

KOMBUCHA KICKSTART



**A BEGINNERS GUIDE ON KOMBUCHA
THE TEA OF IMMORTALITY**

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Contents

Introduction	6
What is Kombucha?	6
Easy to Make	7
Variety of Flavors	7
Good Soft Drink Alternative	8
Low in Caffeine	8
Relaxing	9
Healthy	9
Chapter 1 – History Of Kombucha Tea.....	11
First Mention	11
Dr. Kombu	12
Russia and Beyond	12
World War II.....	12
Chernobyl	13
Modern Popularity	13
Chapter 2 – The Mother (SCOBY)	14
What is SCOBY?	15
Bacteria and Yeast Found in SCOBY	17
Growing Your Own SCOBY	17
Chapter 3 – Is Kombucha Right For Me & Is It Safe.....	18
It's a wild ferment.	19
It's a biosorbent.....	20
It Contains Unmeasured Amounts Of Alcohol.	20
It Contains Sugar.	21
Bottom Line.....	21

Kombucha Kickstart

Chapter 4 – Benefits Of Kombucha & Does It Live Up To The Hype 22

1. Probiotics	23
2. Antioxidants	24
3. Anti-Bacterial	24
Other Benefits of Kombucha Tea	25

Chapter 5 – Kombucha Tea Brewing Methods 26

Continuous Brewing.....	27
Advantages of Continuous Brewing	27
Disadvantages of Continuous Brewing	28
Batch Brewing	28
Advantages to batch brewing:.....	29
Disadvantages to batch brewing:.....	30
Bottom Line.....	30

Chapter 6 – Flavoring Tactics..... 31

What to Add	31
When to Add.....	32
Second Brew	32
How to Add	33

Chapter 7 –Brewing Equipment & Supplies..... 36

Container	36
Jar Covering	38
Other Supplies	38

Chapter 8 - Not Just a Drink - Ways to Consume Kombucha & Cooking..... 40

1. Popsicles	40
2. Pickling	41
3. Ice Cream Floats	41

Kombucha Kickstart

4. Sourdough Starter	42
5. Vinaigrette.....	42
6. Smoothies	42
7. Gummies.....	43
Chapter 9 – Craft Brewed Kombucha	44
Support Local Businesses	44
Gain Insight on Brewing Techniques	45
Find New Flavors to Try	45
Stay Healthy.....	45
Where to Find Craft-Brewed Kombucha.....	46
Starting Your Own Craft-Brewed Kombucha Business.....	47
Conclusion – Making Kombucha Part Of Your Lifestyle	48
Tutorial – How To Make Kombucha	50
Ingredients For Making Kombucha.....	50
How To Brew	51
What Next?	53
The SCOBY	54

Introduction

Hello and welcome to our short, beginners guide on all aspects of Kombucha, a fermented tea also known as “the tea of immortality”.

If you go into any health food store and even many other stores that sell drinks, you will find kombucha, often in a huge variety of brands and flavors. Although it’s been around for thousands of years, it’s only been in recent years that it’s gained popularity in the United States and is being hailed as a healthy drink that has a number of benefits, which we will cover in this guide. Firstly let’s start at the beginning...

What is Kombucha?

Kombucha is a fermented tea drink. It is naturally effervescent much like carbonated beverages, and contains tea, water, sugar, healthy bacteria, and yeast. The healthy bacteria and yeast are

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what work together to ferment this beverage which gives kombucha its many health benefits.

Now, here are a few of the reasons as to why kombucha is such a popular drink:

Easy to Make

We'll go into more details later, but the basic brewing of kombucha involves making tea with sugar, then adding something known as SCOBY which contains the bacteria and yeast and allowing it to set for a certain number of days to ferment. Because it's so easy to make, many people prefer making their own kombucha to buying it in stores.

Variety of Flavors

Because you can start with nearly any type of tea and add additional flavors after the brewing process, it means that the

possibilities are endless when it comes to the flavors that kombucha can have. You can also find kombucha in the store in many different flavors, so there's always something different that you can try and tantalize your taste buds.

Good Soft Drink Alternative

For people that love the carbonation of sugary soft drinks, kombucha makes an excellent alternative. It's not only got the fizziness that makes soft drinks stand out, but it's also much lower in sugar without lacking in flavor. The fact that there is a healthy alternative to soft drinks is great news for people who want to kick that addiction without losing out on enjoying a delicious beverage.

