

CHOOSING INGREDIENTS FOR MAKING GOOD KOMBUCHA



Making kombucha tea requires **five simple ingredients**: water, tea, sugar, starter tea, and a kombucha starter culture (SCOBY). You have lots of choices for each ingredient, but using the **right ingredients** for your kombucha creates a **healthier environment for the SCOBY**.

While it is possible to switch up the tea and sugar you use to change the flavor of your finished kombucha, I recommend you **wait until you have a baby SCOBY or two to spare before experimenting** with different tea and sugar combinations.

CHOOSING WATER FOR MAKING KOMBUCHA

What To Use

Kombucha cultures best when you use water that is **as free from contaminants as possible**. A high mineral content is not particularly important for kombucha, unlike other fermented beverages. In fact, it may be **harmful to the SCOBY if the water has too high a mineral content**. Basic, inexpensive **spring water** is fine to use, but a water that claims to be "mineral water" or has a high mineral content should be avoided if possible.

How to Remove Contaminants

We recommend using filtered water to **remove as many additives, chemicals, and contaminants as possible**.

If your water contains chloramines, it must be filtered. Removing fluorides also requires special filters. Check your filter instructions to check what contaminants it removes.

If filtering is not possible, at the very least, **aerating or boiling the water for 20 minutes** may remove the chlorine. **Letting the water stand for 24 hours will also allow chlorine to evaporate**.

What to Avoid

Water that is structured, alkalized, or pH-adjusted is **not appropriate for making kombucha**.

CHOOSING TEA FOR MAKING KOMBUCHA

Brewing kombucha requires **real tea (*camellia sinensis*)** for both minerals and nitrogen.

The type of tea used to brew kombucha can affect the health of the SCOBY as well as the taste of your finished brew. If you're just getting started, I find that **plain black tea** works best for making kombucha. I also recommend using organic tea possible, to avoid chemical contaminants. It's best to wait until you have a healthy SCOBY and have **made at least 4 batches of kombucha** before using some other teas. Follow the guidelines to experiment with flavors AND keep your SCOBY happy and healthy.

Type of Teas for Kombucha

Black Tea: Best Choice for a Healthy SCOBY

Oolong Tea: Another Good Option

Green Tea: Use with Extra SCOBYs

White Tea: Use with Later Batches

Red (Rooibos) Tea: Use with Later Batches

Yerba Mate & Other Herbal Teas: Use with Later Batches

A note about caffeine

If caffeine is a concern, **you can use decaffeinated tea** for making kombucha. (While it was previously believed that most of the caffeine is released in the first few minutes of steeping tea, this idea has proved false.)

CHOOSING SUGAR FOR MAKING KOMBUCHA

While it can be tempting to try to find ways not to use sugar in recipes, **sugar is required for the fermentation process and cannot be bypassed or substituted.** Using less sugar than required may **starve the SCOBY.**

Keep in mind that the longer the kombucha is fermented, the less sugar remains. Brew from 4-21 days, tasting along the way, to find the best balance between sugar and flavor.

Sugar	Description	Results
White cane sugar	Pure white, free of minerals	Good choice for brewing kombucha
Organic Cane Juice Crystals	Unbleached white sugar; very low mineral content	CFH best choice for brewing kombucha.
Brown, raw, or whole cane sugars	Sugar that is less refined and contains molasses	Hard on the kombucha scoby. Produces a yeasty kombucha and may shorten the scoby's life. Not recommended.
Honey	Natural sugar from bees; may be raw or pasteurized	Results may be inconsistent; If used, always have a back-up SCOBY available.
Agave, Maple, coconut, palm sugars or syrups	Sugar extracted from various plants or trees	Results may be inconsistent and hard on the scoby. Not recommended.
Stevia, xylitol, or Artificial Sweeteners	Sugar substitutes	Do not contain nutrients or proper food for the kombucha scoby. Not recommended.