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Brewing kombucha tea, or Manchurian tea, is an easy process which only requires a minimal amount of time, some common kitchen utensils, and some basic knowledge about cultures and good hygiene. If you look after your mushroom culture and care for it properly it should last you a lifetime!

Brewing the kombucha tea is a simple process of boiling water and sugar solution, adding and steeping the green or black tea. Then allowing this mixture to cool to room temperature before adding the kombucha cultures. Once you have tried it a few times it will be a very easy process to remember. So Let's Get Started Brewing Your First Batch Of Kombucha Tea!



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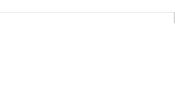
How To Brew Kombucha. (/id/How-To-Brew-Kombucha/) by permawhat

What you'll need to get started brewing kombucha tea...

There will be a few items that you will need to gather before starting:

- A fresh kombucha culture starter, **organic if possible.** You can search the web for a starter or go here for a good organic source http://store.organic-kombucha.com (http://store.organic-kombucha.com) or our new site http://store.organic-cultures.com (http://store.organic-cultures.com)
- A large vessel to heat the water/sugar solution. This can be metal for this step.
- Filtered water (the best choice) or well water, never city water
- Cane sugar or other natural sugar, we suggest organic cane sugar
- Tea (Camellia Sinensis) This may be green, white, or black tea, or a mixture thereof, we again suggest organic tea. Fruit tea and herbal tea will not work as they do not provide the proper nutrients for the growing cultures and may slow the new culture from reproducing. However, feel free to add these to your finished product for added health benefits.
- A glass container for fermenting the tea solution (an old gallon pickle jar works great!) Here some people use plastic, if you do, make sure it is food grade plastic with a #2 symbol on the bottom. We always use glass container for safety reasons. Never use lead crystal, ceramic, or metal containers to ferment kombucha cultures.
- Clean cheese cloth (you can double this up if it seems to thin) or clean T-shirt, cut to size. You'll need this to keep out bugs.









Step 2: The Brewing Process



The actual process of brewing kombucha tea is really very simple. In this example, we will be brewing a 1 gallon batch of tea. You start the brewing process by bringing to boil 1 gal of filtered or distilled water. Just as with any equipment you use, you'll want your water to be clean, too. Never use city water as it contains chlorine and other additives from the treatment plant which could kill some of the cultures in the kombucha.

Step 3: Adding the Sugar...



Once the water comes to a boil add 1 1/4 to 11/2 cups of sweetener. Caution: When brewing kombucha tea, make sure to add the sugar slowly as the hot water will want to boil over if the cold sugar is added to fast! Simmer

the sweetened solution for another 10 min or until the sugar is completely dissolved.

We recommend using organic cane sugar for the best results. Other natural sugars may be used, however result may vary and could change the structure of the cultures within the kombucha.

We suggest using a back up/extra mushroom culture if experimenting with other sugars or sweeteners. Maple syrup or agave should never be used.

Step 4: Adding the Tea...



After the sweetener has dissolved, turn off heat, and add 6 tea bags or 6 teaspoons of loose tea in a tea ball, cover, and steep for ten minutes. Green or black tea are most commonly used or you may use a combination of both. Feel free to try other non-flavored teas except herbal teas. Herbal teas may contain oils that the kombucha cultures do not like. If you wish to add the benefits of herbal teas you may brew them separate and add them after the fermentation process is complete and you have drawn the tea for consumption.

This may seem like a long time to steep the tea but you'll want to pull out all the constitutes from the tea. These constitutes will be part of the nutrients that the culture will grow from and provide benefits, such as anti-oxidants, when you drink the tea.

After 10 minutes remove the tea bags or tea ball.

Step 5: Adding the Kombucha Culture...





Now you'll have to allow the brewed tea solution to cool to room temperature before adding the kombucha cultures. If thetemperature is to high, the cultures can be killed! Once the tea solution is cooled we are ready for the culturing process!

Now that the sweetened tea solution has sufficiently cooled to room temperature, you are ready to inoculate it with the kombucha cultures. This step is very easy and will only take a few minutes to perform.

