

# MAKING KOMBUCHA

## Ingredients + Utensils

- 1 gallon glass container
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 Qt. water (filtered, free from contaminants)
- Kombucha culture SCOBY + starter
- 10-12 grams of loose leaf tea or 3-4 tea bags
- Cloth (breathable but keeps debris out)  
+ rubber band
- Funnel, strainer, and ladle

## Bottling Options

Grolsch-style flip top bottles (recommended)  
Siphon system (available at home-brew supply stores)

## Fermenting Time

- 7-30 days
- Shorter ferment will be mild and more sweet
- Longer ferment will be more tart, less sugar
- Find out what you & your palette likes better!
- Adjusting sugar levels will impact fermentation time

## Temperature

- 68-85° F (if temp too low, mold can grow; if temp too high - will kill the scoby)
- Ideal temperatures are between 74-84°F
- Keep out of direct sunlight. Sunlight will kill probiotics.

## Storing Ideas

- Top of refrigerator, cupboard, top of gas stove (remove before using stove)
- Supply stores have glass warmers for sale

# FLAVORING IDEAS

**TEA-BASED** You will be amazed with the flavors from the tea varieties themselves. We love experimenting with high-quality, loose leaf teas!

**SANGRIA STYLE INFUSIONS** Easy and fun to make! Chop up your favorite, complementary ingredients and let them infuse overnight in a separate, glass container. Scoop it out and bottle and see how much flavor is left!

**JUICE** We recommend cold-pressed and organic. It's the perfect pair for any kombucha!

**SPICES + HERBS** Try using the same food pairing method you would use with cooking! Add some spice to the sweet; put something earthy with the tart, etc.

## TIPS

We are firm believers that your SCOBY should always only touch tea-based kombucha. Do not add juice or fruit to your primary ferment! **Flavoring should happen during the secondary ferment only.**

Some purists even go as far to not mix the different tea varieties with the same scoby. Ex: keeping SCOBYs that used green tea in the primary from SCOBYs that used black tea separate.

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# PRIMARY FERMENT

1. Heat the water to about 175° F
2. Steep the tea for as long as desired. Longer steeping times yield higher caffeine and higher tannin content, which result in increased astringency (usually 10-30 min). If using loose leaf tea, strain the tea with a fine mesh strainer.
3. Add the sugar and stir until dissolved. You can switch steps 2 and 3. The order is not as important.
4. **VERY IMPORTANT!** Let the tea/sugar solution cool down to room temperature (or put it in the refrigerator to cool down to 70-80°F). Failure to do so will destroy the SCOBY (the culture begins to die if heated about 105°F)
5. Once cooled down to room temperature, add the mixture to the kombucha starter in the container.
6. Cover the container with a breathable cloth and place in a warm (**around 74-84° F**), well-ventilated area, and away from direct sunlight.
7. You will notice the new culture will form on top of the liquid. First it will look like slime on top, then it becomes a thin layer. Around day 4, it will become a thicker white layer of kombucha culture.
8. **Your kombucha will be ready for consumption in about 10-18 days.** Your first couple of batches will usually take longer, but once established, your culture will yield new batches in 8-14 days. The longer you let it go, the less sweet and more sour its character will be.

# SECONDARY FERMENT

The next step is the secondary ferment, which is where you bottle your kombucha and leave it at room temperature to ferment further. This allows it to carbonate because the oxygen supply is being cut off and carbon dioxide (CO2) will be building up inside the vessel. There are different ways to bottle but a funnel, ladle, mesh strainer, and some flip-top bottles are a great place to start. As you advance, adding a siphon system can save you a lot of time filling the bottles!

**This stage typically lasts 3-7 days.** The longer the secondary ferment, the more carbonated and less sweet your kombucha will be. We recommend daily testing and note-keeping so you can gauge carbonation levels. Longer secondary ferment will aid in more bubbles but be careful! "Bottle bombs" (glass exploding/shattering due to increased CO2 levels) can be common among home brewers and they are really scary and dangerous! Burping bottles (releasing some of the CO2) will help take some of the pressure off the bottles.

## FOR MORE CARBONATION

- Add fruit or more sugar to the bottles
- Fill the bottles, almost to the top. Less oxygen in the bottle will create more CO2!
- Airtight caps work better than twist-off
- Longer secondary ferment

## REMEMBER...

Each batch will be slightly different and carbonation is just a byproduct and takes away none of the goodness! Once you get the desired time, taste, and bubbles, pop in the fridge for cold storage.

# ALL ABOUT TEA

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FLAVOR
White	Not rolled or oxidized tea leaves	Delicate
Yellow	Similar to green, steamed under damp cloth after oxidation	Mellow
Green	Unwilted and unoxidized tea leaves	Bright
Oolong	Unwilted, bruised, partially oxidized	Silky
Black	Wilted and fully oxidized leaves	Bold
Puerh	Variety of fermented/compressed tea	Malty

## UNIQUE FLAVORS

Rooibos	Red bush from South Africa	Vanilla
Yerba Mate	South American plant (from Holly family)	Smokey
Coffee	Roasted beans	Robust

## WHAT'S NORMAL

New SCOBY will always grow on top. They look weird, grow sideways, and are not always pretty. Small white patches form on top.

## FRUIT FLIES + MOLD?

**Keep fruit flies from getting inside.** Always keep kombucha shrouded in a breathable cover!

**TIP:** keep a glass with a small amount of kombucha nearby, cover with plastic wrap, poke a few holes — trap those suckers!

**Mold is rare but sometimes happens.** Mold is always **fuzzy and circular**. Give it some time and monitor the growth. It will become obvious if it's mold. If that happens, **DISCARD immediately** and sanitize your equipment!