

# Kombucha Brewing Instructions

## You will need:

- 1 large empty jar or vessel (at least 4L) – I've seen them at Bulk Barn, Winners, Canadian Tire, and Ikea.
- Unflavored tea – black tea is optimal but white or oolong tea will also work. Do not use flavored tea.
- Sugar – organic cane sugar is optimal but refined white sugar will also work.
- Coffee filters or tight weave fabric for the top of the jar and a rubber band to secure. Do not use cheesecloth.
- Water
- SCOBY (symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast) and 1c of starter brew – provided by me

## Directions for 1<sup>st</sup> ferment:

1. Make sweetened tea - Brew 2L of very strong tea, dissolve 1/2c of sugar, and let cool to **room temperature**.
2. Thoroughly wash and rinse your jar and anything else that will come into contact with the SCOBY.
3. Add cooled sweet tea, SCOBY, and starter brew to your jar. *Note: before handling your SCOBY always thoroughly wash and rinse your hands.*
4. Cover jar with coffee filter or fabric and secure with rubber band.
5. Place jar in an area out of direct sunlight where it will not be disturbed. Warmer areas of your home will make your kombucha brew faster than cooler areas, so when seasons change you might want to move your kombucha to a different location.
6. Start to taste your brew after 5 days or so (I like to wait until I can see a new SCOBY forming on the top), you can drink it any time but it can take anywhere between 5 and 30+ days depending on how sweet or tart you like it.
7. When your first ferment is done, stir or swish around the liquid to get the yeast and sediment mixed with the kombucha, then pour or ladle out some of the brew (don't forget to reserve some starter for your next brew), store in an airtight glass container (mason jars or flip-top bottles work great) and place in refrigerator. Brew will not ferment any more once refrigerated and can be stored for weeks or months. *Note: kombucha can be drank now if the taste is to your liking or you can do a 2nd ferment at this point – instructions below.*
8. Let your reserved brew and SCOBY(s) rest in the jar before starting your next batch. You will have better results with a really strong starter. When ready, add sweetened tea to your jar with SCOBY(s) and reserved starter brew and repeat the process (you do not need to clean out your jar/vessel before each batch). You can change the quantity of sweet tea as long as you keep the recommended ratios as per the chart. This ensures that your SCOBY stays healthy and your brew is optimal and free of mold. If you don't want to start your next batch yet you can leave it to sit for several weeks or months as long as there is enough liquid to cover the SCOBY.

<b>Kombucha Tea Recommended Ratios</b>				
<b>Container Size</b>	<b>Starter Tea</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Tea Bags (Loose)*</b>	<b>Sugar</b>
½ Litre (2 cups)	¼ cup	1 ½ cups	1 bag (1 tsp)	1/8 cup
1 Litre (4 cups)	½ cup	3 cups	2 bags (2 tsp)	¼ cup
2 Litres (8 cups)	1 cup	6 cups	4 bags (4 tsp)	½ cup
4 Liters (16 cups)	2 cups	13 cups	8 bags (8 Tbsp)	1 cup

*\*Note: Amount of tea bags/loose tea is approximate. Some brands will brew stronger than others so brew to your taste. goal is to have strong tea.*

Within a few days of starting your brew (or a few hours if it's really warm in your house) you may notice it looks a little cloudy near the top of the liquid. There may also be translucent white patches or it may appear to have a "film" on the top. This is your new SCOBY forming and it will get thicker as your kombucha sits. Your new SCOBY will cover the top of the liquid completely and your old SCOBY(s) may float, sink, fold in half, float diagonally, or stick to its mother culture (old SCOBY) – it's all normal. Older SCOBY's will be different shades of beige (older ones will be darker) and probably have brown strings hanging off of the SCOBY, this is yeast and it totally normal. If you have fuzzy or dusty black/orange/green/ patches it is probably mold and the entire SCOBY and brew should be discarded.

Every new batch of kombucha will produce a new SCOBY. You can leave all of your SCOBYs in the jar, or when you start to run out of room in your jar you can transfer them to a new jar with some sweet tea (SCOBY hotel). You can also share your SCOBY's and starter brew with your friends to make their own kombucha.

### ***The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ferment:***

*Note: This is an **optional** step. If you have followed the steps above and like the way your kombucha tastes put it in the fridge and start your next batch.*

1. In a separate jar add some fresh or frozen fruit, vegetables, or spices of your choice. Some common favorites are blackberries, pear, strawberries, mango, melon, pineapple, ginger, carrot, star anise, lemon, thyme, and rosemary. You can also use pure, unsweetened fruit juice – PomWonderful is my favorite.
2. Add a pinch of sugar to taste (optional, fruits will add sweetness to your brew) and pour some of your kombucha into the jar with fruit. Sugar (either added or from fruit) will help with carbonation.
3. Close lid tightly and let sit on your counter for a few more days and hopefully your brew will self-carbonate. If you have a very active/healthy culture (fizz in 1st ferment) you might want to “burp” the bottles/jars once per day to get excess gasses out if you are getting too much fizz.
4. Strain into bottle or jar and refrigerate.

Your kombucha will keep for weeks or months in the refrigerator. If (either during your second ferment or in your refrigerated kombucha) you notice new baby SCOBY's forming, brown stringy bits, or clear blobs that resemble egg whites it's totally normal, it just means your kombucha is healthy. Although it's all edible, I usually strain it out.

### ***My Personal Process: 3 Ferments***

1. First ferment for 10 to 15 days, keep tasting until it's only slightly sweet.
2. Second ferment with fruit and/or herbs of choice in mason jars with tight lids for 2 to 3 days.
3. Third ferment. Use a fork to squish chunks of fruit (if using chunks rather than puree or juice) to get the flavour out, scoop out fruit pieces or bits of scoby that have formed during second ferment. Pour through strainer into flip-top bottles to 1" headspace in the bottle. Leave bottles out on counter for an additional 2 to 4 days before refrigerating. Do not “burp” or open the bottle until you are ready to drink your kombucha.