



Kombucha at Home in Minutes!

Easy-Peasy Instructions and Ideas

Kombucha is a naturally carbonated, probiotic beverage that is completely customizable and very easy to make. In this booklet you will find all you need to know to brew your own and save money by not buying this expensive drink at the store. Kombucha is simply fermented sweet tea. The **SCOBY** (Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast) eats up the sugar and thanks you by giving you beneficial bacteria and bubbles. Both the SCOBY (often referred to as the “Mother”) and the kombucha drink are incredibly resilient, so don’t stress about messing it up! You only need to remember a few key points and the rest should fall into place, leaving you free to be as creative as you like!

1. Use the best quality ingredients you are able to, but don’t be intimidated. While it is true that you “are what you eat eats” as Michael Pollan says, the benefits of kombucha can still be had if you aren’t flying to India and buying your tea direct from the farmer (OK, I exaggerate). Best options would be filtered water, organic tea, and organic cane sugar so that you avoid pesticides and chemicals. You want to use the best that you can with what you’ve got, and then run with it!
2. ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS make sure your equipment, hands, and work area are clean and thoroughly rinsed! Any soap or other antibacterial agent will kill the bacteria you are cultivating and could harm your SCOBY.
3. Some metals can be harmful to the SCOBY so use glass and cloth when dealing with your SCOBY. I sometimes use a metal strainer after my second ferment but try to keep metals away from my SCOBY always, including taking off my rings before working with them.
4. Never pour hot tea (or anything else hot) in your ferment jar. Heat will kill your bacteria and you will need to get a new SCOBY and start over.
5. If you get fuzzy mold on top, throw everything out, sanitize, and start over. Otherwise, whatever is going on is most likely just fine. Relax and be creative!

now let's get started:

Make sure all of your materials are clean and thoroughly rinsed to remove any soap residue.

Brew your tea according to the package instructions using whatever method you prefer (for 1-2 quarts at a time, not by the cup). You should use clean, filtered water to brew your tea. If your only option is tap water, I have read that you can boil it for 5 minutes to remove the chlorine. Stick to black or green teas to start. The flavored teas can have antimicrobial oils in them that could harm your SCOBY. Also, the black and green tea have the best mineral profiles for the SCOBY to be well nourished. I have talked to people that use certain flavored teas, but I would suggest waiting until your SCOBY multiplies to experiment, so that you don't ruin your only one if it doesn't work out. Using organic, fair trade tea and organic cane sugar is the best way to ensure peak quality of your product by avoiding things like pesticides. However, do the best you can with what you've got. (Cliff notes: Brew the tea, stir in around ½ cup sugar per 2 quarts of tea until dissolved, add water until you have reached the intended volume)

Allow your brewed tea to cool. Never put your SCOBY into hot tea, it will kill it. I stick the tea in the refrigerator but you can also cool on the counter. It should be below 90°F. I just feel the jar and when it feels room temperature, it's safe.

Pour your cooled sweet tea into whatever clean glass or ceramic container you will be using to ferment. A beverage dispenser with a spigot allows for minimal handling of the SCOBY, though runs the risk of getting clogged. Add the SCOBY and the batch (the small amount of kombucha it came with) to the tea. Your SCOBY will probably sink at first, that's OK. Don't worry if it's sideways, upside down, sinking or floating. As it settles into its new home it will rise to the surface and grow to fit.

Cover the top of the jar with a clean, dry cloth (dish towels, tea towels, cheesecloth, anything works here as long as it is clean and porous to allow air in) and secure with a rubber band. This "first ferment" is an aerobic process so it needs the air. Just make sure it stays clean and covered, and there is no mold growing on top. The ferment time will depend on many variables such as ambient temperature, amount of sugar, size of SCOBY, etc. Find a nice safe place to store your jar (mine is on top of the refrigerator where it is warmest) and then just wait! The first few batches may take a little longer as your SCOBY settles and grows, it can take anywhere from 7-14 days.

Feel free to taste it every couple of days to familiarize yourself with the process. It should start out tasting like sweet tea, begin to get sour, and then start tasting like kombucha. There is no right or wrong length of time; when it tastes good to you, it's done! As your SCOBY grows, the ferment time will lessen so pay attention.

the art of the second ferment:

When you are happy with the level of tartness your 'booch has achieved, you are ready to flavor it. This is the fun part and where you can really experiment and create!

Pour your kombucha into your secondary (clean and thoroughly rinsed) container. You can use anything that will seal tightly, mason jars work well for this. If you feel that your SCOBY may get in the way or fall out while you pour, you can place it in a clean bowl or jar before you start this process. It'll be fine. I hate dishes so I just leave it be and pour around it. Many people use a fermentation jar with a spout which makes it that much easier, but mine always got clogged so I gave up on it. Make sure to leave a little room at the top of your jar for add-ins and gas expansion.

