

Butter My Biscuit

Food musings of a southern ex-pat



Greens 'n Pot Likker

Happy New Year-Part 2

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Like many a Southern recipe, the infusion of pork into water so as to create a robust stock, is what flavors the greens so well (and works for field peas too!). The 'assembly' of greens referenced in the recipe covers a wide range of options, but I have to say that I'm partial to mustard and collard greens, but have been warming up to kale prepared by this method as well. But any combination of them will work for the New Year's meal where the greens are supposed to shine as the center piece of the meal.

Incidentally, the murky yellow-green broth that is left after simmering the greens has a not so elegant label ? "pot likker." In plantation times, only the greens were served to the masters, but the kitchen slaves knew the nutritious value of the liquid, hence they drained the pot likker and discreetly exported it out of the kitchen so as to feed their families. If you're gagging at the thought of green pork broth, don't be put off from giving it a try, as many people will serve a cup of it along side their greens, or they will save it for the following day as a soup-based meal unto itself with crumbled cornbread in it. It's an earthy, savory broth with a very rustic appeal.

Recipe provided by <http://www.buttermybiscuit.com>

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"An Assembly of Southern Greens Simmered in Pork Stock"

Adapted from Edna Lewis & Scott Peacock's [The Gift of Southern Cooking](#)

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds cured and smoked pork shoulder, sliced or whole (smoked hocks will do the job)
- 1 gallon water
- 4 pounds mixed greens, such as turnip, mustard, winter kale, watercress, escarole, and chard, carefully washed and stemmed (I actually like to slice mine into ribbons)
- salt & freshly ground pepper to taste

To make the pork stock:

Rinse the pork shoulder, and put it and the water into a large stockpot or Dutch oven. (I like to score the meat to help the rendering process.) Cook, covered, at a full simmer for 2 hours, or until stock develops a strong smoked pork flavor. Strain and discard the pork shoulder, because it will have rendered all of its flavor. Cool the stock completely, then refrigerate until needed. Once stock is well chilled, any fat that is congealed on the surface may be removed and reserved for other uses. Pork stock may be kept refrigerated for up to 1 week, or frozen for 6 months.

To simmer the greens:

Pour the nearly 8 cups of smoked pork stock into a large Dutch oven or heavy saucepan and bring to a boil. Add the prepared greens in batches, waiting until the first batch wilts into the stock before adding more. (This will seem like an enormous amount of greens, but they cook down considerably and quickly.)

Cook, uncovered, over high heat until the greens are just tender, about 15-20 minutes. Take care not to overcook the greens. They should be silky and tender but still vibrant green in color. [Admittedly, I did simmer mine a bit longer, say another 10 minutes or so.] During cooking, season as needed with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Greens are served highly seasoned, so don't be afraid to use the salt.



When they are done, use a slotted spoon or strainer to remove them from the pot, draining off any excess liquid and serve hot. Greens are typically served with hot pepper vinegar on the side. The remaining pot likker may be served at the meal or held for a later time..

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