

TASTING SUPERMARKET CHICKEN BROTHS

Twenty *Cook's Illustrated* staff members tasted 18 brands of lower-sodium chicken-broth products (between 140 milligrams and 690 milligrams per serving) as plain soup, with sodium adjusted to the same level. The top nine finalists were tasted once again as

plain soup (sodium levels adjusted), then cooked in a simple gravy reduction (sodium levels unadjusted). Tasters rated each sample. Brands are listed below in order of preference. Sodium levels given are per 1-cup serving, based on package information.

RECOMMENDED



SWANSON Certified Organic Free Range Chicken Broth

➤ \$2.79 for 32-ounce carton SODIUM: 570 mg.

We're not ones to jump on the organic bandwagon for its own sake; the proof's in the taste. Swanson's newest broth won tasters over with "very chickeny, straightforward, and honest flavors," a hearty aroma, and restrained "hints of roastiness."



BETTER THAN BOUILLON Chicken Base

➤ \$4.99 for 8-ounce jar of concentrate (makes 38 cups) SODIUM: 690 mg.

Fairly salty, but tasters were fond of its "straightforward" flavor profile. Though it does take about 5 minutes to reconstitute the concentrated paste in water, the 18-month refrigerator shelf life means it's a good replacement for dehydrated bouillon.



SWANSON "Natural Goodness" Chicken Broth

➤ \$2.19 for 32-ounce carton SODIUM: 570 mg.

Swanson's standard low-sodium broth tasted almost as good as the winner, though some panelists found it "overly roasted." Very full chicken flavor, but several tasters noted an out-of-place tartness reminiscent of lemon.



IMAGINE Organic Free Range Chicken Broth

➤ \$1.99 for 32-ounce carton SODIUM: 570 mg.

A "decent flavor of chicken that lingers." This broth had very prominent onion notes, which some tasters loved and others disliked. Some panelists weren't fond of the pale yellow color.



RECOMMENDED WITH RESERVATIONS

COLLEGE INN Light & Fat Free Chicken Broth

➤ \$1.99 for 32-ounce carton SODIUM: 450 mg.

Some tasters were sold on this broth's "nice, mild chicken flavors," deeming its "understated" profile as optimal for blending into recipes. Others found it "blah and boring—nothing offensive, though."



ORRINGTON FARMS Chicken Flavored Soup Base and Food Seasoning

➤ \$2.99 for 16-ounce jar of powdered concentrate (makes 91 cups) SODIUM: 680 mg.

The only dehydrated bouillon product in the top 10, we discovered, got flavor from a chicken *and* a cow. Beef tallow helped give this product "nice, rich flavors."



NOT RECOMMENDED

TRADER JOE'S Free Range Chicken Broth

➤ \$1.99 for 32-ounce carton SODIUM: 570 mg.

Tasters couldn't make up their minds whether this broth tastes more like "bad takeout Chinese soup" or the "cardboard" container it comes in. The "wretched odor" earned it no extra points.



KITCHEN BASICS Natural Chicken Stock

➤ \$2.89 for 32-ounce carton SODIUM: 480 mg.

Not one taster believed this brand really was chicken broth. "Medicinal and beefy—are you sure this is chicken?" asked one worried taster. "Tastes like Vegemite tea." Beads of oil floated on top.



PACIFIC Organic Free Range Chicken Broth

➤ \$2.49 for 32-ounce carton SODIUM: 570 mg.

One taster noticed an "interesting mushroom smell," but that's as positive a comment as tasters could muster. "Watery," "chemical," "dirty," and "like an entire vegetable drawer gone bad" were more-representative observations.

EVEN LESS RECOMMENDED

These products—listed in order of preference—were deemed not good enough to make the final cut: TELMA Reduced Sodium Consomme Stock (cube), CARMEL Kosher Chicken Soup Base (powder), SHELTON'S 100% Organic Chicken Broth Original Recipe (can), HEALTH VALLEY Fat Free Chicken Broth (can and carton), CAMPBELL'S Low Sodium Chicken Broth Soup (can), NATURE'S PROMISE Organic Chicken Broth (carton), SHARIANN'S Organic Chicken Broth (can), HERB OX Very Low Sodium Chicken Granulated Bouillon (powder).