

Fresh Vegetable Bouillon

Serves 1 | Active Time: 30 minutes | Total Time: 40 minutes

Swick

Chef's Notes

To make a salt-free version, you will need to freeze the paste; otherwise, the vegetables will go rancid. To do this, freeze the paste into smaller portioned-size servings. Be warned though, the paste does not keep as well without the salt. The vegetables tend to get a bit of freezer burn and form some fairly big ice crystals.

I also tried making several versions using less salt but the more salt I omitted, the more the bouillon seemed to suffer. I think I will stick with the saltier version and just omit the seasoning in whatever dish I am cooking. Once you get the hang of the saltiness, it makes cooking a dish just a bit faster as you don't have to worry about seasoning very much, if at all.

The flavors in this particular vegetable paste are nicely balanced and very refreshing. However, you can add more or less of anything you like. You may even want to omit certain vegetables. You could also try adding things like mushrooms to give the stock a more earthy tone. That is the great thing about this paste; you can play around to see what works for you. Just make sure the vegetables are very fresh. Keep in mind that what you add to the paste will ultimately give the bouillon its character or flavor profile. For example, green peppers, garlic, cilantro, onions, chillies, and certain spices would give the bouillon an Latin American essence.

This recipe was inspired by Pam Corbin from her River Cottage Preserves Handbook and by 101 Cookbooks.

Step 1: Preparing the Vegetables

- 100 g celery stalks (approx. 2)
- 100 g celeriac or celery root (1 small)
- 200 g fennel bulb (1 small)
- 150 g leeks (2)
- 100 g shallots (2 to 4)
- 200 g carrots (2 to 4)
- 2 cloves garlic
- 20 g cilantro (approx. 1/4 bunch)
- 10 g flat-leaf parsley (1/8 bunch)
- 30 g sun-dried tomatoes (approx. 2 tbsp)
- 175 g fine sea salt*

To prepare the vegetables, wash, trim and peel where necessary. Roughly chop all of the ingredients so they are easier to puree.

*Note: The salt is best measured by weight because different salts will vary by volume. If using kosher salt, this will be approximately 1 cup. While this may seem like a large amount of salt, it is necessary to keep the vegetables from going bad. You are basically preserving the vegetables with the salt.

Step 2: Making the Bouillon

Note: If you have a small food processor (less than 8 or 10 cup capacity), you may need to make this in 2 batches.

To make the paste, start with celeriac and carrots. Pulse them several times until they start to collapse and break down. Then add the fennel, leeks, celery, shallots and garlic; pulse again. Add the sun-dried tomatoes and pulse to blend everything together. Next, add the salt and pulse a few times. Then add the fresh herbs and pulse again. Once everything is well blended and mixed together, you should have a nice, moist, paste-like consistency.

Place a bit of the paste into a jar and refrigerate so you can use it throughout the week. Place the remaining paste into a container and freeze. The salt keeps it from freezing solid, so whenever you need a bit, you can just scoop it out of the container. Alternatively, the paste can be canned.

To prepare the bouillon, measure 1 tablespoon per 1 cup of hot water. Taste and adjust to your liking. This bouillon can be used in soups, sauces, stews, risotto or grains. Basically, anywhere you want to add a bit more flavor. Just remember that it is quite salty, so keep that in mind when you are seasoning the rest of the dish.