Low in Caffeine

While some people may need some caffeine in their tea to get a little boost to make it through the day, others prefer lower caffeine because of the way it affects them such as keeping them

from being able to fall asleep at night. Because of the fermentation process, kombucha allows you to get many of the great benefits of tea without the addition of caffeine.

Relaxing

One of the natural by-products of the fermentation process is alcohol. The amount increases with the amount of time the kombucha is allowed to ferment, so this is strictly controlled in a commercial setting and can be experimented with in a home setting. However, because of this low alcohol content, kombucha will help anyone who drinks it to relax.

Healthy

Easily the biggest reason that kombucha has gained popularity is because of its many health benefits. It has a number of probiotics which can help with digestive issues, antioxidants which can help remove toxins from your body, and B vitamins which help in a number of ways within your body. It's also low in sugar, calories,

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and sodium, making it great for people who are trying to lose weight.

Well that's a basic overview of what Kombucha is and why it's gaining notoriety as a miracle elixir for overall health

In the next part we're going to take a look at the history of Kombucha and how it's evolved over time

Let's dive in...

Chapter 1 – History Of Kombucha Tea

Nobody knows for sure how far back kombucha goes, and the truth has been so mixed with legends over the years that it's hard to separate them now. But, we're going to do our best to present you with the history of kombucha tea and how it came all the way from an ancient Chinese medicinal drink to a modern-day health beverage around the world.

First Mention

The first recorded mention of kombucha goes back to 220 BC during the Qin Dynasty in China. It was said to have been used as a drink of immortality for Emperor Qinshi Huangdi. This is likely where it gets the "cha" part of its name as the Chinese word for tea is "cha." The Chinese had many other names for this drink as well such as "stomach treasure," "sea mushroom," and "tea mold."

Dr. Kombu

Supposedly, in the year 414 AD, a Korean doctor by the name of Dr. Kombu brought the drink to Emperor Inyoko of Japan, and this is where the drink gets its name. However, there isn't enough evidence to back up this story, so it could be the stuff of legends. Another story is that Ghengis Khan carried kombucha with him as he traveled.

Russia and Beyond

From Asia, kombucha found its way to Russia as well as Europe, where it not only gained in popularity until the 19th century, but also gained a few more names, such as in Russia where it is referred to as "tea mushroom." According to one account, this beverage saved the life of Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, a Nobel Prize winner, while he was in exile in Siberia.

World War II

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Kombucha continued to be popular throughout Europe and Russia until the beginning of World War II. This was because both tea and sugar were rationed and it was too hard for the average citizen to get their hands on enough of them to regularly make the drink. After the war, however, it began to grow again in popularity, and saw a surge in the 1960's when Swiss researchers proved its health benefits.

Chernobyl

In the 1980's, there was a horrific accident near Chernobyl in Russia where a nuclear plant melted down, exposing hundreds of people nearby to radiation. There was a group of people made up primarily of elderly women, however, that survived and did better than the others. It was found by the scientists and doctors that these people regularly drank kombucha.

Modern Popularity

Since the year 2000, kombucha has become a popular health drink throughout the Western world, with people all over Europe, the United States, and Australia enjoying its numerous health

benefits. Unfortunately, as many hail this drink as a miracle cure for a number of ailments, others claim it to be dangerous. Because it is created through a natural process and cannot be patented, big companies have little interest in it, which is why there have been few studies done on kombucha to provide completely conclusive evidence one way or the other.

Now that we've uncovered what Kombucha is and the history of this tea, the next thing to do is explain how it's made...more specifically the SCOBY (Mother), which is what we will cover in the next part.

Chapter 2 – The Mother (SCOBY)

What sets kombucha apart from every other health drink out there is the process by which it is made. That process begins with something that is most commonly referred to as SCOBY, but may also be called “kombucha mushrooms” or “kombucha mothers.” These mothers are responsible for the fermentation process that turns tea into kombucha.

What is SCOBY?

SCOBY stands for Symbiotic Culture Of Bacteria and Yeast. During the brewing process, it can be found floating on the top of the kombucha, and is removed before bottling. It is disc-shaped and has a gooey consistency and appearance that is unappealing to many people. But, if you want to brew your own kombucha, then you need SCOBY to do it!

