

Basic Brewing Instructions for Kombucha Tea:

NOTE: Be sure that all utensils, liquids, and SCOBY mats (Symbiotic Colony of Bacteria and Yeast) are at room temperature before you begin to prepare your kombucha beverage.

1. Bring 3 to 4 quarts of quality, filtered water to a boil. Remove from heat.
2. Next, add 5 to 7 tea bags into the hot water.
3. Steep for at least 15 minutes for a more for a full-bodied tea flavor. You may use a naturally decaffeinated type tea or a regular caffeine containing tea. Black and green versions work best, but you may wish to experiment with other teas as well.
4. Now add in 1 cup of sugar and allow it to dissolve completely. If you are using an **unrefined** type of sugar, you may need to return the solution to heat to allow it to fully dissolve and break down into the tea.
5. Allow the tea/sugar solution to cool to room temperature - a neutral feeling to your skin. Be sure to keep the solution tightly covered because this is the stage of preparation where the brew can easily become contaminated.
6. Pour room temperature tea/sugar solution into your very clean culturing container/vessel.
7. Now add your room temperature Kombucha SCOBY to the brew. It may or may not sink to the bottom of the vessel and this is perfectly fine.
8. Next, add 2 cups of room temperature Kombucha tea from a previously brewed batch to the culturing vessel. This will act as your starter and will help to reduce the pH of the culture for a hardy start.

NOTE: If you do not have kombucha tea from a previous batch, you may use the liquid from the SCOBY you purchased online (www.gemcultures.com) as your starter, or you may wish to add a 1/4 cup of room temperature distilled white vinegar to the tea solution to help reduce the pH level. This acidic vinegar will keep your brew safe from internal or external pathogens. Living apple cider vinegar will **NOT** work for this process and will compete with the SCOBY during the culturing process.

9. Next, cover your brewing vessel with a clean, natural cloth/towel, unbleached paper towel or coffee filter, or several layers of unbleached cheese cloth to protect it from invading pathogens.
10. Set your brew aside in a warm, quiet, undisturbed space - on top of your refrigerator is a great place. The newly forming SCOBY can easily break apart with too much movement of the liquid, so be patient. The more the SCOBY breaks apart, the more difficult it is for it to form and complete the culturing process.
11. Allow the brew to ferment for at least 6 - 8 days at a consistent temperature of 80 degrees. If your home or brewing environment is in the 70 degree range, allow your brew to culture for at least 8-14 days. It is **NOT** ideal to culture kombucha or any other cultured food at 60 degrees or below.

TIPS: Your first brew will take the longest to culture. Subsequent batches may take less time, so be sure to sample all of your batches to make sure they are to your liking. Kombucha should be semi-sparkling, with a slightly sweet/sour taste. The ideal pH should be from 2.7 to 3.2. **ALWAYS** be sure to save 1 to 2 cups of your current batch to act as a starter for your next brew. Each batch yields a new SCOBY. As a precaution, always save several SCOBY mats just in case a batch becomes contaminated and you need to start over. Extra SCOBY mats make great gifts to friends and family!