How to Make Kombucha From Tea (Careful Beginner Guide)

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **How to make kombucha, in summary:** Kombucha is sweetened tea fermented by a SCOBY: use a plain black or green base, keep everything scrupulously clean, discard anything mouldy untasted.

Kombucha is fermented sweetened tea, and the quality of the tea matters to the result. Here is a careful beginner method with the safety points stated clearly. Another tea making page worth a look is cold brew.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in February 2026.

Home fermentation carries hygiene and safety considerations. Follow a trusted, detailed food safety source and stop if anything looks or smells wrong. This is an overview, not a substitute for careful technique.

What kombucha is

Sweetened tea fermented by a SCOBY (a culture of bacteria and yeast), producing a tangy, lightly fizzy, low sugar drink over one to two weeks.

The tea base matters

Plain black or green tea is standard and ferments reliably; the culture feeds on the tea and sugar. Flavoured teas with oils can harm the SCOBY, so flavour after fermenting, not during, see black and green tea.

Core ingredients

Strong sweetened tea (the sugar feeds the culture, not you), a healthy SCOBY, starter liquid, clean equipment. The sugar is largely consumed by fermentation.

The outline method

Brew strong sweet tea, cool fully, add SCOBY and starter, cover with breathable cloth, ferment 7 to 14 days at room temperature out of direct sun, taste, then bottle (optional second ferment for fizz).

Hygiene and safety

Scrupulously clean equipment, never metal that reacts, correct acidity, and discard if mould appears or it smells wrong. This is the part to take seriously, not improvise, see the cautious note above.

Flavouring

Add fruit, ginger or herbs at the second ferment, after the tea fermentation, to protect the culture and control sweetness, see sugar.

Bottom line

Kombucha is fermented sweet tea on a plain black or green base, made with a healthy SCOBY and careful hygiene; respect the safety basics and the tea base, see cold brew.

Kombucha from tea, at a glance

Element	Rule
What it is	Sweetened tea fermented by a SCOBY into a tangy, lightly fizzy drink
Tea base	Plain black or green; avoid oiled/flavoured teas that harm the culture
Core	Tea, sugar (food for the culture), a SCOBY and starter liquid
Hygiene	Scrupulous cleanliness; discard anything mouldy without tasting
Caution	Acidic; over-fermentation and contamination are real risks

A note on safety

Two points beyond hygiene. The second ferment builds carbonation in a sealed bottle, so never seal a vigorously active batch carelessly: trapped gas in glass is a real pressure hazard, so release pressure regularly. And home brewing is not for everyone: if you are pregnant, particularly vulnerable to infection, or managing a condition where fermented or acidic foods are a concern, treat it as a clinician question, or simply buy a good commercial kombucha, which carries a safety margin a kitchen cannot match. If any batch looks or smells wrong, discard it untasted.

Shop the range: browse the English tea range and loose leaf range.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Trust the brew in your jar, not the label. Fancier teas can wait until you have a first batch under your belt.

More tea reading

- How to make cold brew tea
- How to brew tea properly
- Black tea

- Green tea

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
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