



Black-bone Chicken Soup

The black-bone chicken—sometimes called “silkie chicken”—has a long history in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Western research reveals that the small, silky birds with black flesh and bones are particularly high in carnosine, a naturally occurring peptide sometimes taken as a supplement to increase muscle strength.

Traditional Chinese Medicine regards black-bone chickens as having unique energetic properties that make them particularly beneficial in building constitutional strength. While traditional poultry has a warming energy, black-bone chicken is more neutral. Consuming black-bone chicken broth is an effective way to balance moisture in the body and support the body's essential energy.

At Wu's Healing Center, we prize these birds for their unique benefits to women at all stages of their reproductive lives—particularly women preparing for pregnancy. And not only is the broth safe for breast-feeding mothers; its energetic properties make it particularly beneficial for women post-pregnancy. Clients who drink black-bone chicken soup regularly tell us they notice improvements in their skin quality—a bonus.

Look for black-bone chickens, fresh or in the frozen foods section, at Asian grocery stores. Often labeled “Silkie Chicken,” the birds are about the size of a game hen and have black or charcoal-colored skin. Although there are no feathers, keep in mind that this is a whole chicken; head and feet are included (at no extra charge).

Sources

May Wah Market
707–719 Clement St. (between 8th and 9th Ave.)
San Francisco, CA 94118

Manila Oriental Market
4175 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94112

Ming Kee Game Birds, Inc.
1136 Grant Ave. (between Pacific Ave. and Broadway St.)
San Francisco, CA 94133

99 Ranch Market
For Bay Area locations: www.99ranchmarket.com

Ingredients

- Whole Black-bone or “Silkie” Chicken, frozen or fresh
- Scallion, coarsely chopped
- Ginger, smashed
- Pinch salt
- Optional: 1 tablespoon rice wine per chicken*

Do not add any other ingredients

*Unless you know your constitution is very “warm,” you may add 1 tablespoon of rice wine during cooking to enhance flavor. However, we recommend you try the standard recipe first before embellishing.

Cooking Instructions

1. Pour water and completely cover the black-bone chicken (okay if frozen). For convenience, you may cook 2 chickens at once. Just make sure both chickens are covered. Add scallions and ginger.
2. Cook on high heat until water boils, then turn to low heat and simmer for 3 hours.
3. Salt slightly, then strain.
4. Refrigerate or freeze broth and skim fat before consuming. Discard meat or save for someone else to eat. *Do not eat it yourself.*

Tips

1. You may also use an electric slow cooker. Generally we find producing the right concentration of broth takes 12–15 hours at high heat (overnight), but cooking time may vary depending on your slow cooker’s temperature, quantity of chickens you cook, and whether chickens are fresh or frozen.
2. Quality and intensity of broth is more important than quantity. You know you’ve produced a good soup—extracting every bit of essence from the chicken—when the refrigerated broth becomes gelatinous.
3. When producing a large batch, you may freeze the broth and thaw as needed to preserve freshness.

Eating Instructions

1. Remember—drink only the chicken broth! Do not eat the meat, which has a different energy from the broth. (If you eat the meat, it will want to take back the energy from the broth.)
2. Drink as prescribed by Dr. Wu—generally 1–2 cups per day, every day, with meals; 1–2 chickens per week.
3. Return broth to a boil before drinking.