



The beginner's guide  
to making natural,  
non-alcoholic  
fermented drinks

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# FOR STARTERS

Kombucha is a sweetened tea that starts to ferment when you add to it a specific combination of bacteria and yeast. To the naked eye the bacteria and yeast colony looks like a flat, white rubbery mushroom, floating on top of the tea. The technical name for this is 'scooby', which is short for 'symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast'. The scooby converts the sugar in the tea into CO<sub>2</sub>, organic acids, and vitamins. From ancient China to today's health-food circles, people have attributed superpowers to this drink, although no conclusive scientific evidence backs up the claims about its detoxifying effects.

One thing is certain: kombucha is a healthy alternative to commercial soft drinks. It's brimming with living organisms and contains only a fraction of the sugar.

If you want to brew kombucha yourself, find out if anyone you know is a brewer and ask them for a piece of their mother scooby to use as a starter. Failing that, buy a bottle of commercially brewed kombucha and pour the contents into an open glass jar. Cover it with (cheese)cloth secured with a rubber band and let it stand at room



temperature. After a while a new scoby will form on top of the liquid and you can then use this for your own brews. Choose a kombucha that has no added flavours or aromas, and make sure you use a live, unpasteurised kombucha as this will contain living organisms.



# BASIC RECIPE

Ingredients for 1 litre:

- 1 kombucha scoby
- 100 ml live kombucha
- 5 g loose leaf black tea  
(or 3 tea bags)
- 50-100 g unrefined  
cane sugar (to taste)
- 1 litre filtered water

1 glass jar (1.5 litre capacity)

# METHOD



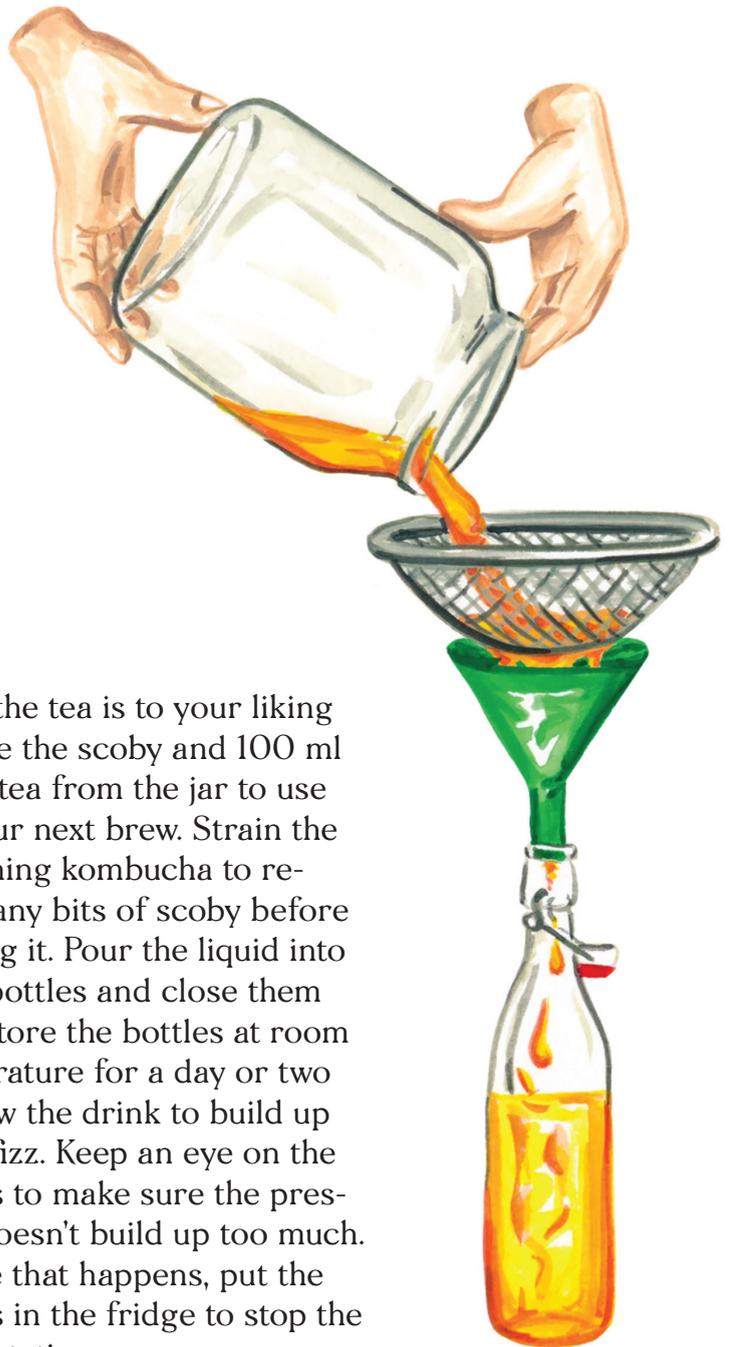
1. Bring 250 ml water to the boil and use this to make the tea, letting it steep for at least 10 minutes. Add the sugar and stir until it has dissolved. Pour the sweetened tea into the glass jar and add 750 ml cold water.



Because the scoby will not survive temperatures higher than 40°C, it's important to make certain that the liquid is not too hot. Once it has cooled down enough, add the scoby and the 100 ml live kombucha to the liquid. This will increase the acidity of the mixture immediately and create conditions in which the kombucha organisms feel at home. Other, potentially harmful bacteria will not be able to survive in the acidic environment.



2. Cover the jar with (cheese)cloth and secure it with a rubber band. The kombucha needs air to ferment, but the cloth keeps dust and insects out. Leave the liquid to ferment for 7 to 14 days at room temperature in a dark place. Then taste the kombucha. If it's too sweet for you, leave it to ferment more. The longer you wait, the less sugar it will contain.



3. Once the tea is to your liking remove the scoby and 100 ml of the tea from the jar to use for your next brew. Strain the remaining kombucha to remove any bits of scoby before bottling it. Pour the liquid into glass bottles and close them well. Store the bottles at room temperature for a day or two to allow the drink to build up some fizz. Keep an eye on the bottles to make sure the pressure doesn't build up too much. Before that happens, put the bottles in the fridge to stop the fermentation process.