

How to Make Kombucha



OVERVIEW

Making homemade kombucha has three main steps:

1. Make SCOBY (1 to 4 weeks) – make the “mother”
2. First Fermentation (6 to 10 days) – make the actual kombucha tea
3. Second Fermentation (3 to 10 days) – carbonate the kombucha tea

1. HOW TO MAKE A KOMBUCHA SCOBY

Ingredients to Make a SCOBY

- 7 cups (1.6 L) water (tap water should be fine)
- ½ cup (100 g) white sugar (sugars you can use in kombucha)
- 4 bags black tea (teas you can use in kombucha)
- 1 cup (240 mL) unpasteurized, unflavored store bought kombucha

Supplies to Make a SCOBY

- A large glass or ceramic container (should hold at least 1 gallon, 3.7 L)
- Tightly woven cloth (coffee filters, paper towels, cheese cloth)
- Rubberbands
- Large pot for boiling water

How to Make a SCOBY

1. Make Tea: Bring water to a boil. Remove from heat and dissolve sugar into it. Add the tea bags and allow them to steep for at least 20 minutes.
2. Cool to Room Temp: Allow hot tea to cool to room temperature. Quickened this process by boiling just 2 cups of water, dissolving the sugar, and steeping the tea for 20 minutes. Then add remaining 5 cups of cold water, which will bring the mixture to room temperature faster. Test that the tea is room temperature by drawing out some tea with a paper straw, using your finger to keep the kombucha in the straw.
3. Add Starter: Pour the sweetened tea into your jar, then pour store-bought kombucha in, making sure to include any gunkies that may be at the bottom of the bottle.
4. Cover: Cover with a few layers of the tightly woven cloth to keep out bugs and debris, securing with a rubber band.
5. Ferment: Set somewhere dark, still, and room temperature (70-75 degrees F, 21-24 C) for 1 to 4 weeks, until a ¼ inch (½ cm) SCOBY forms.
6. Go to 1st Fermentation: You now have a SCOBY! Allow the SCOBY to remain in this liquid until you are ready to use the SCOBY for the next step, the 1st fermentation.

2. THE FIRST FERMENTATION

Ingredients for the First Fermentation

- 14 cups (3.3 L) water (tap water should be fine)
- 1 cup (200 g) white sugar
- 8 bags black or green tea
- 2 cups (480 mL) unflavored kombucha (either from a previous batch or unpasteurized, unflavored store bought kombucha)
- 1 SCOBY

Supplies for the First Fermentation

- A large glass or ceramic container (should hold at least 1 gallon, 3.7 L)
- Tightly woven cloth (coffee filters, paper towels, cheese cloth)
- Rubberbands
- Large pot for boiling water

First Fermentation Instructions

1. **Make Sweet Tea:** Bring water to a boil. Remove from heat and dissolve sugar into it. Add the tea bags and allow them to steep for at least 20 minutes.
2. **Cool to Room Temp:** Allow hot tea to cool to room temperature. (Don't be impatient here – hot water will kill your SCOBY).
3. **Empty the Jar:** With very clean hands, transfer SCOBY to an equally clean plate. If this is your first round of kombucha, reserve 2 cups of the liquid the SCOBY was growing in (that can be your starter kombucha), discarding the rest of the liquid (it is very acidic and not nice for drinking).
4. **Add Starter:** Pour the sweetened tea into your jar, then pour in unflavored starter kombucha. With clean hands, place SCOBY into jar.
5. **Cover:** Cover with a few layers of the tightly woven cloth and secure with a rubber band.
6. **Ferment:** Set the jar somewhere dark, still, and room temperature (70-75 degrees F, 21-24 C) for 6 to 10 days. Begin tasting at about 6 days by gently drawing out some of the tea with a paper straw (using your finger to hold the tea in the straw – don't use your mouth). It should be mildly sweet and slightly vinegary. The warmer the air temperature, the faster the kombucha will ferment. The longer the tea ferments, the more sugar molecules will be eaten up, the less sweet it will be.
7. **Go to 2nd Fermentation:** Reserve 2 cups from this batch to use as starter kombucha for your next batch (just leave it in the jar with SCOBY). The rest can move into the second and final fermentation.

3. THE SECOND FERMENTATION

Ingredients for the Second Fermentation

Homemade kombucha from the first fermentation
Sweetener (fruit, honey, or sugar). While there are many flavor combinations here on BrewBuch.com, we generally work with a ratio of 1 cup kombucha to:

- 1 to 2 Tbsp mashed fruit or fruit juice, or
- 1 to 2 tsp honey or sugar

Supplies for the Second Fermentation

You just need a few flip top fermentation bottles for the second fermentation. These bottles are meant for fermentation and have an airtight seal, which will prevent carbonation from escaping. If you don't have these, canning jars will do an alright job, though they aren't truly airtight.

Second Fermentation Instructions

1. Bottle: Funnel kombucha into bottles, leaving about 1 1/2 inches at the top (3.8 cm).
2. Sweeten: Add your chosen sweetener and seal tightly.
3. Ferment: Let ferment somewhere dark and room temperature for 3 to 10 days.
4. Serve: If desired, strain out fruit before serving. Place in fridge to slow the carbonation process and to chill before serving.

Happy Brewing!

P.S. Join our Facebook group, Kickass Kombucha Brewers, to ask questions and connect with home brewers from all over the world!