With each new batch you will want to save your best SCOBY or "mushroom" along with 5-10% of the old tea as a starter or inculum. For a gallon size batch use about a cup or two of starter tea. You may also check the pH at this time to insure that enough starter tea has been used. The pH for the start of the brewing cycle needs to be below 4.5 pH. This will insure that you culturegrows quickly and will be able to compete with any foreign cultures or molds that maybe present. This lower pH also abates the growth of foreign bacteria that could be dangerous for human consumption.

Add both the starter tea and mother culture/SCOBY to the sweetened tea solution. If you did not save any left over tea or received just a SCOBY from say of riend, you may use 1/40 1/2 cup of white organization of the grapher (against abalance/)

replace/substitute starter for your first batch (/id/Kombucha-Brewing-Instructions/) 6 Steps

You have now inoculated the tea solution with the tea cultures! + Collection

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Step 6: Culturing the Tea Beverage...



The last step is to allow the inoculated tea solution to set in a warm place, out of direct light and undistributed. It will take 2 to 3 days to see the start of the formation of the new kombucha

culture. Which appears as a translucent jelly-type layer forming on the surface

of the tea solution.

At 5 to 14 days the fermentation process is complete. This time will very depending on the environment & temperature, the mushroom culture likes the temperature to be between 75 and 85

degrees F. Having the incorrect temperature, especially in winter time, seems to be where most people go wrong.

After the 5 to 10 days, you'll want to start checking if the tea is ready to drink. You may buy pH strips for testing acid content, however, this is not necessary. The easiest way to tell if your tea is ready is by smell and taste. You may use a straw to pull a small sample from the side of the jar, trying not to disturb the new culture growing on top of the tea solution.

After brewing a few batches of kombucha tea you'll know when your tea is finished and ready to drink! If using pH test strips, the pH reading should be between 2.5 - 3.2. This range tells us that the organic acids, pro-biotics, and nutritional benefits have been fully produced and that the culturing process is complete.

The finished tea should have a slight vinegar smell, not to strong, and have carbonation. If your tea still smells sweet and/or is flat, then most likely it needs to set a few more days. After 5 to 10 days, the taste should be fizzy, semisweet, and similar to apple cider in appearance. Allowing it to brew longer (8-14 days) produces a sharper vinegar taste and contains a higher amount of beneficial medicinal properties.

Now that the brewing cycle is complete, you can simply bottle any extra tea into clean glass containers or jugs.

To start a new batch, just follow the above instructions remembering to save some starter tea for the next batch. If you have more questions you may go to this website for photos, FAQ, and a lot of information on kombucha - http://www.organic-kombucha.com (http://www.organic-kombucha.com)

Happy Culturing!

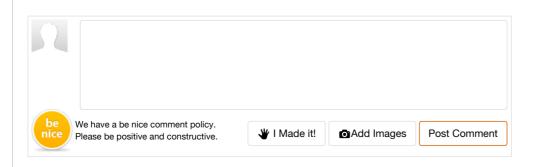
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chloecatkins (/member/chloecatkins)

5 months ago

Reply

For my first experiment with making kombucha I used two layers of cheesecloth and many many gnats got through and spoiled it. Just sayin'...use fabric from an old t-shirt.





anahatabalance (/member/anahatabalance) (author)

2 years ago

Reply

Hi all, Glad everyone like the instructable!!

We have a new web site that is all about food culturing and access to the cultures like kefir grains, kombucha, tempeh, koji, and more.

You can use this coupon code for a discount on your first order 'new_customer_10'

Happy Culturing, Nirinjan Singh



brucedenney (/member/brucedenney)

4 years ago

Reply

If you want to get a kombucha baby, try the international kombucha exchange..

http://www.kombu.de/gebe-eng.htm



mcaliber.50 (/member/mcaliber.50)

4 vears ago

Reply

what is kombucha? i have no clue, i see it all the time on here, but i nevfer really can tell what it is.