Let’s break down the different parts of SCOBY.

Symbiotic – This means that there are things working together for mutual benefit. In this case, the bacteria and yeast work

together to thrive in the tea and sugar environment and then you get the biggest benefit of kombucha.

Culture – This refers to the microorganisms (bacteria and yeast) that have been allowed to grow so that they can be used for a specific purpose.

Bacteria – The type of bacteria that is found exclusively in kombucha and is unique to it is *Gluconacetobacter kombuchae*. It thrives in the airless environment and feasts on the tea and sugar, turning it into several types of acid that give kombucha its tartness. These bacteria are, of course, beneficial bacteria and shouldn't be confused with the types that cause disease.

Yeast – This is another organism that isn't going to hurt you. *Zygosaccharomyces kombuchaensis* is the type of yeast that is unique to kombucha, and as they consume the sugar, they produce gases as a by-product that give kombucha its signature effervescence.

Bacteria and Yeast Found in SCOBY

In addition to the ones mentioned above that are unique to kombucha, there are a number of other types of bacteria and yeast that can be found in kombucha. All of these work together to create the kombucha as they all produce something different after consuming the tea and sugar. The exact makeup of bacteria and yeast in a SCOBY varies greatly depending on the region they are found in.

Growing Your Own SCOBY

Brewing your own kombucha starts with having SCOBY. Fortunately, it's easy to get one. If you have friends that are growing kombucha, you can ask them for a "baby" after their next batch, or you can even order one online. A baby SCOBY is a smaller piece of a larger mother SCOBY, and it will grow into a mother SCOBY after it finishes its first batch of kombucha.

Kombucha Kickstart

It's important to take good care of your SCOBY since it is made up of living things. You need to make sure it's kept in the right environment at the correct temperature, and that it has plenty of food. By taking good care of your SCOBY, you will have an infinite supply of it and be able to make as much kombucha as you want.

Well that's an introductory to what is needed to make kombucha, in the next chapter we will cover one of the most asked questions and hesitations when looking at drinking Kombucha for health...Is it safe?

Chapter 3 – Is Kombucha Right For Me & Is It Safe

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Whenever you're considering putting anything into your body, it's important to take the time to make sure that it's going to benefit you rather than harm you. This is especially important if you decide to make your own kombucha. Store-bought kombucha is often pasteurized and tested to make sure that it's safe, but if you're brewing your own, there are some dangers to consider.

It's a wild ferment.

That means that you have little to no control over what exactly is growing in your kombucha. Although it's supposed to only contain good bacteria, a surprising number of SCOBY's in homebrewed kombucha have harmful types of bacteria and yeast growing in them, some of which you will end up drinking which can lead to problems.

Because you probably lack the equipment to be testing your own kombucha, you have to be extremely careful about these possible contaminants. These can come from not properly sanitizing a container, touching the SCOBY with unwashed hands, or from

unknown environmental factors. If you are worried about keeping your kombucha safe, it might not be for you.

It's a biosorbent.

The SCOBY that's necessary for creating kombucha is a biosorbent, which means it binds to various contaminants and heavy metals. In fact, several studies have shown that SCOBY can be used to clean wastewater of harmful contaminants. What's dangerous about this factor is that those contaminants and heavy metals can find their way into your kombucha.

What's important to keep in mind here is that the SCOBY has to come into contact with these contaminants before it can absorb them, which can happen if it is improperly stored in a container that contains something like lead, or when unfiltered tap water is used. Tap water contains trace amounts of heavy metals that the SCOBY will concentrate over time, leading to possible poisoning.

It Contains Unmeasured Amounts Of Alcohol.

For this reason, children should never drink homebrewed alcohol, since there's no guarantee how much alcohol is in it. Even the commercially-bottled types have some alcohol, so if you do want to give kombucha to your kids, be sure to find one that has the least amount or no alcohol in it. People who are sensitive to alcohol should also avoid homebrewed kombucha for this reason.

It Contains Sugar.

Although it's true that much of the sugar is eaten by the bacteria and yeast during the fermentation process, it's also true that there is still quite a bit of the sugar remaining in the drink afterwards. If you're trying to eliminate sugar from your diet, then kombucha probably isn't right for you, especially when you brew it yourself and can't know exactly how much sugar is left after fermentation.

