SODA MAKING BASICS

Sweet Farm Sauerkraut

1 1/2 CUP SUGAR	FLAVOR	CULTURE	EQUIPMENT
Raw Cane Sugar Turbinado Demerara White sugar Molasses Malt extract *Maple Syrup *Honey *Agave *use experimentally	Ginger (grated) Whole lemons Fruit juice concentrate Dried fruit Roasted Dandelion root Sweet Potatoes (grated) Beets (chopped) Mint leaves Vanilla Cinnamon sticks	1 cup ginger bug 1/2 cup whey 1/2 cup Water kefir grains 1/2 cup Ginger beer plant	Cutting board and knife Grater Large mixing bowl Plastic Strainer (stainless steel is ok) Large spoon for stirring Funnel (3) 1-liter plastic soda bottles FERMENTATION VESSEL: Ceramic crock or 1 gallon glass jar And cloth with rubber band
THIS WILL MAKE ABOUT A GALLON OF SODA. ADJUST QUANTITIES ACCORDINGLY.			

1) Combine Sugar, flavoring, and culture in a 1 gallon wide mouth jar or ceramic crock. (Plastic containers work fine too, but DO NOT use metal). Add enough filtered, spring or well water (not chlorinated!) to fill the jar, leaving a 1 inch air space at the top. Stir well to dissolve the sugar, and cover with a clean cloth secured to the jar with a rubber band.

2) Leave the jar in a warm place for 24-48 hours, or until it appears active. It should have some bubbles on the surface, and more should rise when the jar is agitated. You can leave the solution to ferment longer, but beware it will start making alcohol at this point!

3) Using a fine-mesh plastic strainer, strain out the solids and capture the liquid in a mixing bowl (a bowl with a spout or a lip is best for pouring). Reserve the solids if you wish to use them for your next batch.

4) Place the plastic bottles in the sink. Using the funnel, fill each bottle leaving 1 1/2 inch of space at the top. Cap firmly and keep on the kitchen counter for 24-48 hours. Give it a squeeze a few times a day to keep track, and once it becomes firm the soda is carbonated. Refrigerate and enjoy within 1 week.

FERMENTATION RESOURCES

SWEET FARM SAUERKRAUT

www.thesweetfarm.com: home of Sweet Farm Sauerkraut. We offer basic fermentation workshops, private classes, and we're always happy to answer your fermentation questions. You can reach us through the website, or email Rachel directly at rachel@sweetfarmsauerkraut.com.

www.wildfermentation.com: A great resource for all things fermented. Its creator, Sandor Katz, is the "guru" of the modern fermentation movement. He's got great recipes and information. He also travels around giving talks and workshops. If you're ever able to see him, or even travel to his center in Tennessee, I highly recommend it.

Wild Fermentation and The Art of Fermentation, by Sandor Katz, are both wonderful print resources. I especially recommend Wild Fermentation for beginning fermenters. It covers everything from natural sodas to dairy cultures to wine and mead.

http://users.sa.chariot.net.au/~dna/kefirpage.html: Dom's Kefir Site is a truly amazing site dedicated to all things kefir, both milk and water. From basic how-to information to in-depth scientific analysis, his is an exhaustive resource that is worth a look.

www.culturesforhealth.com: an online source for all kinds of cultures and starters. Get kefir grains, sourdough starters, yogurt starters, kombucha mothers, and more. They also have a really great email newsletter with tips, tricks, recipes and support.

www.yemoos.com: another source for cultures and starters. This is where we got our Ginger Beer Plant.

www.fermentationrecipes.com: an archive of tons of fermentation recipes. Try something straight from their pages, or find inspiration for your own creations.

www.nourishedkitchen.com: a wonderful blog about cooking with whole foods. I include it here because she often features simple fermented recipes--sodas, kombucha, and others. She also offers recipes for healthy alternatives to "junk food" and treats.

EASY SODA CULTURES

TO MAKE AT HOME

There are lots of cultures that you can purchase to make fermented beverages. They all have their benefits, and we enjoy them all. However, our favorite cultures are the ones that you can make at home. They are quick, inexpensive, easily replaceable, and produce delicious results.

GINGER BUG

The Ginger Bug is our favorite natural soda starter. It is an obvious starter for ginger ales, but it also makes tasty sodas of any flavor. It is easy to use, and easy to maintain.