Quinns (/member/Quinns)

8 years ago

Reply

Nice instructable, what I would like to know is how the culture is started in the first place, the only recipes i have read call for a SCOBY from one of your kombucha brewing buddies, I don't actually have any kombucha brewing buddies, and I am aware that many people will send one to you for the cost of shipping. But how do you make one from scratch? or have we been using cultures grown off other cultures since the beginning? Cheers, good work





anahatabalance (/member/anahatabalance) (author)
Quinns (/member/Quinns)

You must get a starter from someone. How did it start..mana from god?

8 vears ago

Reply



Robyntheslug (/member/Robyntheslug) > anahatabalance

(/member/anahatabalance)

5 years ago

The same way the first kombucha culture started, captured from the wild. There are tons of wild yeasts and bacteria, and the right nutrient combined with a little luck can indeed net you an accidental SCOBY. Still, I'd recommend getting a mother or creating one from raw kombucha.



Tracysnbb (/member/Tracysnbb) ▶ Quinns (/member/Quinns) 6 years ago

You can make your 1st starter with 2-4 Tablespoons of Organic distilled white vinegar and pouring it in when a starter or Scoby is called for. I learned this from the prev. web site I just visited to learn about making my own Kombucha Beverages.

I've looked at plenty, and booked marked them, but when I try to get back to this page, I have to go thru too many steps.



technosapien (/member/technosapien) • Quinns (/member/Quinns)

Reply

6 years ago

I've read where you can go to a health-food store or international market and buy unpasteruized kombucha, it should have some of the culture in it, enough to make a new mother if you want. Check: http://www.instructables.com/id/Making_your_own_Kombucha_(http://www.instructables.com/id/Making_your_own_Kombucha_



TahoeGal (/member/TahoeGal)

5 years ago

Reply

Why do you say maple syrup or agave never be used? I am curious if you have experienced something or have more knowledge about it than what I have learned. It is my understanding that as long as there is sucrose available it will feed the culture. A (well educated-IMO) TCM doc and scoby supplier says you can also use raw (not treated) honey. Each kind of sweetner adds it's own flavor element and will change the percentages of various elements, but will still produce a viable scoby. He also mentions combining various types if you are using something other than regular sugar for best results as the yeast portion and the bacteria portion reproduce differently and are affected by the sugar(s) used. These sugars also affect the Acetic and Gluconic acid percentages as well as the taste. For a lot of really great info and research facts take a look at this guys page! http://www.happyherbalist.com/sugar.htm (http://www.happyherbalist.com/sugar.htm) I just wanted more info from you if you had any on using other sugars. PS Thank you for the pictures and the brewing info btw!



xrobevansx (/member/xrobevansx)

8 years ago

Reply

can you equate the taste to some other flavors someone may be able to grasp? Is it like a regular tea? I assume it is alcoholic since you are basically fermenting sugars, right? I am just wondering how it tastes.



Tracysnbb (/member/Tracysnbb) ▶ xrobevansx (/member/xrobevansx)

Reply

6 years ago

I have bought Synergys' Drinks w Kombucha in it and really liked it (a lot!)b,but it's pretty expensive to purchase on a regular or semi-regular basis. \$ 3.99 on sale at Rainbow acres in CA.

sale at Rainbow acres

This is why I'm now trying to make it. If you want to try it w/o a lot of expense, I recommend trying one of the brands of these drinks you can purchase at a Health Food Store 1st, to try to get an idea of what it will tast like. only if your just drinking it staight, I would imagine it will be much stronger.



anahatabalance (/member/anahatabalance) (author) ▶ xrobevansx

(/member/xrobevansx)

6 years ago

Reply

Hard apple cider taste without the alcohol



sonaps (/member/sonaps) ▶ xrobevansx (/member/xrobevansx)

Reply

Depending on the type of tea, ratio of the batch to mother size, ⁷ years ago and the time you allow it to firment it can have anything from a taste like Hard Cider to something like condensed Lime juice in my experiences. Also, adding in extra amounts of sugars at varying times (not advised) can make it much sweeter, like a soft-drink.



