

Sip Kombucha Well



Look for kombucha made with less sugar

You may just be seeing it on your grocery store shelves recently, but kombucha has been around for more than 2,000 years. For most of its existence, kombucha was brewed at home, but in the last two decades companies have begun mass producing it, making it readily available

to everyone. Kombucha is a very simple beverage made from a combination of tea and sugar, juices for added flavors, and the magic ingredient: A “scooby” (symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast), which promotes fermentation of sugar and develops its sour, fizzy taste.

Numerous health claims have been made about this beverage, including its ability to treat cancer, diabetes, hair loss, and more. However, the research is more cautious: Some studies show promising potential health benefits, while others don’t support benefits at all. While kombucha may not be the cure to the world’s ills, it does offer some health potential. Like other fermented foods, kombucha contains probiotics, which are good bacteria also found in your body. Including probiotics in your diet can nourish your gut’s population of bacteria, promoting a healthy digestive and immune system.

Helpful Hints. Here are some things to keep in mind the next time you’re craving some of that sweet-sour refreshment.

- ▶ **DIY.** It’s fairly easy to make kombucha yourself, which allows you to add any personal flavors you prefer, and save a great deal of money (some brews fetch up to \$6 for a bottle). Just brew a tea and sugar mixture, add some pre-made kombucha (this acts as your “starter”), and the scooby (you can get this from a kombucha-making friend, buy it online, or make it yourself). You can find step-by-step instructions for making scooby and kombucha at www.thekitchn.com.
- ▶ **Some like it sweet.** If dietary sugar is a concern, check the nutrition label before choosing which kombucha brand to bring home. Some are fairly low in sugar, while others have the equivalent of 3 teaspoons of sugar in an 8-ounce serving.
- ▶ **Drinking and driving?** As a natural result of fermentation, kombucha contains a small bit of alcohol—usually not more than one percent. Drinking it should not impair driving or cause other problems, however it’s important to be aware of this if you have to avoid alcohol for specific reasons. **EN**

—Heidi McIndoo, MS, RD



Kombucha Nutritional Comparison

✓ = **EN's Picks.** As with all EN comparisons, this is only a sampling of products. Picks contain no more than 4 g of sugar.

KOMBUCHA DRINKS	Serving Size*	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Carbs (g)	Sodium (mg)	Sugar (g)	Protein (g)
Búcha Blood Orange	8 oz	47	0	12	0	12	0
Búcha Grapefruit Sage	8 oz	47	0	12	0	12	0
Búcha Guava Mango	8 oz	47	0	12	0	12	0
Búcha Raspberry Pomegranate	8 oz	47	0	12	0	12	0
Búcha Verbena Rose	8 oz	47	0	12	0	12	0
Búcha Yuzu Lemon	8 oz	47	0	12	0	12	0
✓ GT's Classic Gingerade	8 oz	30	0	7	10	2	0
✓ GT's Classic Third Eye Chai	8 oz	30	0	7	10	2	0
✓ GT's Classic Synergy Cosmic Cranberry	8 oz	30	0	7	10	2	0
GT's Classic Synergy Maqui Berry Mint	8 oz	35	0	8	10	5	0
✓ GT's Enlightened Multi-Green	8 oz	35	0	7	10	2	1
✓ GT's Enlightened Original	8 oz	30	0	7	10	2	0
✓ GT's Enlightened Synergy Black Chia	8 oz	75	3	8	10	4	2
✓ GT's Enlightened Synergy Strawberry Serenity	8 oz	35	0	8	10	4	0
✓ High Country Blueberry Ginger	8 oz	15	0	0	0	2	0
✓ High Country Cinnamon	8 oz	15	0	0	0	2	0
✓ High Country Grape	8 oz	15	0	0	0	2	0
✓ High Country Tropical Fruit	8 oz	15	0	0	0	2	0
✓ High Country Turmeric Beet	8 oz	15	0	0	0	2	0
KeVita Lavender Melon	8 oz	35	0	8	20	8	0
KeVita Mango Habenero	8 oz	35	0	8	20	8	0
KeVita Pineapple Peach	8 oz	35	0	8	20	8	0
KeVita Raspberry Lemon	8 oz	35	0	8	20	8	0
KeVita Tart Cherry	8 oz	35	0	8	20	8	0
Kickin' Kombucha Blackberry Coolcumber	8 oz	25	0	6	0	6	0
Kickin' Kombucha Blueberry Mojito	8 oz	30	0	7	0	7	0
Kickin' Kombucha The Goodness	8 oz	40	0	9	0	10	0
Kickin' Kombucha Straight Up	8 oz	25	0	6	0	6	0
Kickin' Kombucha Vanilla Lemongrass	8 oz	25	0	6	0	6	0
Kombucha Wonder Drink Essence of Lemon	7 oz	50	0	13	0	12	0
Kombucha Wonder Drink Essence of Peach	7 oz	50	0	13	0	12	0
Kombucha Wonder Drink Niagara Grape	7 oz	50	0	13	0	12	0
✓ Kombucha Wonder Drink Raw Japan	11 oz	12	0	2	15	2	0
✓ Kombucha Wonder Drink Raw Tibet	11 oz	13	0	2	1	2	0
Kombucha Wonder Drink Traditional	7 oz	50	0	13	0	12	0
Reed's Culture Club Coconut Water Lime	8 oz	50	0	12	10	11	0
Reed's Culture Club Cranberry Ginger	8 oz	50	0	12	10	11	0
Reed's Culture Club Goji Ginger	8 oz	50	0	12	10	11	0
Reed's Culture Club Hibiscus Ginger Grapefruit	8 oz	50	0	12	10	11	0
Reed's Culture Club Passion Mango Ginger	8 oz	50	0	12	10	11	0

Note: oz=ounce, g=gram, mg=milligram, carb=carbohydrates. Source: product websites. Note: All products contained zero grams saturated fat or fiber, thus these were not reported in chart. *Based on 8-oz serving size, except for products packaged in irregularly portioned containers.