Bottom Line

When done properly, kombucha can be safely made at home and enjoyed by everyone in the family. However, when handled casually, you may face some serious consequences. Before you jump into brewing your own kombucha, make sure you're prepared to do what you can to reduce or eliminate these risks.

Now that we've covered the issues that lead to kombucha not being safe to consume, in the next part we will briefly look at some of the benefits of kombucha and whether the truth lives up to the hype

Chapter 4 – Benefits Of Kombucha & Does It Live Up To The Hype

There are some pretty outrageous claims out there as to what kombucha can do, so it's hard to know for sure what's true and what's been highly exaggerated. We've taken the time to find the benefits of kombucha tea that actually have some backing to

them. Since these claims have actually been tested and researched, we're confident that they are true.

1. Probiotics

Probiotics are the good bacteria that help your body in a number of ways. They not only aid in digestion which helps if you have stomach issues, but they also help keep bad bacteria numbers low so they can't affect you. Probiotics and good gut health have even been linked to weight loss, but what do these have to do with kombucha?

As you already know, kombucha is created when bacteria and yeast work together to break down the sugars in tea. Many of these healthy bacteria will break off from the SCOBY during the fermentation process and end up in the drink itself. These live healthy bacteria can then thrive in your digestive tract where they can provide you with a number of benefits.

2. Antioxidants

Your body builds up toxins because of everything from cellular activity to eating processed foods and smoking. These toxins damage your body at the cellular level and can cause a number of negative symptoms: fatigue, weight gain, illness, and even cancer. To remove these toxins from your body, you need antioxidants that bind to them and take them out of your body.

Because kombucha is made from tea which is rich in antioxidants, kombucha itself has a number of these compounds that can help you burn more calories, lower your cholesterol, and help you regulate your blood sugar. This is especially true of kombuchas that are made with green tea, since green tea contains more of these antioxidants than other types of tea.

3. Anti-Bacterial

When you have high levels of bad bacteria in your digestive system, it can lead to a number of health problems, including

constipation, anemia, respiratory problems, allergies, high cholesterol, vitamin deficiencies, and hormone imbalances. Many of these are caused when the gut wall is weakened which allows bacteria and other toxins to enter the bloodstream and affect other areas of the body.

However, because of the acetic acid that is present in kombucha, it is good for controlling these bad bacteria and keeping them from causing this host of problems. This acid is also found in vinegar and is produced by the good bacteria in the SCOBY during the fermentation process. By regularly drinking kombucha, you can regulate the number of bad bacteria to stay healthier and feel better.

Other Benefits of Kombucha Tea

There are several other studies that have been done that indicate that kombucha tea could help with several other health problems, but these are not as well-documented as the previous items on this list. These other benefits include reducing the risk of heart disease, better management of type 2 diabetes, and prevention of some types of cancer.

Well, those are some of the major benefits of kombucha that are well documented, In the next part we will move onto different brewing methods...Onward we go!

Chapter 5 – Kombucha Tea Brewing Methods

There are two main methods of brewing kombucha, each one with different advantages and disadvantages. Choosing a method will depend on your personal preferences, particularly as to which method will work best for you and your family. You can also try out the different brewing methods before settling on one, or switch methods if what you're doing isn't working anymore.

Continuous Brewing

This method involves constantly having the same jar of kombucha brewing new tea as you add to it and drink from it at will. This method is much similar to the way that kombucha has been made since ancient times. Essentially, once your first batch is fermented, you can start to drink from a tap in the jar, and then as it gets low, add new tea on top.

Advantages of Continuous Brewing

Safer – Because the SCOBY is handled less in this method, there is a much lower risk of it becoming contaminated in between batches, making the kombucha much safer for you.

Easier – Since you don't have to thoroughly clean your system every time you're starting a new batch, it's much easier to continuously brew.

Faster – Once you get the system going, new kombucha brews much faster because you're not having to start from scratch every time, which means a more continuous supply of fresh kombucha.

Disadvantages of Continuous Brewing

Sour – Continuous brewing can result in sour kombucha because the fermentation cycle is disrupted and some of the bacteria that start the cycle and prevent too much acid buildup become less active.

Unpredictable – Because you are constantly adding new tea and taking out fermented tea, the process and therefore the flavor becomes unpredictable and it's difficult to get consistency with batches.

