

## Homemade Bouillon Cubes

Posted by Sue



herb and chicken broth bouillon cubes ready for the trail or the kitchen!

**BOUILLON!** I love saying that word. It brings me back to my days in High School French class, with our hilarious, Freud-obsessed teacher, Mrs. Adler from Marseilles ... but I digress. When you're out hiking, do you like having a cuppa something hot when you get to camp? I do! When I worked as an instructor for Outward Bound in Colorado, we'd get a stove going as soon as we found camp, to prepare a hot cup of soup for everyone before dinner. It was a nice way to get some extra hydration and electrolyte salts in after a long day on the trail. And being handed a cup of something warm, tasty and nutritious as you set up camp was just, well, *nice*.

Years later, I still like to do this. Someone sets up the tent, someone gets the stove going, and in minutes, you've got your nest settled and you're sitting with your back against a rock (or in your **Crazy Creek Chair** – always worth the wait!) with a hot cup of soup and a killer view. Not so bad!

With this in mind, I'm working on some easy soup recipes for the blog, and that gave me a hankering to try making **bouillon cubes**. What a great idea! Compact, convenient little flavor packets that can go in soup, stew, or in your camp cup with some hot water. Sure, you can find lots of bouillon in stores, but finding one that's AIP/Paleo compliant can be a challenge – I never trust a packaged food that has the word “flavoring”, “flavor”, or “spices” on it – typically these contain gluten or corn, which are no-no's on the Autoimmune Protocol (**AIP**). Not to mention (but I will) all the preservatives and unpronounceables that tend to show up in store-bought bouillon cubes!

### **WORTH THEIR WEIGHT IN SALT... AND COLLAGEN... AND GREENS...**

When you make your own bouillon cubes, you can decide exactly what ingredients and flavors to use. These bouillon cubes contain real broth made from chicken stock – so in addition to great flavor, you're getting the benefits of the **collagen, calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, proline and glycine** from the bones. They also contain **edible wild greens** such as nettles, dandelion leaf, and dried kale, which contain **valuable vitamins and minerals**. You can typically find wild edible greens in the bulk herb or tea section at the grocery store. You could make these with beef broth too – I haven't tried it, so if you do, please let us know how they turn out!



salt, onion, garlic, herbs, and edible wild greens!

These bouillon cubes are super easy to make, and produce a tasty, flavorful broth that's great in soup, stew, or plain in your cup. The recipe calls for 1/2 cup condensed chicken broth, but frankly, you won't need all of it for one batch. I'm a big fan of experimenting, and I love having some broth left over for a second version, depending on what my flavor preferences are at the moment. Be creative, try different herbs and greens for a second batch, and if you come up with an awesome version you want to share with the world, by all means share it in the comments below! Other herbs I've considered using: Rosemary, tarragon, oregano, thyme... and remember, you can use these bouillon cubes in your home kitchen, too.

### **ALL ABOUT THAT SALT...**



My recipe is somewhat salty, for a few reasons:

1. Mainly, I intend these cubes to be diluted in a whole pot of soup on the trail.
2. I need extra salt, because I tend to flirt with **adrenal fatigue**.
3. The salt helps to assure better shelf-life if you store these out of the freezer.

However, in the recipe below, I make note of two different amounts of salt: If you plan to use these cubes simply as a drink, you can use the lower salt amount, *but be sure to store them in the freezer until your trip*. If you plan to use them in a pot of soup (ie: diluted), use the higher amount of salt. The higher salt amount allows for less concern about storing in the freezer, but you might as well do it anyhow.

Before you decide on salt, consider these two points:

1. You lose a lot of salt when you're out on the trail, so recharging it is important, especially if you deal with adrenal fatigue.
2. These bouillon cubes contain real chicken broth, which has *fat* – and any dehydrated food with a high fat content is more prone to spoilage than a food without fat – and the salt helps to curb spoilage. In my opinion, either way you make them, just store them in the freezer to support the longest shelf-life possible. Got it?

## **HOMEMADE BOUILLON CUBES RECIPE**

*Makes about six cubes at 1.5-inch square by .5 inch tall.*

### **INGREDIENTS**

½ cup condensed chicken broth (instructions below)

herb/salt mix:

3 tsp dried wild edible herbs such as nettles, dandelion leaf, or dried kale (commonly available in the bulk herb or tea section of grocery stores)

1 tsp onion powder, granules or flakes

1 tsp garlic powder or granules  
1 tsp dried Italian herbs or basil  
1 tsp dried summer savory  
5 tsp sea salt for *pot-o-soup* cubes  
– or –  
3 tsp sea salt for *cup-o-soup* cubes

*(big-batch cooks, the dry part ratio is: 5 parts salt, 3 parts edible wild herbs, 1 part each of onion, garlic, Italian herbs/basil, summer savory)*



the broth cut in two



the dry ingredients

## INSTRUCTIONS

There are 3 steps: make broth, make cubes, and dehydrate:

Step One: Make the Condensed Chicken Broth

1. Bone broth has become a kitchen staple in the **AIP** and Paleo world – if you're not familiar with how to make bone broth, check out this simple **chicken bone broth**

**recipe** from Sarah Ballantyne of thepaleomom.com. With my bouillon recipe, you don't necessarily need to add the extra veggies in her version, but go ahead if you like, it's added goodness. But LEAVE OUT THE SALT, we'll add that later.

