

Kombucha 101

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01

What is kombucha?

Basically, it's fermented tea!

Properties of kombucha



Alcohol content

Usually less than 0.5%



Sugar

Less than juice. The SCOBY eats most of it before it gets to you.



Live cultures

Kombucha SCOBY includes lactic acid bacteria, which can act as a probiotic.



Why brew your own kombucha?



Save money!



Create your own flavors



It's fun!



02

How to start brewing

Equipment

Large glass jars

Not plastic or ceramic. ½ gallon to 1 gallon size

Jar cover

Something breathable but with holes small enough to keep fruit flies out.

Large stainless steel pot

For brewing tea

Misc equipment

Measuring cups, funnel, bottle brushes

Bottles for carbonation

We'll talk about this later...

Optional

Thermometer strips for your brewing jars, heating pad, pH test strips

Ingredients

Water

If your water tastes good, it will make good kombucha. Avoid heavy chlorination and hard water.

Tea

Black tea - oolong, ceylon, darjeeling, English breakfast, etc.

Green and white tea - you might have to “train” your SCOBY to eat it.

Avoid any flavored teas (no Earl Grey) and herbal tea.

Sugar

Cane sugar is recommended.

Flavorings

We'll talk about this when we get to the 2nd fermentation.



SCOBY

Symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast

The thick cellulose layer is not actually the SCOBY or a “mother” like vinegar. It’s called a **pellicle**.

The SCOBY is actually in the liquid!

You need 2 cups of starter for a 1-gallon batch of kombucha.

Cleanliness
is SUPER
important!



F1

Recipe

14 c. water
8 bags of black tea
1 c. cane sugar
2 c. kombucha starter or unflavored RAW kombucha
(Pellicle optional)

Make sure everything is scrupulously clean!

Boil 4 c. water. Add tea bags and steep for 20 minutes. Remove tea bags. Stir in sugar. Add remaining water and cool to room temperature.

Pour the sweet tea into a clean jar. Add the kombucha starter and the pellicle, if using.

Cover your jar with a woven cloth and rubber band. Place in a warm, dark spot ideally at about 75° F. Ferment for **6-14 days** depending on temperature and strength of your starter.

Your kombucha is ready to drink, or ready to flavor and bottle for carbonation.



03

Flavoring and bottling

What next?

How do you know when it's ready?

Taste

Finished kombucha has a slight vinegar-y smell, a pleasant amount of acidity, and is just a bit sweet.

pH

You don't have to test pH.

If you want to, you're aiming for a finished pH of between 2.5 and 3.5.

Bottles for carbonation



F2: Flavoring and carbonating

1. Clean your bottles and utensils thoroughly.
2. **STIR** your finished F1 kombucha. Reserve **2 cups** of your finished F1 for your next batch.
3. Add flavors and sweeteners to your bottles.
Amounts per **16 oz. bottle**:
 - a. Juice: $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.
 - b. Fruits: 1-2 T. of minced or pureed fruits
 - c. Sweeteners: $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 teaspoon of sugar, honey, etc.
 - d. Herbal teas, spices, herbs, or other flavorings to taste
4. **STIR** your finished F1 again, then pour into your bottles leaving about 1" of headspace.
5. Wipe off the lids and bottle tops and seal.
6. Place in a warm, dark place for 2-4 days.
7. Refrigerate before opening.



F2 recipe ideas for 16 oz bottles

- Pineapple: 2 T. minced fresh fruit
- Lemon ginger: Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ c. lemon juice, 2 t honey, 3 t. minced ginger and add 2T to each jar
- Cherry: 2 minced cherries
- Hibiscus: 1 t. sugar & 1 t. dried hibiscus flowers
- Lime/mint: 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ t. fresh lime juice & 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ t. mint simple syrup
- Blueberry ginger: Simmer 1 c. water, 1 c. blueberries, 2 T. minced ginger, 1 T. sugar until saucy. Divide into 6, 16 oz. bottles.
- Strawberry: 2 T. minced berries



04

Problems

What if something goes wrong?

Problems

Nothing is happening!

Was your tea too hot when you added your starter and pellicle? Have you waited long enough?

My SCOBY looks weird!

This may or may not be a problem. See <https://brewbuch.com/kombucha-mold/> for examples.

Mold

Make sure your equipment is very, very clean. Use enough starter. Keep your kombucha covered, warm and away from possible sources of contamination.

Fountains and Explosions

Use only round bottles designed to hold pressure. Use less sugar and/or a shorter fermentation period in F2.

Mold!



Not mold!





Photo by [Tyler Nix](#) on [Unsplash](#)

05

Drinking kombucha



06

“Advanced” techniques

Take your booch to the next level!



Kombucha 201

- Continuous Brew (CB)
- SCOBY hotel
- Jun - green tea and honey
- Training your SCOBY to new teas and sweeteners
- Flavoring batches in F2 and bottling in F3
- Hard kombucha



Photo by [Klara Avsenik](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Thank You!

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