

SOUPS.

Consommé, or Stock, forms the basis of all meat soups, and also of all principal sauces. It is, therefore, essential to the success of these culinary operations to know the most complete and economical method of extracting from a certain quantity of meat the best possible stock or broth. Fresh uncooked beef makes the best stock, with the addition of cracked bones, as the glutinous matter contained in them renders it important that they should be boiled with the meat, which adds to the strength and thickness of the soup. They are composed of an earthy substance—to which they owe their solidity—of gelatine, and a fatty fluid, something like marrow. Two ounces of them contain as much gelatine as one pound of meat; but in them, this is so encased in the earthy substance, that boiling water can dissolve only the surface of the whole bones, but by breaking them they can be dissolved more. When there is an abundance of it, it causes the stock, when cold, to become a jelly. The flesh of old animals contains more flavor than the flesh of young ones. Brown meats contain more flavor than white.

Mutton is too strong in flavor for good stock, while veal, although quite glutinous, furnishes very little nutriment.

Some cooks use meat that has once been cooked; this renders little nourishment and destroys the flavor. It might answer for ready soup, but for stock to keep it is not as good, unless it should be roasted meats. Those contain higher fragrant properties; so by putting the remains of roast meats in the stock-pot you obtain a better flavor.

The shin bone is generally used, but the neck or “sticking piece,” as the butchers call it, contains more of the substance that you want to extract, makes a stronger and more nutritious soup than any other part of the animal. Meats for soup should always be put on to cook in cold water, in a covered pot, and allowed to simmer slowly for several hours, in order that the essence of the meat may be drawn out