2.

Her recipe uses parts from 2-3 chickens – my bouillon recipe is made with bone broth from **one** chicken, so simply readjust the amounts to match. It's easy! NOTE: If you opt to make a larger recipe, that's okay – you'll only be adding the condensed broth to this recipe one TBS at a time, so you won't mess it up. The remaining broth can be used in other recipes, even if you've condensed 3 chickens-worth.



broth after cooling – the fat rises to the top, and the broth stays at the bottom. this batch came out cloudier than normal.

2. Get your broth going, then toward the end of the cooking time, let it boil down till the broth is super condensed – more than normal, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  or less of the original water content. Keep a close eye on it so you don't burn anything! In the recipe linked above, she goes for 48 hours – sadly, I am rarely that patient, and go about 8 sometimes... but remember, the more you cook it down, the more goodness you extract from the bones!

3. Pour off the broth into a glass canning jar with a wide mouth – it's very important that it does not have a narrow mouth, because once it's chilled, you need to be able to get the

whole thing out of that jar in one fell swoop. Don't use a regular glass jar, because you might risk it breaking with the heat.

4. Place the jar in the fridge and let the broth cool completely. It will separate, with the fat on top. Brilliant!

#### Step Two: Make the Bouillon Cubes

1. Place the jar of solid, separated broth in a pot of water that comes up just above the broth line. Heat just until the outer surface of the broth is soft enough to slide the whole chunk out of the jar. Don't over-heat it!



broth in warm water to separate it from the glass jar

2. Take the jar out of the water, and use a butter knife to separate the gelled broth from the glass.



separating the gelled broth from the glass jar

3. Turn the jar upside-down on a cutting board, and slide the gelled broth out. Plop!



gelled broth ready to separate

4. Turn the blob on its side. Using the butter knife, cut the fatty part off the clear-ish part. Set the fatty part aside, you can use it in another food dish. You could include the fat in the bouillon cubes, but added fat makes spoilage more likely, so I prefer to remove the fat.





the broth cut in two

5. Place the brown, clear-ish portion of the gelled broth into a pot, and liquefy it over low heat. Don't over-heat.

6. Place the dry mix in a mixing bowl. One TBS at a time, add broth until the mixture is a thick paste that holds together. Don't make it too thin!



the mix is thick enough it sticks to the spoon

7. Let it sit for a bit to meld the flavors.

8. With your fingers, shape the bouillon mixture into flat cubes. I make mine flat so they dry more evenly – thicker cubes will take longer to dry on the inside. They still hold together well when flat. These are 1.5-inch square x .5 inch tall:



bouillon cubes formed and ready for drying. that's a teaspoon next to the cubes.



dehydrated bouillon cubes ready for the trail and the kitchen!

### Step Three: Dehydrate

1. Dehydrator: Lay out parchment paper or a ~~fruit leather sheet~~ on your **dehydrator** tray.

OR

Oven: If you are using your oven, lay out parchment paper on a cookie sheet.

2. Place the cubes on the sheet, with plenty of air space between them.
3. Dry cubes at 135°F for 6-8 hours (oven may take longer, since it's harder to maintain a regular temperature). Cubes should be firm, light and completely dehydrated. Because there is fat content in the broth, the cubes may still seem to contain some moisture; if you are uncertain about their dryness, dry for more time.

4. Let cool completely before packaging.
5. Package in an air-tight container, and store in the freezer.

*NOTE: Because these bouillon cubes contain broth, the fat content makes them more likely to spoil than bouillon made simply with water and herbs. By storing them in the freezer, you can extend their shelf-life. I keep mine in the freezer until I'm ready to throw them in my backpack.*

### **IN-CAMP PREPARATION**

To use in a pot of soup, just break the cube up into the soup and stir in thoroughly. One cube adds additional seasoning to one 1-quart pot of soup.

To use as a drink, break up 1/2 cube in 1 cup hot water, stir till dissolved, and taste – you might like the entire cube in one cup, depending on your preferences.



one cup of broth made from one bouillon cube

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