

DRINKS

Kombucha - first fermentation

Sweetened black and green tea fermented into kombucha, following Alice Johnston's recipe for Good Food.

Recipe author: Alice Johnston · Good Food



TIME

20 minutes prep + steeping and cooling time + 1-2 weeks fermenting

MAKES

2 litres

Method: Fermenting sweetened tea with a breathable cover

Season and ingredients: Year-round

Storage: Keep the finished drink refrigerated for up to 3 months.

Ingredients

- ☐ 1.8 litres freshly boiled water
- ☐ 2 organic green tea bags or 2 tsp loose-leaf green tea
- ☐ 2 organic black tea bags or 2 tsp loose-leaf black tea
- ☐ 100-200 g granulated sugar, to taste
- ☐ 1 medium SCOBY
- ☐ 100-200 ml kombucha starter liquid

Measure the water and starter liquid with a measuring jug. Weigh the sugar.

Equipment

- ☐ Saucepan, 2.5-3 litre glass jar, thin tea towel or muslin, rubber band and bottles

Instructions

1. Brew the tea

Pour the freshly boiled water into a saucepan. Add the tea and sugar, stir to dissolve the sugar and steep for 6-10 minutes.

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Sources and history on the Fermentarnia website
fermentarnia.com



Kombucha - first fermentation / continued

2. **Cool and add the starter**

Remove the tea bags without squeezing, or strain out loose-leaf tea. Let the tea cool completely, then pour into a 2.5-3-litre glass jar. Add the SCOBY and starter liquid, leaving at least 5 cm of space at the top.

3. **Cover the jar**

Cover with a thin tea towel or muslin and secure with a rubber band. Label the jar with the date and contents.

4. **Leave to ferment**

Leave for 1-2 weeks at room temperature, away from radiators, the oven and direct sunlight. Air needs to circulate, so do not keep the jar in a closed cupboard.

5. **Check the flavour**

After the first week, check the pH first, following the BCCDC note below. Taste only when it is within 2.5-4.2. You can then check the flavour daily; longer fermentation makes the drink more acidic. If the pH is still above 4.2 after 7 days, discard the batch.

6. **Reserve starter and chill**

When the flavour is to your liking, pour into bottles. Keep the SCOBY and 100-200 ml kombucha to start the next batch. Refrigerate the finished drink; this recipe stops after the first fermentation.

Tips

Starter liquid acidifies the tea. Good Food advises discarding both the liquid and SCOBY if mould develops.

Additional BCCDC guidance: use a calibrated pH meter before tasting. Finished kombucha should have a pH of 2.5-4.2. If the pH is still above 4.2 after 7 days, discard the batch and restart with a fresh commercially supplied culture.

Contains caffeine and may contain alcohol. A home brew cannot be assumed to be alcohol-free.

How to serve

Serve chilled. This recipe does not include a second fermentation for carbonation.

Under the microscope

From sugar to organic acids

Yeasts turn some of the tea's sugar into ethanol and carbon dioxide; bacteria then turn some of the ethanol into acetic acid. Bacteria also make the cellulose in the surface layer. Microorganisms live in the starter liquid too, so the visible SCOBY alone does not replace it.

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