

## **KOMBUCHA**

The kombucha starter culture or scoby (a symbiotic colony of yeast & bacteria, sometimes known as a "mushroom") acts on sugar & tea to produce a wide variety of beneficial acids, such as acetic & lactic acid.

It is a therapeutic drink, and is considered a liver tonic, but is also very refreshing as a summer drink..

- 1 large, uncoloured pyrex bowl
- 2.7 litres filtered water (3 quarts)
- 1 cup sugar (white sugar feeds the culture best)
- 4 tea bags of black tea
- 1/2 cup kombucha from a previous culture
- 1 kombucha scoby

Bring the filtered water to boil. Put the sugar into your bowl, add the boiling water and stir till dissolved. Add the tea bags and leave the tea to steep until the water has completely cooled. Remove tea bags, add 1/2 cup kombucha from previous batch and stir. Place the scoby on top of the liquid. Cover the bowl loosely with a cloth or towel, secured with a ring of elastic and leave to a warm, dark place, away from contaminants and insects.

The kombucha will be ready in about 7 to 10 days, depending on the temperature. The ideal temperature is about 23-27°C (74-80°F) and if possible, don't let it fall below 20°C (68°F) or rise above 30°C (86°F). A hot water cupboard is a good place to ferment it, or if you don't have one, you may need a heating pad in winter. If it gets too cold, the balance of bacteria and yeasts will be disturbed. Avoid moving it until it's ready to bottle.

When the kombucha is ready, it should be fizzy and rather sour, with no taste of tea remaining. The scoby will have grown a second spongy pancake, which can be used to make other batches or given away to friends. Store fresh scobies in the fridge in a glass jar (never plastic), covered with some of the last batch. A scoby can be used many times. If it begins to turn black, or if the resulting kombucha doesn't sour properly, it's a sign that the culture has become contaminated. When this happens, it's best to throw away all your scobies and get a new clean one.

Set aside a cup of liquid for the next batch, and bottle the rest. Use bottles suitable for carbonated drinks – otherwise they are prone to exploding! Keep at room temperature for 5-7 days, then store in the fridge.

### **Contraindications:**

As with any food, kombucha will not be suitable for everybody. Always start with a small amount and increase your intake slowly. It may not be suitable for you, or you may need to be especially careful introducing it if you:

- Are diabetic, or on any other sugar controlled diet - Some diabetics have had great results from drinking Kombucha. But it is important to remember that although most of the sugar is converted into other components during the fermentation process, some still remains as sugar in the finished tea.
- Are an alcoholic in recovery - Recovering alcoholics sometimes find it helpful to drink Kombucha during their recovery period. Be aware though, Kombucha does contain a small quantity of alcohol. It is usually less than 1% by volume, but even a small quantity of alcohol can have a negative effect on a recovering alcoholic.
- Have a yeast allergy – most people with yeast allergies find Kombucha helpful, but there is a possibility of an adverse reaction in some people
- Have a badly functioning liver, or any other chronic disease - Kombucha is a very powerful detoxifier and will pull toxins from your body and pass them through your liver on their way out. If your liver does not function correctly then it may be unwise to drink Kombucha, or you may be only able to take very small quantities (such as a spoonful).
- Are giving it to an infants under 6 Years - Whilst a young body is growing it cannot withstand the same degree of supplements and foodstuffs as an adult. Kombucha is very strong and should not be used on infants. Dilute an older child's Kombucha with water.
- Are a pregnant and breastfeeding mother - As above. Nutrients from the mother will pass into the unborn child and / or breastfed baby.