

**Kombucha:**

**Your Probiotic Drink**

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**What is Kombucha?**

Kombucha is something that many people hear about and have a general idea of the health benefits, but really aren’t sure exactly what it is.

Kombucha is a type of probiotic drink, more closely resembling a tea. While you can add a lot of flavorings to make it taste different, it essentially consists of a starter with bacteria and yeast, tea, and sugar.

You can make it completely at home from scratch, or you can start with the kombucha tea starters, then flavor it on your own. You don’t have to be concerned about the sugar or caffeine, since most of it is going to be used up during the fermentation process.

**How Kombucha is Made at Home**

It is not uncommon for people to make kombucha at home. You can purchase it in bottles from health food stores and some supermarkets, but it does tend to be a little pricey when you go that direction. To save some money, you can try making it at home in larger quantities so that you are able to drink this healthy drink without spending half your grocery budget.

While it may seem complicated, kombucha is actually not that difficult to make on your own. As mentioned previously, you need to start with the ‘starter’, sometimes called an active starter culture. This is what uses yeast and bacteria and is necessary for proper fermentation.

It is combined with black or green tea and sits for about 10 days. You then will remove the culture that forms on top, and can then save that for future kombucha blends. The rest of the liquid is flavored and used for consumption.

**Ways to Flavor Your Kombucha**

Keep in mind that kombucha without anything added to it can be a bit of a pungent flavor. Many people prefer adding something to it to flavor it.

This can be anything you would add to your tea or a strong beverage, from fruit juice like from lemons or oranges, to actual pieces of fruit added to the batch and mixed in, honey, cinnamon sticks, herbs, seasonings, and other flavors of tea.

**The Health Benefits of Kombucha**

One of the top reasons people like to drink kombucha tea is because of how healthy it is for you. Probitoics are an excellent way to get the nutrients you need to help form a healthy gut, help with digestive problems and irritable bowel syndrome, fight the cold and flu, and even lower your blood pressure and cholesterol.

If you suffer from food allergies, having more natural probiotics can help with that as well. While there are supplement probiotics, others prefer drinking something as natural as possible, which is where kombucha comes in.

**Health Benefits of Kombucha11**

The fermented tea called kombucha is not a new concoction by any means, but it is gaining popularity by people who care about their health. You can find it in just about any health food store, plus many drug stores and supermarkets are also starting to carry it.

The reason people enjoy drinking it is because the tea, yeast cultures, and bacteria in it can actually really help with your health, particularly gut health and digestion. Here are some different health benefits to expect when you drink kombucha.

**It Helps With Digestion**

One of the top reasons people will drink kombucha is because it can really help with digestion and overall gut health. If you are someone that constantly experiences heartburn after eating, or general upset from things like dairy or strong flavors like garlic, drinking more kombucha can really help.

If you are drinking it for gut health, have it without flavor, or with just some mild flavors to begin with. Since kombucha is a probiotic, it is also really great in helping with leaky gut as well as if you get stomach ulcers or have GERD.

**Use it As a Detox**

Another health benefit to be aware of is the fact that kombucha can be useful as a detox drink. It helps to cleanse the system, particularly cleaning out the kidney and liver. This can help remove bad bacteria and toxins from your body, leaving you healthier and avoiding future illness and disease.

There are a lot of harmful effects of the environment, the foods and drinks you consume, and just being around certain damaging products, Detoxing your body with kombucha can be very beneficial. In addition to being a regular detox drink, it can also become a good antioxidant for your body, helping to reduce inflammation and avoid cold and flu.

**Help With Your Arthritis Pain**

Since kombucha helps reduce inflammation, it is the perfect natural remedy for joint pain, such as from arthritis. Joint pain is usually from the swelling and inflammation associated with arthritis, so by reducing that inflammation, drinking more kombubcha can help you to reduce your pain.

Kombucha helps with this because it improves hyaluronic acid production in your body thanks to the glucosamines it contains. This is going to boost your collagen, which is another way to help with pain from arthritis and other joint problems.

Some studies have also shown that drinking kombucha regularly can reduce your risk of getting certain types of cancers.

**Ways to Flavor Kombucha**

When you make kombucha at home, you will be left with kombucha in its purest form. It will be made with an active culture starter along with tea and sugar. However, when it is fermented, you no longer taste any sugar.

Since green or black tea is typically used, it can be a very strong and pungent flavor. If you are not a fan of this type of taste, you may want to add in some flavor. You can also flavor bottled kombucha if you purchased it without anything added. Here are some different ways to change the flavor of your kombucha tea.

**Add Fruit**

This is a really great option because not only are you getting more flavor from the fruit, but you can benefit from the fruit’s nutrients as well. There are some different ways to add fruit to your kombucha. The first way is just to add the juice of your fruit to the tea.

You can use a juicer for your fruit, or simply juice the lemon, grapefruit, or orange right into the tea. However, if using fruit without a lot of juice, such as strawberries, using a juicer first can be really helpful.

