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Bone Broth Recipe

Bone Broths can be a wonderful, tasty, nutritious addition to your dog or cat's diet. I "prescribe" them for a wide variety of reasons which include; rebuilding strength in debilitated animals, getting inappetent animals eating again, helping stiff, sore, arthritic animals move more comfortably and as a tasty treat to get bad tasting medication/herbs/supplements into our pets.

Below is the basic bone broth recipe with a few additions/variations for specific problems. If you want, you can even google bone broths for people and find a recipe that you can share with your pet (just make sure there is no onion in it as they can be toxic to your pet).

You can make up a batch and freeze it in smaller amounts (ice cube tray works well for this) or use it while it is fresh.

Have fun, get creative and enjoy!

Bare Bones (pardon the pun) Ingredients:

Bones, preferably with tendons and even small amount of meat attached. Any type of animal is fine. Animal shanks/cuts just above hoof are particularly helpful for arthritic animals as are chicken feet.

Water – enough to cover bones generously. Add more in time if bones no longer totally immersed. Some recommend no fluoride or chlorine in water but I confess I've made it with tap water.

Vinegar – approx. 1 ½ tsp per 4 L water (I tend to use Braggs Apple Cider vinegar but any vinegar will do)

Additional ingredients (for arthritic animals):

Yucca root –shaved or cut into small amounts (a great natural anti-inflammatory/pain killer)

Ginger root and cinnamon sticks especially for older pets who's digestion isn't strong, and especially if they are heat seeking animals or tend towards being chilly.

The Chinese always add a healthy splash of soya sauce or tamari to the water and any or all of the following spices (cinnamon, ginger, garlic, cardamom, star anise, cloves, fennel, Szechuan pepper – many of these will help with digestion of the rich broth....and certainly add flavour!).

Cover bones generously with water, add vinegar (and any other additions like spices/veggie/yucca) and bring to a boil. Let it boil for a few minutes then turn down heat and simmer for 12 to 24+ hours. Skim off any scum that forms on top of the water in the first few minutes. (if you use organic meat or game, there is often no or very little scum that forms).

Once finished, you can strain the broth so bones, spices/roots and meat are separated from the broth. You can feed your pet the meat and bits of cartilage but DO NOT GIVE them the cooked bones. If you are feeding the broth to your pet who has an easily upset digestive tract or who is recovering from digestive upset (ie vomiting or diarrhea), I would use a fat separator or other means to remove the fat. Other animals who have strong digestive system will tolerate the fat just fine (especially if you have added digestive-aiding spices like cinnamon, ginger, fennel)

Pour broth into appropriate container to cool. It will form a gelatin consistency. If using broth to get herbs, supplements into pet, ice cube trays are handy. Put the dose of herb, supplement or medication in the ice cube tray then pour in the broth and allow to solidify/gelatinize in the fridge or freezer.

If using bone broth to start your dog back on food after an episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea, try and separate off any fat from the broth either in a fat separator or skim off the top once cooled.

How Much to Feed?

Typically ½ TBSP for small dogs and cats and up to 1/3 to ½ a cup a day for larger dogs.

**But one caution: Whenever you are introducing anything new to your pet's diet, do so very gradually. Start with just a small amount and make sure there is no diarrhea, loose stools or vomiting. Once you know your pet has no trouble digesting it, you can gradually increase the amount fed daily.