SWV1787 (/member/SWV1787) > xrobevansx (/member/xrobevansx)

Reply

8 years ago

to put IvanJM's answer more simply it does not have much alcohol if any in it since air is allowed to enter the ferment continually and the flavor is reminiscent of hard cider if you bottle and chill it overnight before drinking.



IvanJM (/member/IvanJM) ► xrobevansx (/member/xrobevansx)

Reply

Just to get it out of the way, no it is not alcoholic. Here's a mini ⁸ years ago lesson in brewing. When you ferment grape juice with yeast you get wine (yeast = alcohol). If your not properly cleaning the equipment you may accidentally allow a bacteria to enter your wine and you will then have vinegar (bacteria = acid). The bacteria actually metabolize the alcohol. From the yeast you get some very useful vitamins, and from the bacteria a number of different acids that your body can use, but that we don't normally find in measurable amounts in our food.

Different cultures have fermented lots of different stuff. Every once in a while some one got sloppy and contaminated his alcohol ferments. If the result was still palatable they kept doing it.

If you leave it sit for too long (like a month or more) the yeast will eat all sugar and convert it to alcohol, and the bacteria will convert the alcohol to vinegar. The result will be very similar to Apple Cider vinegar. Most brewers do not want their drink that strong, and mostly ferment for 7-14 days. This results in a drink somewhat like Apple Cider but with a tart edge to it (like drinking Cider with a vitamin C in your mouth). If you have ever made wine, or tasted a very young wine you will have noticed that the taste of it isn't as well rounded as a bottle that is a year or more old. This is because the tannins are still very much intact. Some brewers will bottle their Kombucha (sealed to slow down the yeast and bacteria growth) and let it sit for a number of days. The result is much more well rounded in flavour.

Other kinds of real tea can be used besides common black teas. The resulting Kombucha will have the qualities of the tea you start with. Black Tea Kombucha is somewhat astringent, but with a bolder flavour. Oolong Kombucha is less astringent and retains the sweet ginseng-like aftertaste. Green Kombucha has a more grassy, flowery flavour. Some describe the differences between black and green as being like comparing wine to beer.



ladylissa (/member/ladylissa)

Where did you buy that culture?

6 years ago

Reply



Ward_Nox (/member/Ward_Nox)

voted the #7 grossest drink on cracked.com http://www.cracked.com/article_17174_p2.html (http://www.cracked.com/article_17174_p2.html) 7 years ago Reply



mcadwell (/member/mcadwell)

7 years ago Reply

I got my scoby on freecycling.org (Thank you Robin!) so have been brewing kombucha since February. Yum! I found out that, in the winter time, my attic stairs are the perfect place to brew this stuff - it doesn't get bothered and it's cool and dark. Now if only I could find another gallon glass jar so I could make more at one time.



shes_a_rainbow (/member/shes_a_rainbow)

7 years ago Reply

I have some tea that is a mixture of black and yerba matewould that work as well?



7 years ago

yes, just no oily/flavored teas or herbs like peppermint,



taraist (/member/taraist) > shes a rainbow (/member/shes a rainbow)

Reply

Awesome idea! Thanks!

7 years ago





anahatabalance (/member/anahatabalance) (author) > shes_a_rainbow

(/member/shes_a_rainbow)

7 years ago

Reply

That works great, the mate gives a nice smoky finish to the finished brew!



ALWAYS. (/member/ALWAYS.)

7 years ago

Reply

Has anyone made it with juice like GT's? I would really like to know, because although they are having a special on kombucha 2 for 5, I'd much rather make my own.



AoiKaze (/member/AoiKaze) ALWAYS. (/member/ALWAYS.) 7 years ago

I used some plain origunal gt's kombucha and put it in a jar with a cloth cover. Within a few days it formed a skin then made a kinda mini culture. (I've been observing it mostly though I've read you can use the culture to make kombucha. I FINALY found a sourse to get a real scoby from and have been using that.





anahatabalance (/member/anahatabalance) (author) > ALWAYS.

(/member/ALWAYS.)