To start a Ginger Bug, you will need 1 cup of water, 2 tablespoons of sugar and 2 tablespoons of grated ginger. Mix the three together in a jar and cover with a clean cloth. Leave on your counter or on top of your fridge, and feed it 2 tablespoons of sugar and two tablespoons of ginger every 2 days. Add small amounts of water as needed to keep the mixture fluid. After several days, you should see bubbles on the surface of the mixture, and bubbles rising to the top when you agitate the jar. This means the culture is ready to use.

Once you have used the culture to make a soda, strain it and put it in a clean jar. Add water to cover, add 2 tablespoons of sugar, cover with a clean cloth, and leave on your counter. Continue to "feed" your culture every couple of days until it is active again.

WHEY STARTER

Whey is an easy way to culture fermented drinks. It is very simple to make, and gives you the delicious byproduct of thick, creamy strained yogurt. You'll find yourself wanting to collect the whey just to get it!

To make whey, start with a quart of plain yogurt. Make sure the yogurt contains active cultures, and is free of preservatives and stabilizers. Line a stainless steel or plastic strainer with a few layers of cheesecloth or a clean tea towel. Place over a glass or plastic bowl and dump the yogurt into the bowl.

Cover the bowl with a clean cloth, and leave on your counter for several hours or overnight. Spoon the strained yogurt into a clean container and put in the fridge. Reserve the whey into a clean jar and keep in the fridge until ready to use.

BASIC GINGER BEER

INGREDIENTS:

1 1/2 cup cane sugar
2 oz grated organic ginger (about 4 inches of ginger root)
1 lemon
1 cup Ginger Bug
Water (Not Chlorinated!)

Massage lemon by rolling it on the table with your palm. Cut it half, and combine with all ingredients in a 1 gallon jar, and stir to dissolve sugar. Cover with cloth and leave at room temperature for 24-48 hours, or until bubbly. Strain solids and reserve. Transfer liquid into plastic bottles and cap, leaving 1 1/2 inch air space. Leave at room temperature for another 24-48 hrs or until bottles feel firm to the touch. Refrigerate and enjoy within one week.

VARIATIONS:

-Try using less sugar and replacing with fruit juice for a different flavor
-Steep herbs like mint or dandelion root to make a tea to replace the water
-Use different types of sugar to alter flavor and color.
-Add raisins, prunes, or other dried fruit to the jar to soak.
-Experiment!

SWEET POTATO FLY

INGREDIENTS

1 lb sweet potatoes (about 2 medium size)
1 oz ginger root
1 1/2 cup sugar
1 lemon
1/2 cup whey
Water (not chlorinated!)

*optional:

pinch of Cinnamon
pinch of Nutmeg
1 eggshell, cleaned and crushed

Grate sweet potatoes and ginger into a bowl. Massage lemon by rolling on the table with palm. Cut in half and add with all ingredients into 1 gallon wide mouth jar and fill with water, leaving a 1 inch space at top. If you prefer a less sour beverage, add a cleaned and crushed eggshell to help neutralize acidity. Cover with a clean cloth secured with a rubber band, and leave at room temperature for 2-3 days, or until actively bubbly. Strain liquid into a large bowl. Using a funnel, pour into plastic soda bottles and cap securely. Leave at room temperature for 2-3 days, or until bottles become firm to the touch. Refrigerate and enjoy within 1 week.

BEET KVASS

THE SAVORY SODA

INGREDIENTS:

1 large or 2 medium sized beets
1/2 cup whey
1 teaspoon sea salt or kosher salt
1/4 cup sugar (*optional)
1 1/2 quarts Water

Coarsely chop beets, and combine with whey, salt, and water in a 1/2 gallon jar. Cover with clean cloth and leave at room temperature for 2-3 days. Strain liquid into a mixing bowl. If you desire a carbonated soda, stir in 1/4 cup sugar at this point. Transfer into plastic bottles, cap tightly, and leave at room temperature for 2-3 days. Refrigerate and enjoy within 2 weeks.

VARIATIONS:

--Try making kvass with different vegetables. Carrots or cabbage work well.
--Add some lemon or orange for a citrus twist.
--If you want a little sweetness without the sugar, add some sliced apple.