Batch Brewing

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With batch brewing, you brew your kombucha one batch at a time. Once the fermentation process is complete, you'll bottle all your kombucha, clean your system, and can use the same SCOBY as starter for a brand-new batch. Because you will be handling the SCOBY more often, it's important to maintain strict sterile procedures to avoid contamination.

Advantages to batch brewing:

Healthier – Because the kombucha is allowed to go through all the stages of fermentation, it has a more complex system of bacteria which provides more health benefits.

Consistency – Each batch will have the same base flavor which will allow you to develop recipes to create flavors that you and your family love that will taste the same every time.

Sweeter – Kombucha that is brewed in batches has a much sweeter flavor than continuously-brewed kombucha and is rarely too sour.

Disadvantages to batch brewing:

Harder – Batch brewing is more difficult in that it requires more time and work on your part to clean out the system between batches and to do all of the bottling every time a batch is done.

Bottom Line

The more you read about the differences between continuous brewing verses batch brewing, the more you will see that there are people who believe strongly in one method over the other. However, you will have to decide for yourself which method will work best for you and gives you the most health benefits.

In the next part we will uncover different tactics to flavoring your kombucha tea.

Chapter 6 – Flavoring Tactics

One of the things that makes kombucha great is that you can add a variety of flavors so you're never bored with the same old kombucha. Every batch will already taste a little different because of different concentrations of types of bacteria, but by adding flavoring, you'll open up a whole new world of kombucha flavors.

What to Add

There aren't really any rules about how you flavor your kombucha, so you'll have to experiment to find out what works best for you and what flavors you like best. You can add fresh or dried herbs, spices, fruit juices, fresh or frozen fruits and berries, or any combination of these to produce a complex, deliciously-flavored kombucha that you'll love.

When to Add

You'll always want to add these at the end of the initial brewing process. If you're doing batch brews, that means at the end of the brew. For continuous brewing, you'll add flavoring when you remove the kombucha you're going to drink. If you're going to do a second brew, then you'll do this before that second brew.

Second Brew

To get a fizzier kombucha, you'll want to do a second brew. First, put the kombucha into airtight bottles. Then, add the flavoring. If you're not adding any fruits or juices, you'll need to throw in a couple raisins or a small amount of honey to feed the bacteria during the second ferment. Then, seal the bottle tight and allow it to set out in room temperature out of direct sunlight for 1 – 3 days.

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The amount of time you need to do the second brew will depend on how much fizzier you want your kombucha and the temperature. At higher temperatures, the kombucha will ferment faster so you need less time. At lower temperatures, it will need a few more days. When you're happy with it, you can refrigerate the bottles to slow or stop the fermentation.

How to Add

When adding fruit, the best way to get a more intense flavor is to cut or crush the fruit into the smallest possible pieces because the more surface area of the fruits that are in contact with the kombucha, the stronger the flavor will be. Adding fruit will also give you a much sweeter kombucha compared to adding herbs and spices alone. You'll need to add about ½ cup for every 3 – 4 cups of kombucha.

When adding herbs and spices, it's best to do a second ferment because this gives them time to disperse their flavors throughout the kombucha. Generally speaking, dried and crushed herbs and spices will produce a stronger flavor in a shorter amount of time compared to fresh herbs.

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Here's our list of common kombucha additives and how much needs to be added per 3 – 4 cups of liquid.

Cardamom – 2 pods

Cinnamon – ½ inch of a stick, crushed

Fennel seed – 2 teaspoons

Vanilla – 1 split bean

Ginger – ½ inch grated fresh

Lavender buds – 1 tablespoon

Hibiscus leaves – 1 tablespoon

Rose petals – 1 tablespoon

Don't be afraid to get creative with your mixing and matching of fruits, herbs, and spices to make your own unique kombucha flavors.

Kombucha Kickstart

In the next part we will delve deeper into equipment and supplies you need to produce your own Kombucha.

Chapter 7 –Brewing Equipment & Supplies

When it comes to brewing kombucha, there are a lot of options that you can find on the market today. Choosing the right supplies will make a huge difference in whether or not you are able to successfully brew kombucha at home. Here, we're going to outline the basic supplies that you need to get started to help you set up your system right the first time.

Container

This is easily the most important part of your kombucha-brewing operation, as you can't make kombucha without something to ferment it in. The material of the container is what we'll look at first. You never want to brew kombucha in plastic because it can leech harmful chemicals into your kombucha, crystal because it contains lead, or metal because it will react with the acids.

