

Poaching Pastured Poultry

1 Chaffin Family pasture raised chicken
3 large carrots
1 large onion
1 bouquet garni (12 parsley stems, 1 large sprig rosemary, 1 large sprig sage, two celery branches with leaves, 2 bay leaves, all tied together with kitchen twine)
4 quarts water
3 tsp sea salt
1 Tbsp raw cider vinegar

To poach the chicken and remove meat:

Fresh young chicken, raised on native grasses, is best chilled two to four days before poaching. Freezing without chilling for 48 hours will shorten the muscle fibers and cause the bird to toughen. After chilling two days post harvest, place the chicken, several carrots, 1 large onion, (obtaining organic vegetables is usually worth the effort and expense due to their higher brix score, an indication of sugar and mineral content, which intensifies the flavor), and 1 bouquet garni (12 parsley stems, 1 large sprig rosemary, 1 large sprig sage, 2 bay leaves, and two celery branches with leaves, all tied together with kitchen twine) in a tall, narrow stock pot with 4 quarts spring water and 3 tsp sea salt.

Bring the mixture to a boil over high heat. Cover, reduce heat to low, and boil gently for 30 minutes. Set the covered pot away from the heat and let the chicken poach in it's broth for half an hour. Using a large skimmer, remove the chicken from the pot and allow to cool a bit. Pick the meat from the chicken in large pieces and place on a platter, serve warm or cover tightly and chill.

To make a chicken stock:

Return the chicken bones to the pot with vegetables and water and 1 Tbsp cider vinegar, bring back to a boil. Turn to a simmer and allow to cook several hours, if not all day. Allow the stock pot to cool and then skim out and discard bones and vegetables. Strain the stock through a cheese cloth lined strainer, pour in a tightly covered container and refrigerate or freeze. This will be a rich stock to use as a soup base or wonderful sauces.