

Making Your Own Kombucha

There are three or four phases to the kombucha process.

Phase 1 – Steep



Phase 2 – Fermentation



Phase 3 – Bottle



**Phase 4 (optional)
Add Flavors & Add'l Fermentation**



OK. I guess there are five phases. Phase 5 is enjoying your delicious kombucha!

Phase 1 – Steep

(this is for 1 gallon)

Note: In order to start, you need a scoby (symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast). You can obtain a scoby and starter liquid from someone else that makes kombucha or you can grow your own scoby (I have not done this). Once you have your scoby and starter liquid (as well as a fermentation jar), you are ready to make your first batch of tea.



Ingredients

- 12 cups water
- 1 cup organic cane sugar
- 6 tea bags – black, green, or a combination

Note: I make two batches every week

- Batch 1 – I use 4 green and 2 black tea bags
- Batch 2 – I use 2 green and 4 chai tea bags

Instructions

1. Bring 12 cups of water to a boil on stovetop; Turn off heat (*see note below*)
2. Slowly stir in 1 cup organic cane sugar (when you first dump in a little bit of sugar the water will “super bubble” so just put in a tiny amount and then you can slowly pour it in while stirring)
3. Once all sugar is added, add tea bags
4. Move pot off the warm burner and cover
5. Steep for 11-14 minutes
6. Remove tea bags squeezing with two spoons
7. Let tea sit several hours to come to room temperature

Note: To save cool-down time, you can follow these same instructions; however, just heat a portion of the water and then add cold water after you remove the tea bags to get to 12 cups. (6 & 6 or 4 & 8 which is what I have been doing)

Notes _____

Phase 2 – Fermentation



Note: Make sure your hands are clean whenever you handle your scoby.

Consider: Name your scoby – Mine is “Sheldon”

Consider: Draw pictures or write words on your fermentation jar

You decide how long to ferment your kombucha. It all depends on the taste you want to achieve.

- A shorter ferment gives a sweeter taste because not as much of the sugar has been eaten/processed by the scoby.
- A longer ferment time will result in a more tart, vinegar-like taste.

Until you determine your optimum fermentation time, use a straw to taste your kombucha starting at day six.

Instructions

1. After bottling is complete (see *Phase 3 – Bottle*) and you have your starter liquid left in your fermentation jar, pour your new tea into your fermentation jar
2. Add your scoby back into the jar, cover with a towel, and put it back in its home until your next bottling day

Option: I keep a kombucha calendar so I know exactly when I am supposed to make my next batch. I can easily move days when necessary.

Note: When you need to shift your bottling day, use less or more sugar in your tea to accommodate the increase or decrease to your fermentation days. For instance, if I need to move my bottling day out 3 days longer, I will add extra sugar to my tea. I do not ferment less than one week.

Note: If you prefer to bottle on the same day every week, you can adjust the amount of sugar. For instance, I bottle every week so I use less sugar than when I was bottling every 10-11 days.

Notes

Phase 3 – Bottle



Instructions

1. Once your tea is room temperature, you are ready to bottle your kombucha
2. Remove the scoby from your kombucha (make sure your hands are clean) and add some liquid to the scoby (use a plate or upside-down lid)
3. Scoop or ladle your kombucha pouring into your bottles using a funnel and leaving a little extra space at the top of your jar (don't fill it to the rim)
 - Bottle without any added flavors and put in the fridge right away
 - Bottle with flavors (see *Phase 4 – Add Flavors & Add'l Fermentation*)
4. Leave 1-2" of fermented tea in your fermentation jar
5. Go to *Phase 2 – Fermentation*

Notes

Phase 4 (optional) – Add Flavors & Add'l Fermentation

I have tried numerous flavors in my kombucha. You can use juice, fruit puree, fruit, powdered spices...your options are as endless as your creativity.

These are some of our favorites:

- Pumpkin Spice
 - 1 t pumpkin spice
 - 1 T maple syrup
- Apple Spice
 - ½ cinnamon stick cinnamon
 - 2-3 whole cloves
 - Diced apple or apple juice
- Ginger Anything
 - Cover bottom of bottle w/ginger juice
 - Other fruit juice – lemon, orange, grapefruit, pomegranate
- Citrus & Fruit
 - Citrus juice – lemon, orange, grapefruit
 - 2-3 frozen raspberries, cherries, blackberries



Instructions

1. Add flavors to your bottles prior to bottling
2. Follow the *Phase 3 – Bottle* instructions
3. Set aside for several days so add'l fermentation and carbonation takes place
Note: You may choose to open the lids daily to avoid explosions (I have read about this and have not experienced it)
4. After 5-7 days, put your bottles in the refrigerator

Option: If you enjoy the chia kombucha drinks, add chia seeds before you drink a bottle

Option: You can also bottle without adding flavors skipping the add'l fermentation. Just add flavors when you drink your kombucha or add flavors now and put into the refrigerator right away.

Notes

Extra Scobies

Your scoby may be ready to "split" this time or you may wait until the next time. The big question is "What do I do with my extra scobies?"

The best option is to give away your extra scobies to friends along with some starter tea so they can make their own kombucha.

Another option is to start a scoby hotel. One good reason to keep at least a couple extra scobies on hand is in the unfortunate event that something happens to your scoby. Go to your hotel and you are back in business. (If you know someone you can get a scoby from, you may choose not to mess with the hotel)

Should you choose to have a scoby hotel, you will need a container for storage. I bought a gallon jar. Each time I steep and bottle, I add some of my fermented kombucha to the hotel.



Other ideas for using your extra scobies:

- Add to compost
- Add to smoothies
- Puree with water and use to water plants
- Dehydrate and use as dog treats
- Search the internet as I saw recipes for candy and other food items made from scoby

Useful Websites

Here are some websites I found useful.

Kombucha Kamp – This website is very useful in general and especially should you decide to go to the continuous brew method

<https://www.kombuchakamp.com/>

Becoming Peculiar

<http://becomingpeculiar.com/brewing-your-first-batch-of-kombucha-with-a-homegrown-scoby/>