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You could use ceramic or porcelain containers for kombucha, as long as they are food grade, since many decorative pieces contain lead and other harmful chemicals. However, the best kombucha container is glass. It's non-reactive, safe, and relatively cheap. Plus, it's easy to find glass containers in a variety of sizes so you can brew as much or as little kombucha as you want with a few containers.

Container size is the next thing that you'll need to consider. You'll not only need enough space to make enough kombucha to make it through the next brewing cycle, but you'll also need to be able to mix the ingredients at the proper ratios. Since every batch will take the same amount of time no matter the size, the smallest container we recommend is ½ gallon, though 1 gallon is the most popular.

The surface area of your container is what will affect the brewing time, with larger surface areas brewing kombucha more quickly than smaller surface areas, so you'll want to find a happy medium. If the kombucha ferments too quickly, it will have a more sour taste. The best sized surface area for brewing kombucha is 5 – 6 inches.

When choosing a jar with a spigot, be sure to follow the same material recommendations as the spigot will come into contact with the kombucha and using a plastic or metal spigot can cause the same problems as using a plastic or metal container. Fortunately, there are plenty of spigots to choose from that will work for kombucha brewing.

Jar Covering

Covering your jar with the right material will keep out unwanted visitors like fruit flies and ants but will still allow the airflow needed for proper fermentation. You can secure your material with a rubber band. The best materials to use as a jar covering for your kombucha are coffee filters, tight-weave dish towels, butter muslin, or even t-shirt material.

Other Supplies

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Some additional supplies that will help you with brewing kombucha but that aren't necessary to get started include tea balls or reusable tea bags for brewing the tea, a food-grade plastic strainer that you can use to scoop out the mother and baby SCOBY's, sealable bottles for second brewing and storing finished kombucha, a funnel to help with bottling, and a stick-on thermometer to keep track of the temperature of your brewing area.

Now that we've learned about the equipment and supplies you need to brew your own kombucha, it's time to look at exactly how to make it and different ways to use kombucha as it's not just a drink!

Chapter 8 - Not Just a Drink - Ways to Consume Kombucha & Cooking

One of the best things about kombucha is that it's not just a drink. In fact, there are a number of different things that you can do with kombucha in order to really enjoy this delicious drink. These are especially great if you are brewing more kombucha than you're able to drink as you'll be able to use them in different ways so they don't go to waste.

1. Popsicles

Perfect for hot summer weather, you can use your favorite popsicle mold or even just paper cups to make popsicles with your kombucha. This is especially good with berry and other sweet-flavored kombuchas, but any type will work. Then, whenever you want to enjoy a cold, refreshing, and healthy treat, just grab one from the freezer!

2. Pickling

This is especially perfect if you grow your own produce and if your kombucha went a little too long and started to taste like vinegar. Fortunately, instead of tossing it out, you can toss it in a jar with your fresh produce and let it start pickling. This is a great way to ensure that you're not wasting any of the overly-sour kombucha and to make your pickled veggies more flavorful and healthy.

3. Ice Cream Floats

If there's one thing that can't be beat on a warm summer evening, it's an ice cream float. But, with all the sugars, calories, and unhealthy ingredients that come with soda, it's not something the health-conscious can enjoy in good conscious. However, by replacing the soda with a lovely fizzy kombucha, you can enjoy your ice cream floats all summer long.

4. Sourdough Starter

If you're into other fermented foods besides kombucha, then you know that sourdough is a delicious and nutritious bread. What you may not know is that you can actually use kombucha to start a batch of sourdough at home! To get a sourdough going, all you need to do is mix equal parts flour and kombucha together and it will be ready the next day!

5. Vinaigrette

Another great use for kombucha that's gone a little too vinegary is to make it into a vinaigrette. You can find recipes that specifically call for kombucha as the base for a vinaigrette, but you can also simply replace the vinegar of your favorite recipe for kombucha for a healthier but equally delicious vinaigrette.

6. Smoothies

If you love drinking smoothies, then why not give your smoothie blend a probiotic kick by adding kombucha in place of some or all of the liquid content of your smoothies? These work particularly well for berry smoothies and will also kick up the tart factor. You could also freeze kombucha into ice cube trays and add it that way to your smoothies if you normally use ice as part of your smoothie.

