

## TIPS AND TROUBLESHOOTING

**SCOBYs are not perfect white discs.** They can range from white to light brown, be thin, have holes and flat out look ugly. You might start to see long strands, brown in color forming below your SCOBY. This is yeast, a by-product of the active fermentation that is happening. It's a good thing.

**My Kombucha is not doing anything.** Be patient! Your SCOBY is a living organism and takes time to adapt to its new environment. The climate and temperature in your home effect the SCOBYs initial growth. It can take 4 weeks or longer for your first batch to produce another SCOBY on the surface of your vessel and 2-3 batches for the kombucha to start tasting like you want it to.

**My kombucha won't carbonate.** There must be residual sugar left in the bottles for it to carbonate, which is where tasting, as your kombucha brews, to catch the sweet/sour balance is important! Yeasts create carbon dioxide which becomes trapped in the liquid. When opened the co2 is released creating bubbles. It's not necessary, but adding priming sugar, (i.e raw honey, or fruit) to your bottles, will feed the yeast and create carbonation. Keep in mind that kombucha produces small bubbles.

**Always have a SCOBY Hotel,** another vessel where you have extras for experimenting or if you killed your "mother" :( Be sure to feed with sweet tea periodically. Give to your family and friends! 1 cup of tea to 1-2 tablespoons sugar, let cool!

**I have mold!** If it looks like the mold you see on old bread, fuzzy, green, black, then yes you have mold. It is not safe to drink and do not try to recover the brew. Throw the entire batch into the compost. Clean the vessel well and begin anew. Sometimes when the new SCOBY is forming some parts will look more opaque, spotted white or thin in areas. **NOT MOLD.** Monitor the newly forming SCOBY often.

**Cleaning your vessels:** never use soap, distilled vinegar is great for disinfecting. If you have re-usable glass bottles invest in a bottle brush, rinse and scrub out your bottles after each use, rinse with vinegar and water, dry.

**Do not refrigerate your SCOBY.** If you go away for an extended period of time, be sure to "feed" your kombucha. When you return it will most likely have gone acetic (vinegar), taste it! If it tastes pleasantly like apple cider vinegar, use it! Bottle some up, date it and use it as you would a lemon or lime in cooking or in place of vinegar in recipes. Also makes a great marinade for meats and tofu. Experiment!



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## KOMBUCHA INSTRUCTIONS

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## KOMBUCHA – ELIXER OF LIFE

- 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)
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 sun light, 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

- 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
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, fresh fruit and vegetable juice, extracts, 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.