7 years ago

you can infuse juice into the kombucha tea, however, do this after you have pulled off the amount you wish to drink. This way you will not contaminate the cultures. Keeping them pure(by feeding them sugar and tea) and preventing adding something the kombucha may not like to grow in. Happy Culturing!!!!!!!!!!



harleyxx (/member/harleyxx)

7 years ago

Reply

I'm on my 6th batch of Kombucha, and love this stuff. The health food stores sell it for about \$4.00 a bottle, so I have bottled mine up and have several weeks supply. I didn't like the green tea, it seemed to lack flavor so i switched to black tea. It's much better in my opinion. I drink a couple bottles of my own brew everyday for lunch instead of going to McDonalds and have lost about 15 lbs. For my last batch I substituted Orange Blossom honey for the sugar and it is by far the best tasting batch so far. I had to throw out my old mothers since none of my friends were willing to try it. Here are a few pics of my brew:



(http://cdn.instructables.com/FNZ/KP1L/FHWNBVD1/FNZKP1LFHWNBVD1.LARGE.jpg)





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discontinuuity (/member/discontinuuity)

8 years ago

Reply

So I have most of the materials ready to make my own kombucha, but I have a couple questions. First, is it possible to use beer bottles to bottle this stuff? I drink more beer than I do anything that comes in PET bottles. How long would I let it pressurize before putting it into the fridge? Second, can I use other sweeteners such as honey? Third, what would happen if I add baker's or brewer's yeast to the kombucha culture? Would one kill off the other? Would it make more alcohol?





anahatabalance (/member/anahatabalance) (author) ▶ discontinuuity

(/member/discontinuuity)

8 years ago

Reply

Hola, You can use beer bottles, just sanitizing them first. You'll need to get new caps and sanitizer from a beer brewing store. I let the KT set maybe 3 or 4 days out at room temp then into the frig... You can add a raisin or slice of ginger at this time to produce more fizz! You can use honey, just do it with your extra cultures(you have many after a few rounds). As the long term affects are unknown. I suggest not adding other yeast to the KT as this may change things and throw it out of balance. KT does not produce large amounts of alcohol(.5%), due to its process & brewing methods...sorry. Hope this helps, Nirinjan, Anahata Balance



clarextina (/member/clarextina) ▶ anahatabalance (/member/anahatabalance)

i've heard that the bottled kombucha is very likely to ⁷ years ago explode. maybe more so than home brew beer. sounds kinda dangerous. i'm staying away from glass, personally.

Reply

Reply



discontinuuity (/member/discontinuuity) ▶ anahatabalance

(/member/anahatabalance)

8 years ago

ears ago Rep

Apparently, you can do a second fermentation in anaerobic conditions to make more alcohol: http://www.happyherbalist.com/second%20stage%20t(http://www.happyherbalist.com/second%20stage%20t



harleyxx (/member/harleyxx)

8 years ago

I finally got two mothers from Kombucha.com since no one was willing to share theirs. I started two batches, one with green tea, the other with black tea. After three days, the mother in the green tea sank to the bottom and it looks like the beginnings of a new mother are forming on the top..I hope its not mold. The motherin the black tea is still floating on the top. I have several empty kombucha bottles I am going to use when it is ready to bottle.



anahatabalance (/member/anahatabalance) (author) > harleyxx

(/member/harleyxx)

8 years ago

Reply

sometimes the culture will sink or float, it does not matter as the new culture will always grow on top. Having the culture on top does help in protecting the fresh tea/sugar solution from mold and such. Make sure to use some old starter tea from the last batch to drop the pH into a safe range.



harleyxx (/member/harleyxx)

8 years ago

Reply

Anyone in the Daytona Beach area willing to donate a mother for my first batch?



GorillazMiko (/member/GorillazMiko)

8 years ago

Reply

Nice Instructable. It has good detail, and the pictures are nice too! Nice Instructable once again!

anahatabalance (/member/anahatabalance) (author) > GorillazMiko

(/member/GorillazMiko)

8 years ago

Reply

thanks, if you would like more info on kombucha we have a site www.organic-kombucha.com with much more details, research, photos, FAQ

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