7. Gummies

If you're looking for the perfect healthy treat that's both delicious and great for your body, consider making some gummies with your extra kombucha. These tasty snacks are easy to make, and they're delicious. Plus, you get the advantage of getting a few more probiotics!

Chapter 9 – Craft Brewed Kombucha

Much like craft-beer, craft-brewed kombucha is commercially-sold kombucha that is made in small batches. Most bottled kombucha you find in stores is made this way, and most of the companies are small local businesses. Here are some reasons to try craft-brewed kombucha, even if you're planning on brewing your own.

Support Local Businesses

Because so many craft-brewed kombucha businesses are local, buying from them is a great way to support the people in your community, rather than a big corporation that's doing quite well already without your business. Often, these craft-brewed kombuchas are equally if not more delicious than the ones produced by larger companies, so it's worth the extra effort needed to find them.

Gain Insight on Brewing Techniques

As you're meeting with craft-brewed kombucha business owners, you'll be able to gain valuable insight on kombucha brewing and flavoring techniques. These kombucha enthusiasts often have many years of experience, so they'll be able to help point you in the right direction when it comes to getting the right supplies and with any problems you run into along the way.

Find New Flavors to Try

Craft-brewed kombucha comes in an enormous variety of flavors, so you'll not only never be bored when trying the different types, but you might also get some new ideas of how you can flavor your own kombucha. If you're thinking of bottling your own kombucha to sell, you'll need to avoid stealing flavors from other local sellers, but using it for your own batches at home is ok.

Stay Healthy

Since craft-brewed kombucha has the same health benefits of the stuff you're brewing at home, it's a great way to stay healthy when you're first getting started and may not have enough kombucha to last you until the next batch is ready. Most kombucha enthusiasts encourage drinking kombucha every day, so if your supply runs out, then pick a craft-brew and you're on your way to staying healthy even without your own home-brewed kombucha.

Where to Find Craft-Brewed Kombucha

The best place to start your search for local craft-brewed kombucha is to check out farmer's markets. Many small brewers will bring their kombucha to these to sell, so it's a great place to start looking. This is the best place to find craft-brewed kombucha because the owners are likely the ones selling, so it's easy to connect with them and share ideas about brewing kombucha.

Another place you can usually find craft-brewed kombucha are health food stores. Most health food stores will carry a variety of kombuchas that you can try. Many regular grocery stores and

sometimes even larger convenience stores will carry this drink. Typically, the popularity of the drink in your area will determine how easily it can be found.

Starting Your Own Craft-Brewed Kombucha Business

If your friends that try your kombucha are telling you that you should try selling your kombucha and you find yourself being overwhelmed with the gallons you're producing once things get going, starting a craft-brewed kombucha business might be a good idea. Be sure to do a lot of research about the health and safety requirements of selling food before you get started, and make sure you have somewhere to sell your kombucha, whether it's at the farmer's market or your local health food store.

Conclusion – Making Kombucha Part Of Your Lifestyle

Congratulations on making it to the end of this short, introductory guide on Kombucha.

You may be surprised to know that the majority of people who start something never complete it.

Take your time and progress at your own pace. This is not a race. The more you understand and comprehend about kombucha and whether you decide to brew your own or buy ready made from stores the better

If you really want to succeed, then everything you do for your body & health must be with long-term planning in mind. These changes you're making for your overall health are not meant to be temporary. They're meant to be part of a new lifestyle that you follow.

You can't think of kombucha as simply as something that you add into your day. Kombucha and your health must instead be something that your life is about and only then can you truly reap the benefits of this ancient fermented tea known as "The tea of Immortality"

I wish you all the success with making kombucha part of your daily life.

Tutorial – How To Make Kombucha

While it's always nice to pick up a Kombucha drink from the store, the main method people use to produce Kombucha is brewing it for yourself.

In this part of the guide we're going to look at how to brew your own Kombucha at home

Ingredients For Making Kombucha

The materials and ingredients needed to make Kombucha are simple.

