“The Local Buy” Recipe, Episode 711

Kombucha
Courtesy of Hex Ferments

What You’ll Need
- 1 gallon filtered water
- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup loose leaf green or black tea or 5 tea bags
- Reusable tea bag
- Glass container or crock (sun tea containers with spigots work great)
- Check out the Happy Herbalist for Brewing vessels
- 1 cup of starter liquid (kombucha from a previous brew)
- Kombucha SCOBY
- Clean cloth and rubber band
- Glass Bottles with bail tops or re-useable plastic bottles with screw tops
- Thermometer (optional but helpful)

Directions
1. Bring the gallon of water to a boil.
2. Once boiling turn off heat, let sit for a few minutes before adding the tea and sugar (green tea should be added between 160-180 degrees, black 205 degrees).
3. Steep green tea for 15 minutes, black 15-30 (the longer you steep the more caffeine, green becomes bitter after 15 minutes).
4. Remove tea, stir, and let cool to 72-78 degrees.
5. Once cool, pour the sweet tea into your vessel, add the 1 cup starter liquid and a piece of the SCOBY. Stir and cover. (Always handle the SCOBY with clean hands.)
6. Keep in a warm spot (~68-78 degrees) out of direct sunlight. Mark the date on the outside of the vessel.
7. After a few days to 3 weeks you will notice a skin forming on the surface. This is the new SCOBY forming. Taste the liquid. It will probably still be sweet. The longer it sits the more acidic (vinegary) and less sweet it will
become. Keep tasting the tea until you like the flavor. Most people like a balance of sweet and sour. It might also be slightly effervescent at this point.

**Bottling and Flavoring**

*What You’ll Need*
- Clean glass bottles with bail tops or re-useable plastic bottles
- A funnel is useful if you are not using a vessel with a spigot
- Flavorings of your choice (berries, ginger, spices, herbs...)
- Tape and pen to date your bottles

*Directions*
1. Ready your clean bottles and flavoring. They should be free of soap and residue.
2. Depending on your vessel, either use the spigot to fill your bottles or pour your finished kombucha into bowls suitable for pouring into bottles.
3. Be sure to save the SCOBY and a cup per gallon of the kombucha for the next batch.
4. Priming for second fermentation: For juice add 1 tablespoon to each bottle, for fresh fruit add 1-2 teaspoons chopped coarsely to each bottle, ginger 1-2 teaspoons chopped fine. *Rule of thumb with adding flavor: the higher the sugar content, the more likely to carbonate quickly and become explosive—a little goes a long way.*
5. Fill your bottles with kombucha tea, leaving an inch at the top. Cap.
6. Leave in a warm place for 4-7 days to carbonate. Monitor your bottles! After 2-3 days release the bail top or cap to release pressure. Plastic bottles will tighten up. Once the bottles are carbonated place them in the refrigerator to slow the fermentation. Once chilled, carefully open your bottle and enjoy!

Experiment with flavors! Add fresh herbs, vegetables, fruit, vegetable juice, extracts, and spices. Try using different teas and sugars (raw honey, maple syrup, palm sugar).

**IMPORTANT:** Explosive bottles! Please be careful when priming (adding fruit or honey) for a second fermentation and when opening. Again, start with less and gradually increase as needed. Do not shake kombucha.