Brew Your Own Kombucha

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The Basics

• What is Kombucha?
• Why So Much Hype?
• How to Make it?
  • Ingredients
  • Equipment
  • Process
• Dos & Don’ts
What is Kombucha?

- A fermented sweet tea that is fizzy, slightly tangy and delicious
- Juices, herbs, spices are often added to flavor the tea
- A fantastic drink with almost endless possibilities
Health or Hype?

- Tout as some type of miracle cure-all
- Our focus is on the process how to make Kombucha
  - Not its health benefits
Ingredients for Making 1-gal Kombucha

• 1 gallon water
• 4-8 black (and/or green) tea bags or loose-leaf tea (1/4 cup)
• 1 cup cane sugar
• 1 SCOBY (Mother) - a Symbiotic Culture Of Bacteria and Yeast
  • Turn sugar into acid and carbon dioxide with trace amount of alcohol
• 1-2 cups kombucha starter tea (= previously brewed kombucha)
Equipment

• Required
  • Steeping vessel (e.g., a pot)
  • 1-gal glass jar
  • Cotton cloth cover
  • Rubber band
  • Bottles for finished kombucha

• Optional
  • Funnel
  • Thermometer
  • Strainer
The Process: 2-Step Fermentation

1. First Fermentation – make the base tea
   • SCOBY consumes sweet tea
   • To make unflavored, uncarbonated kombucha tea
   • Take ~7-14 days

2. Second Fermentation – flavor the tea
   • Flavor the kombucha in an airtight bottle
   • Take ~1-3 days
Instruction: First Fermentation

1. Heat water, make tea in a pot, steep tea for 10 mins
2. Remove the tea leaves/tea bags, stir in sugar and dissolve completely
3. Allow the sweeten tea to completely cool to room temp.
   • Alternative method to cool faster
4. Once cooled to room temp, add the starter tea & the SCOBY to the jar
First Fermentation (Cont’d)

5. Cover the jar with a cloth and secure it with a rubber band

6. Let it sit at room temp (70°F-85°F) in a shady spot for 1-2 wks.

7. Start sampling around the 5-day mark.
   • The tea will get increasingly tart, the longer the fermentation goes on

10. Bottling when the tartness is about right to you
Second Fermentation

1. Add ¼ cup of pureed/juiced fruit to a 16 oz (airtight) bottle
2. Use a pitcher and a funnel to pour in kombucha to the bottle, leaving 1”-2” headspace
3. Ferment 2-3 days, until it reaches the carbonation level you like
4. Chill in the fridge before serving (optional to strain out filaments)
Flavoring Ideas

• Store bought juices or juice concentrate
• Frozen or fresh berries
• Pureed or cut up fruit
• Fresh or dried herbs
Choice of tea – avoid flavored tea during the first fermentation

Cane sugar is the best
  - Honey, brown sugar, stevia, aspartame, and other sugar substitutes or sweetener – don’t work

Starter tea is NOT the same as white vinegar

OK to drink after 1\textsuperscript{st} fermentation
  - If just want carbonation with no flavoring, add sugar and ferment for 2-3 days

The moldy kombucha, along with the SCOBY, used to brew should be disposed immediately
To Burp or Not to Burp – Fizzy Mess

• Carbonation build up during 2nd fermentation
  • Duration
  • Temperature
  • Sugar content in the flavoring

Avoid the risk of over-carbonation
  • Keep the bottles in the refrigerator, or
  • Burp daily after 1-2 days
Gadgets
Recap the Process

• First fermentation
• Second fermentation
• Tolerate a bit of inconsistency
  • May not be consistent despite following the same steps
Happy Experimenting

It is a journey… go with the flow!