Another way that fruit helps you to flavor the kombucha is by using the actual fruit. You can take your fruit and puree it first, add little chopped pieces, or even smash it, then stir it in.

Instead of adding to individual cups of the kombucha, this works better when adding the fruit to the bigger batch of homemade kombucha. It helps it to get the flavor through a second fermentation process. You can then take the fruit out and be left with the flavored kombucha.

**Try Some Herbs and Spices**

Another way to get a new blend of flavors with your kombucha tea is to try adding some herbs and spices. These can be added along with your fruit or fruit juice to the batch, or you can go with these herbs on their own.

Choose any type of blend you like, such as going with crushed pineapple inside the kombucha, with some basil and mint. Some other herbs and spices that work really well with kombucha include vanilla bean, orange and lemon zest, basil, mint, rosemary, fennel seed, crushed cinnamon sticks, and fresh ginger.

**Use a Different Type of Tea**

You can also adjust the flavor of your kombucha by starting with a different tea. You might use green tea for the majority of the kombucha, but then add some flavored tea in there as well. It just kicks it up a bit, so that the final flavorings you add don’t need to be added quite as much. Keep trying new blends of flavors until you find one that you love.

**Alternative Uses For Kombucha**

You might already know that kombucha is made from an active culture starter, tea, and sugar, and that it is typically used as a tea you drink.

However, you might not realize that you can use kombucha for a lot of other things that you can consume, which can also help you get a lot of the same health benefits, such as proper gut health, better digestion, and reduced inflammation from arthritis. Take a look at some of these other uses for kombucha.

**Turn it Into Gelatin**

If your family enjoys eating gelatin as a snack or a healthy dessert, you can go ahead and add some of your kombucha to your gelatin and enjoy the health benefits that way.

It is really easy to make your very own gelatin snack starting with the gelatin and adding in kombucha, along with whatever type of sweetener you want.

You can use Stevia or another sweetener that doesn’t contain any GMOs. You just need to whisk it together and let it all dissolve over low heat on the stove, then refrigerate to harden. This is similar to how you would make regular Jello.

**Make a Dressing**

Kombucha can also be used for other food purposes, such as turning it into a dressing or marinade. Keep some kombucha in a glass bottle in your kitchen so that it is easy to grab and add to your homemade dressing.

It is really good for adding to various vinaigrette or oil and vinegar dressings. Combining it with some seasonings, olive oil, sea salt, and pepper makes a really nice vinaigrette. Flavor it any way you like, whether using Italian seasoning, honey, or going with some lemon juice.

**Add it to Your Smoothie**

If you tend to drink a lot of smoothies in the morning for breakfast, go ahead and add some kombucha to it. You will replace other liquid, like fruit juice or water in the smoothie, and add in the kombucha tea instead.

This makes it really healthy and can add an interesting flavor instead of just using plain water. However, you might want to use it in the more flavorful smoothies, like the ones used with sweeter fruits in order to get the best overall flavor from the smoothie.

**Mix a Unique Cocktail**

Kombucha can be used to create a signature and healthier cocktail as well. It has a fizzy quality, so this works really well with tropical cocktails that use fruit like pineapple, mango, and papaya.

**How to Make Your Own Kombucha**

If you have been looking at bottled kombucha tea that is sold in health food stores or your local supermarket, you have likely noticed how expensive it can be.

This is because it goes through a fermentation process, so it isn’t as simple as just combining ingredients in a manufacturing plant. However, you can make it on your own to always have it on hand, control what it is flavored with, and save some money in the process.

Here are some basic instructions for making your own kombucha tea.

**Gather Your Ingredients**

To make your own kombucha tea, you first need to have the right ingredients. The following includes a list of ingredients and tools that are needed for making your own kombucha tea.

* Large glass jar or container
* Hot water
* Kombucha starter
* Loose tea leaves – green or black preferred
* Sugar
* Metal tea ball
* Flavorings

Keep in mind that these ingredients are for when you are making a simple kombucha in a smaller jar, not a huge batch.

**Combine Your Ingredients**

The first step to making your kombucha tea is to combine your ingredients. Get the glass jar and fill it with your hot water and sugar first, allowing the sugar to dissolve completely. You will then add in the loose tea leaves contained in a metal tea ball, or you can use tea bags if you have those.

Let the tea remain in the hot water and let it cool down in temperature. You can then remove your tea bags or tea leaves, or leave them in for a stronger flavor. Add in your kombucha starter that you got from the store, which is made from bacteria and yeast culture.

**Let the Tea Ferment**

Once the ingredients are combined, it is time to start the fermentation process. You should cover your jar with a coffee filter or a towel that has a very tight weave. This allows it to fully ferment. It should not be messed with, but also not left in direct sunlight.

It can take anywhere from a week to a month to ferment, though 10-14 days is about average. At this point, you can remove the makeshift lid you created, scoop up the layer of culture on the top and save it as a starter for your next batch.

Remove any tea left in the jar, then add in your flavorings. If you are flavoring it, you will go through a second fermentation process. Otherwise, you can flavor the cup of kombucha each time you drink it.