

Making Kombucha



Sacramento County
Master Food Preservers
UCCE-ANR

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Understanding and Making Kombucha Safely at Home

Q: What is Kombucha?

A: A sparkly, tangy beverage made by fermenting sweet tea with a unique starter culture called a SCOBY (Symbiotic colony of bacteria and Yeast)

Q: How is kombucha made?

A: Obtain a SCOBY and starter liquid from a friend or purchase. Add to sweetened and cooled black or green tea (*Camellia sinensis*), not herbal. Allow to ferment about a week to a month.

Q: Is it safe?

A: Yes! If the brewer maintains safe and hygienic practices. As a raw, probiotic beverage, start small no more than 4 oz per day. Use care if giving to children or pregnant people as alcohol may exceed 0.5 % v/v ethanol.

Q: What equipment do I need?

A: 1. A tea kettle or pot for heating water. 2. Glass, stainless steel, or food grade plastic brew vessel. 3. Tea towel or coffee filter to cover the brew vessel and rubber band to secure. 4. Bottles or jars and funnel

Q: What ingredients do I need?

A: For 1 gallon we need 8 teabags of plain green or black tea or ¼ cup loose tea in a diffuser, 1 gallon of filtered water, 1 cup white sugar, Kombucha starter liquid, and a SCOBY for each brewing vessel.

We will cover these

- Preparing the tea
- The SCOBY and Primary Bulk Fermentation
- Bottling and Secondary Fermentation

How to make Kombucha

Preparing the Tea

- Heat the water to boiling and carefully transfer to the brewing vessel(s). Add tea bags and steep about 10 minutes.
- After 10 minutes, remove tea bags and add the sugar. Stir to dissolve.
- Allow the sweet tea to cool to room temperature. If the tea is too hot when you add the SCOBY, it will kill the microorganisms.

The SCOBY and Bulk Fermentation



Wash hands and transfer the SCOBY and starter liquid to the cooled tea.



Cover with clean cloth or coffee filter and secure cover with rubber band. Record start date.



Ferment for at least a week, depending on the room temperature. After a week, check the flavor.

First Skill

Second Skill

Third Skill

Conclusion

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Bottling and secondary fermentation

- When you like the flavor – it will get tangier and less sweet – decant into sanitized jars that can withstand pressure and hold an airtight seal. Save about a pint of starter liquid and the SCOBY for your next batch.
- Add 10 – 20 % v/v juice or fruit. Or add herbs and/or spices to taste.
- Cap tightly and leave at room temperature 1 – 3 days depending on room temperature and then transfer to refrigerator.

Summary

Here is what we learned

- **Preparing the tea:**
Use “regular” caffeinated green or black Tea (not a herbal or tisane) to maintain a healthy SCOBY. Use real table sugar (sucrose) for a predictable and safe fermentation. Save honey or fructose sweeteners for secondary ferment.
- **The SCOBY and primary bulk fermentation:**
Keep it clean! Avoid introducing contaminant that may spoil the ferment (and ruin the SCOBY) or introduce “off” flavors. Don’t forget to record the start date!
- **Bottling and secondary fermentation:**
Now is the time to be creative and introduce other flavors!