Kombucha DIY

Do you want to get started with fermentation but no idea how? Use a tasty drink as an incentive and try brewing you own Kombucha with the

Kombucha Starter Kit

By Hazal Ateş

Kombucha is a super healthy fermented drink made from sweetened tea and a SCOBY (Symbiotic Culture of Yeast and Bacteria). The yeast eats the sugar and produces alcohol, and the bacteria eats the alcohol and produces acid. Because of this process kombucha contains very low sugar, and <1% alcohol. During fermentation a layer of cellulose will form on top of the kombucha. You can discard this layer, use it as plant fertiliser or dry it to make vegan leather!

How to brew your own kombucha:

You'll need:

5g Tea (Black tea, green tea, a mix or even herbs like verveine or maté)
80g Sugar
1 SCOBY (around 150ml liquid from an old batch)
0,85L Water

1 Rubber band
1 Piece of fabric (a coffee-filter also works)
1L Glass jar
Round glass bottles with a cap (Grolsch beer bottles are perfect, but other glass bottles will work fine)

First we'll prepare the tea.

1. Boil half of the water.
2. Add the sugar to the boiling water and stir until it's dissolved.
3. Add the tea and let it sit for 10-15min.
4. Remove the tea and add the remaining (cold) water.
5. Wait until the temperature of the sweetened tea is below 30°C
6. Pour the sweetened tea in the glass jar (you could also make the tea directly in the jar but **make sure your jar can handle boiling water**. I ruined a lot of jars this way ;)).
7. Add the SCOBY (after adding the SCOBY, make sure the kombucha doesn't come in contact with reactive metals. It's best to use a wooden spoon, and if you want to strain the kombucha; a

plastic strainer).
8. Seal the jar with a piece of fabric and a rubber band. The kombucha needs oxygen to ferment, but you don't want flies in your brew.

And now we wait…

Kombucha needs around 10-15 days to ferment depending on temperature. Place the jar in a nice warm spot (preferably around 25°). Avoid direct sunlight. During fermentation a layer of cellulose will form on top of the kombucha. This will protect the kombucha against harmful microbes in the air.

You can start tasting the kombucha around day 7. The kombucha is done when it's tasting a little sour, but still pleasant. When you like the taste of your 'butch it's time for 2nd fermentation.

9. Remove the cellulose from the liquid. Reserve some of the kombucha as a starter liquid for a next batch, this will be your new SCOBY. You can give some of the SCOBY to your friend/fam/neighbours and have them start brewing as well!
10. Put the kombucha in the glass bottles. You can add fruit/herbs/fruit juice to flavour the kombucha.
11. (Skip this step if you've added fruit/fruit juice) Add a spoon of sugar to each bottle and shake or stir to dissolve. This will give the yeast a little extra food to make your kombucha fizzy.
12. Close the bottles and let the kombucha ferment a second time for 3-5 days on room temperature.
13. Put the bottles in the fridge and wait one or two more days before drinking. This will ensure that the co2 is better preserved.
14. You've just made your first batch of kombucha! You can use your new SCOBY for the next batch.

When you don't directly want to make a new batch of kombucha but want to keep your SCOBY healthy, you can put the SCOBY in a small jar with some sugary tea. Seal the jar with a piece of fabric and make sure the cellulose that forms on top of the liquid stays immersed in the liquid. You can add some sugary tea when needed. Use this liquid as a starter for your new batch.

Now some of my favourite recipes:

Watermelon & cayenne: Add 1/6th part of watermelon puree/juice and 1 teaspoon of cayenne to 5/6 parts kombucha before 2nd fermentation

Turmeric & black pepper: Slice a piece of turmeric the size of your thumb, and add it together with 10 whole black peppercorns to the kombucha before 2nd fermentation.

Lemon & mint: Add 1 spoon of sugar, 4 slices of lemon and 15g of mint to the kombucha before 2nd fermentation

Mango, rosemary & lemon: Add 1/2 mango, 2 branches of rosemary and 2 slices of lemon kombucha before 2nd fermentation

Kombucha Mojito: Make the lemon & mint kombucha. Add 30ml of white rum, 1tsp of sugar, 90ml of kombucha and a splash of sparkling water to a glass filled with ice-cubes. Stir and garnish with a slice of lime and a few leaves of mint.

Bonus: Christmas Kombucha!

After a quick Google search, we found a Spiced Christmas Kombucha recipe on To Her Core. We haven't tried it ourselves yet, but we would love to hear your results! This is the recipe:
Ingredients for the second fermentation:

- 500ml freshly made kombucha (see above)
- 1 cinnamon quill
- 5 cloves
- 3 cardamom pods
- 3 Tbsp fresh orange juice
- ¼ tsp orange rind
- 2 thin slices ginger

Instructions

1. Add the spices, ginger, orange rind and juice, plus the freshly brewed kombucha, to a 750ml jar, and stir to combine.
2. Place the lid on and seal, and then leave 1 - 5 days on the counter-top out of direct sunlight. Taste the kombucha after a day or two to see if it tastes good to you - if you would like a more developed taste leave a few days longer.
3. Once the kombucha tastes ready, strain the spices and rind, and add the liquid to a clean glass jar. Place in the fridge to chill, and then enjoy.

And if you're feeling even more adventurous, you can also try a Glühwein Kombucha!

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