You need glass jars to make it in, tea (either bags or loose leaf) sugar, and a Kombucha culture or SCOBY

The choice/brand of tea is up to you and the type of sugar is also unimportant, as long as it gets an adequate amount. Sugar is vital for the fermentation process and for those wanting a low

sugar drink, it's just a matter of fermenting it for sufficient time to bring the sugar level down very low

How To Brew

Get a glass jar of up to 1 litre in volume and $\frac{3}{4}$ fill with boiling water and add two black tea bags. (2-3 tea bags per 800-1000ml)

Leave to draw/brew for at least 15 mins then add 60-70g of plain, white sugar (approx 1/4 cup max for a full litre, less sugar if less than a litre) and stir to dissolve (80-90g max for 1 litre). You can use raw or cane sugar if you want, tho it makes little difference. Remove the tea bags and leave to cool to room temperature (it will take a few hours to cool).

(Note: Always use a glass jar or container to brew your Kombucha as it becomes more acidic as it brews and can react with plastic or metal containers).

Kombucha Kickstart

Once the brew of sweetened tea has cooled to room temperature, pour at least three Tablespoons of the supplied kombucha tea or starter (also at room temp) into the Tea then carefully add your supplied kombucha scoby/culture into the jar as well. It may float or sink and it doesn't really matter which it does.

Place the jar in your pantry or somewhere out of direct sunlight (to avoid temperature extremes) and cover the top with muslin or some other breathable fabric to stop ants and fruit flies getting into it but still allowing air to flow in and out of the jar. Air is needed by the yeast and bacteria in the scoby to breath.

Leave it for at least 4-5 days to ferment/brew.

During this time a new scoby or 'baby' will form on the surface of the tea and if your original one was floating, the new 'baby' will most likely be adhered to it.

After 4-5 days check it to see if it is starting to build up bubbles underneath the surface scoby.

Kombucha Kickstart

If it is, try and carefully draw a little bit out with an eye dropper or pipette by carefully tilting the jar on edge to taste it. If it's still really sweet and not very bubbly, leave it another day then test again. If it's really fizzy and only slightly sweet, it's ready. If it tastes vinegary, it's been left too long. Ultimately, you bottle it off when it reaches the level of flavour that you personally like.

When testing, try not to submerge or get the top of the Scoby wet as it stalls the fermenting process because the wet layer slows oxygen transfer to the bacteria and yeast.

What Next?

When it's ready, pour off 80-90% of it to either drink straight away or you can bottle it to drink over the next few days etc. Take the remaining 10+% and the now 2 scobies and start a new batch with another brew of sweetened tea as per the start of these instructions. Using 2 scobies in the second batch should give you an even better result than the first. It may take two or three brews to get it really working well. A scoby of 3 or 4 layers/generations gives a good, consistent brew. Be patient.

Kombucha Kickstart

After the third or fourth brew, you can peel off the older scobies and use them to start a new/second brew in a new jar.

You may soon learn that you may need/want 3 or 4 bottles brewing at once or use a larger glass jar if you can find one to make enough for everyone in the household to have a glass each day.

Experiment yourself using different flavoured teas or herbal/fruit infusion teas, but always use at least one or two black or green tea bag as many of the herbal/fruit teas contain very little actual 'tea' leaves and the tea is necessary for the scoby to feed on.

The SCOBY

As for the 'Scoby' I have found that a scoby that is three or 4 layers (generations) thick gives the best flavoured drink so don't be surprised or disappointed if your first batch is nothing to rave about. Simply put both the original/mother scoby and the newly grown scoby/baby into a new batch of tea for the second week and you should get a better brew next time round.

2 or 3 scobies in a brew seem to give a better result than just a single scoby.

In colder weather, the Scobies may not grow as fast or become as thick as in summer, but they will still give a good brew and as long as the Kombucha still brews and tastes good, then the size of the Scobies matters little.

Stuck together layers of scoby float better than single ones too because of the air trapped between the layers so I like to keep my scobies at 2-4 layers thick and floating on the surface

If your scoby sinks in a new batch of tea, it just means the new one that forms on the surface won't be stuck to it (obviously).

If your scobies always float and get thicker each week, peel off the older bottom layer or two so that it doesn't take up too much volume in the jar.

Kombucha Kickstart

If they don't float, simply throw out the ones that go dark brown with age and only use the newest 2 or 3 generations.

What to do with the old scobies? Give them to friends to start their own kombucha, start another jar/batch yourself or simply throw them out.

Remember, it's all about experimenting, finding what works best for you in your situation and what kind of flavour you like