Now all you do is add in yummy things from your kitchen to flavor your kombucha. You can add fruit chunks, purees, or juice (no need to special prep anything. I've thrown in fruit with the peel on, fruit straight from the freezer, etc). This is a great way to use up fruit that is about to go bad. You can also use herbs and spices. You will find a list of examples at the end of this section. Decide what flavor you want to try, toss it into the jar, and screw the lid on. This "second ferment" (also referred to in the elite fermenting circles as "2f") is an anaerobic process, meaning no air. The bacteria will eat the fruit and produce gas, creating a fizz. If you are not adding fruit, you may want to add a little maple syrup or other sweetener to give them something to munch on so you get more fizz. If you prefer not having fizz, then using flavor add-ins that don't contain sugar should keep the fizz down or letting the gas out frequently.

Burp your jar as needed. The pressure will build up so if your lid is starting to look stressed or bowed, please burp your jar. Jars can explode from the pressure and that is no fun for anyone! Don't burp too much if you want a lot of carbonation, but make sure you keep an eye on it and use your judgement.

This second ferment should only need a day or two, but can be left for longer. You can taste it as it goes and stop it when it tastes good! Some weeks, I can barely keep the 2f bottles full, we drink it up so fast! Other weeks, they will sit in 2f for days and days (and days...) until I get around to processing them. When it is done, strain it into bottles that seal tightly and store them in the refrigerator to slow further fermenting. You can then toss the add-ins in smoothies or whatever else you think of. They are perfectly edible and probiotic themselves! I will often just add more 'booch to the jar and reuse the add-ins until the flavor starts getting weak.

To start your next batch simply add more sweet tea to your SCOBY and 1-2 cups of kombucha from the previous batch. Cover and repeat!

flavor ideas:

It really is as easy as adding some juice, fruit chunks, or ginger to your second ferment and letting it sit a few days. However, if you want to get a little wild, here are some ideas to get you started!

Favorites from [Real Simple Health](#):

- **Cranberry Ginger:** add dried, sweetened cranberries and a wee bit of ginger
- **Pumpkin Pie:** add pumpkin chunks or puree (or not) and pumpkin pie spice
- **Pineapple:** add pineapple and go!

Favorites from [Cooking Up Your Best Life](#):

- **Add your favorite fruit juice:** be sure to use pure, good quality juice only
- **Candied Ginger:** just toss in a few chunks of candied ginger

Favorites from [Farm and Hearth](#):

- **Beet Booch:** wash, peel, and slice two beets per gallon
- **Apple Spiced:** add apple chunks, cinnamon stick, nutmeg, cloves, and allspice
- **Herbal Infusion:** add herbs of your choice - lavender, mint, yarrow, sage, plantain, evening primrose, dandelion, etc.

final tips:

- You never have to throw away anything from any part of this process (unless it gets fuzzy mold)! Every part, from the SCOBY to the second ferment add-ins to the kombucha at every stage can be consumed and/or used for things. If you let your 'booch get too tart, use it in smoothies and dressings (it's just vinegar).
- When your SCOBYs start multiplying faster than you can use them, just store them in a jar with some kombucha. Google "Scoby hotel".
- Your SCOBY is resilient, don't stress! Just have fun with it and experiment, the sky's the limit!

Cultural Revivalists is a collaborative effort between Leslie Bobb of Real Simple Health and Lyndsay Gutierrez of Cooking Up Your Best Life. Leslie and Lyndsay are both certified integrative health coaches with a passion for traditional foods in general, and ferments in particular. Their combined training includes psychology, culinary arts, nutrition therapy, fitness nutrition, herbal medicine, integrative health, personal coaching, and public health. Cultural Revivalists can be found “reviving the cultures of traditional cultures” through teaching fermentation and “real foods” classes and workshops around the mid-Atlantic region. They are launching a children’s book series to introduce kids to the world of traditional foods.

Follow them on social media at:

www.Facebook.com/CulturalRevivalists

On Instagram: CulturalRevivalists

On Twitter: @Culturevivalist

www.culturalrevivalists.com



Leslie Bobb, BA, CHC
Real Simple Health

www.RealSimpleHealth.org

RealSimpleHealth@gmail.com
804-814-8336

Follow me at:

www.Facebook.com/RealSimpleHealth
On Instagram: RealSimpleHealth
On Twitter: @LeslieBobb



Lyndsay Gutierrez, BS, CHC
Cooking Up Your Best Life!
www.cookupyourlife.wix.com/cookupyourlife

CookUpYourLife@gmail.com
757-472-3764

Follow me at:

www.Facebook.com/CookUpYourLife
On Instagram: Lynsbrea

