbs in a bowl and season well with salt and pepper. Add the egg and mix well. Add enough bread crumbs to bring the mixture together. Roll two-three ounce portions of the mixture into “sausages” about 3 inches long and 1 inch thick. Or if you prefer, make meat balls. Place the “sausages” on an oiled tray and put the tray into the freezer for about 15 minutes.

Place a large non-stick sauté pan (yes this requires a second pan for a one pot meal) over medium high heat and add 3-4 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the “sausages” directly from the freezer. Shake the pan to prevent their sticking. Don’t crowd the pieces. Do two batches if necessary. Add the “sausages” to the beans. Raise the heat to medium high to finish cooking the lamb.

## **VEGETARIAN STEW**

4 cups roasted vegetable stock

¼ cup olive oil

Any combination of root vegetables:

Turnips

Rutabaga

Parsnips

Potatoes

Carrots

Onions

Celery Root (or chopped celery stalk)

Dried thyme or oregano

Fresh flat leaf parsley

Minced garlic

Salt and pepper

½ lb. fresh spinach (optional)

This “recipe” provides plenty of opportunity for your influence and creativity.

Peel and chop the vegetables into similar sizes. Place all the vegetables in a roasting pan and roast for about 45 minutes in a 275 degree oven. Stir the vegetables a couple of times during the roasting to coat them with oil and to assure that they do not burn or stick to the bottom of the pan.

Heat the vegetable stock in a large pot. Add herbs and garlic. Pierce each type of vegetable to determine which vegetables are still very firm and which vegetables are starting to soften. Add the firm vegetables to the stock first. When they are beginning to soften add the vegetables that have begun to soften from roasting.

The idea is to start with those that will take longer to cook and end with those that will take the least time to cook. Total cooking time will be about 1 hour.

Rinse the roasting pan with some of the vegetable stock and add then return it to the pot.

Optional: Add 2 TBS of butter and 2 TBS flour to the roasting pan set over medium high heat. Whisk the flour and butter together until in foams. Lower the heat and cook for 4-5 minutes. Add 2 cups of liquid from the stock pot and raise the heat to medium high. Cook this *roux* for about 10 minutes and then add it to the pot with the vegetables. Substitute milk or half and half for the vegetable broth to make a creamy stew.

## **OXTAIL RAGOUT**

This recipe is a labor of love, somewhat laborious, absolutely worth the investment. Do not hesitate to make variations and adaptations that will reflect your preferences, your special skills and techniques.

4 lbs oxtail, cut into 2 inch pieces (two FFM packages of oxtail with serve 4-6)

3-4 TBS olive oil or lard

3 cups frozen FFM tomatoes or 2 TBS tomato paste

2 cups of stock, beef or chicken

2 large onions peeled and sliced

1 cup red wine or Madeira or Port

4-5 garlic cloves, peeled and minced

1 TBS dried oregano

salt and pepper

Heat the oil or lard in a heavy bottom pan set over medium-high heat. (A Dutch oven that can be moved to the oven is best.) Add the oxtail pieces. Stir and turn the pieces to brown all sides. Do not crowd the pan. Do not crowd the pan or the pieces will not brown well. Do in batches if necessary.

When all the meat has been browned, add the onion. Stir to coat the onions with the oil or lard. Cook while stirring for 5 minutes. Raise the heat to high and add the wine. Scrap the bottom of the pan to release all the brown bits. When the wine has nearly evaporated, add the stock, garlic, oregano, salt and pepper.

Cover the pan and move it to the oven set at 350. Cook until the meat nearly falls from the bones. Return the pan to the stove. Check the seasoning. You can serve the ragout with rice or mashed potatoes. A combination of 2 parts potato and 1 part turnip and/or rutabaga would be excellent.

Of course you can use your finger to enjoy the rich flavor of the meat which you have to pull from the bone.

If you want a more refined version easy to handle at the table version let the ragout cool. Remove the pieces of oxtail and wrap them in plastic. Refrigerate the oxtail and the sauce over night.

To finish, remove all the fat from the sauce and return it to the oven. Remove all the meat from the bones of the oxtail pieces and add these to the sauce. Reheat and serve.

Because this is a complex process that requires your time and attention, consider making a larger amount. Remove the meat from the bones and the freeze the ragout in smaller portions.

## **ONE POT MEALS**

### **Meat and Vegetables Simmer in a Pot**

1 whole chicken

Any combination of onions, carrots, celery, turnips, rutabaga and potatoes

Dried herbs

Flat leaf parsley

Salt and pepper

Wash the chicken well. Use paper towels to dry the cavity of the bird. Place some onion, carrot and celery with a tablespoon of dried thyme and a bay leaf in the cavity. Truss the chicken with kitchen string. See Note.

Choose a pot that will accommodate the chicken and all the vegetables and enough water to cover the chicken by two inches. Add a teaspoon each of salt and pepper.

Bring the water to the boil and skim several times. Lower the heat to medium. The water should bubble just a little, but it should not create a rolling boil. Add the dried thyme and a bay leaf.

Cook uncovered for about two hours. The cooking time will depend on the size of the chicken.

Test for doneness. The meat can be pull from the bone with a fork. Don't overcook to the point where the bird is falling apart. Think of a roasted chicken that can be carved at the table. This stewed chicken should be cooked to the same point.

Place a cutting board on a tray. (There will be a lot of liquid and juice coming from the chicken.)

Remove the chicken from the pot and place it on a cutting board. Remove the string. Cut the leg and



thigh from each side. Separate these into two pieces. As you work, remove the skin and discard. Remove the breast meat and the wings.

Arrange the chicken pieces on in a deep platter and surround the meat with the vegetables using a slotted spoon to remove them from the broth. Check the broth for salt and pepper. Pour some of the broth over the chicken and vegetables. Serve in wide soup bowls rather than shallow plates. Pass additional broth in a bowl.

If you prefer, present the chicken on a deep platter. Remove the string, place the chicken, just as you would do for a roasted bird, on the platter. Surround the chicken with vegetables and broth. Carve the chicken and serve at the table.

*Note: Remove the first joint from the wings. Use a piece of string to tie the wings against the body. Use another piece of string to tie the legs together and pull them tightly over the open chicken cavity. The chicken should resemble a firm almost-football shape.*

Save the stock. Return the chicken carcass to the cooking pot. Simmer for a couple of hours. Strain the broth through a strainer lined with a damp cloth.