



Easy Ginger Beer

Your homebrew supplier has ginger beer kits for you to make 30 bottles of ginger beer very easily. You can use these kits to make it as a soft-drink or you can make "hard" alcoholic ginger beer. The kits come with instructions & the recipe is designed to prevent exploding bottles & other problems often associated with "aunt Myrtle's ginger beer".

Whenever you make ginger beer kits you will need

- A 25 or 30 litre fermenter *
 - Enough bottles for 20 litres of ginger beer
 - A priming scoop for measuring sugar into the bottles *
 - Homebrew sterilizing compound *
 - Beer or screw top softdrink bottles
- * available from Liquorcraft

"Beermakers" brand & "Old Fashioned" brand ginger beers are excellent.

If you try either of these ginger beer kits, you can make our very popular "Ginger Grail" variation. Here it is.

Ginger Grail

The added malt gives it a creamy smooth texture & the optional extra ginger gives plenty of bite. The alcohol strength is about 4%.

Ingredients

- 1 can of Beermakers or Old Fashioned Ginger Beer*
 - 500g of malt powder
 - 1kg of glucose / dextrose
 - 1 tsp ginger powder (optional)
- * Available form Liquorcraft

Method

- Mix the malt & glucose powders together first.
- Add 3 litres of very hot water, stir to dissolve then add the ginger beer kit & ginger powder.
- Add cold water & bring the volume up to 18 litres (do not make up to the normal 22.5 L)
- Add the yeast & continue making the cider in the normal way
- The final SG will be about 1.005.

Hard Ginger beer (alcoholic)

This recipe makes a semi-sweet alcoholic lemonade of about 4.5% strength. You can vary the sweetness by varying the amount of lactose in the recipe or make it dry by leaving the lactose out altogether (see notes)

You will need

- A 25 or 30 litre fermenter *
 - Enough bottles for 20 litres of ginger beer
 - A priming scoop for measuring sugar into the bottles *
 - Homebrew sterilizing compound *
 - Beer or screw top softdrink bottles
- * available from Liquorcraft

Ingredients:

- 2kg glucose/dextrose *
 - 500g malt extract *
 - 500g lactose *
 - 100g to 200g crushed or grated fresh ginger (vary to suit your own taste)
 - Up to 4 lemons, sliced or chopped fine including peel (optional)
 - 5g yeast nutrient *
 - 1 sachet SAFAle yeast *
 - Water to make up 22 litres of wort *
- * available from Liquorcrafter

Method

- Heat 5 litres of water then add glucose, malt, lemons & ginger & simmer for 20 minutes.
- Sterilize your fermenter according to directions on the sterilizing compound.
- Add about 12 litres of cold water into your fermenter. Pour the hot mixture through a straining bag (available at homebrew suppliers) into the fermenter.
- Top up with cold water to the 22 litre mark add the yeast nutrient & stir well.
- Make sure the temperature is 30C or less & add the yeast, fit a fermentation lock in the lid of the fermenter & half fill it with water.
- The fermentation should start within 24 hours although it usually only takes a couple of hours to start. When it starts, bubbles should be rising through the ginger beer & stream through the water in the airlock.
- Allow the ginger beer to ferment until it stops then allow it to settle & clear for 48 hours.
- Use a priming scoop (available from homebrew suppliers) to add a measure of sugar to each bottle.
- Fill the bottle to about 50mm from the top then seal it firmly with a crown seal or screw cap.
- Store these bottles in a warm place for a week or 2 to allow them to condition (become fizzy). They will now be ready to drink.

Notes

You can vary the quantities of lemons & ginger to suit your own taste.

You cannot use sugar or glucose to sweeten a bottle fermented drink like this because it will cause the bottles to explode. This ginger beer is sweetened with lactose which is a non-fermentable sweetener. You can add more or less lactose to suit your own taste. As a rough guide, lactose is about half as sweet as sugar.

Ginger beer softdrink

This lemonade actually has a tiny bit of alcohol but it will only be 0.5% or less so it is a "soft" drink.

You will need

- A 25 or 30 litre fermenter *
 - Enough bottles for 20 litres of lemonade
 - Homebrew sterilizing compound *
 - Beer or screw top softdrink bottles
- * available from Liquorcrafter

Ingredients:

- 300g malt extract *
 - 1kg lactose *
 - 100g to 200g crushed or grated fresh ginger (vary to suit your own taste)
 - Up to 4 lemons, sliced or chopped fine including peel (optional)
 - 5g yeast nutrient *
 - 1 sachet SAFale yeast *
 - Water to make up 22 litres of wort *
- * available from Liquorcraft

Method

- Heat 5 litres of water then add malt, lemons & ginger & simmer for 20 minutes.
- Sterilize your fermenter according to directions on the sterilizing compound.
- Add about 12 litres of cold water into your fermenter. Pour the hot mixture through a straining bag (available at homebrew suppliers) into the fermenter.
- Top up with cold water to the 22 litre mark add the yeast nutrient & stir well.
- Make sure the temperature is 30C or less & add the yeast, fit a fermentation lock in the lid of the fermenter & half fill it with water.
- The fermentation should start within 24 hours although it usually only takes a couple of hours to start. When it starts, bubbles should be rising through the ginger beer & stream through the water in the airlock. It is ready to bottle as soon as it starts fermenting. If you delay the bottling, the ginger beer will be flat.
- Stir the mixture & fill each bottle to about 50mm from the top then seal it firmly with a crown seal or screw cap.
- Store these bottles in a warm place for a week or 2 to allow them to condition (become fizzy). They will now be ready to drink.

If you are interested in trying your hand at a traditional home made ginger beer, here's terrific a recipe

Traditional ginger beer

This is not really an alcoholic beer although it does have a very small percentage of alcohol from the fermentation process. The recipe is very simple and once you get the hang of making it you should experiment with other flavor combinations. This recipe has a strong bite.

You will need

- a large pot (about 8 - 10 litres) for boiling. Stainless steel or enamel is best.
 - a fermenter (a plastic or glass container about 5 - 8 litres)
 - a jug & a funnel
 - a packet of sterilizing compound *
- * available from Liquorcraft

Ingredients:

- 1 handful sized knob of fresh ginger root
 - 2 cups of sugar
 - 4.5 litres of water
 - 1 sachet SAFale yeast *
 - 1/4 tsp yeast nutrient *
- * available from Liquorcraft

Optional:

- substitute brown sugar for of the white sugar with brown sugar for added flavour
- substitute maple syrup for some of the sugar
- substitute malt extract for some of the sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (added bite)
- 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar (acid balance & smooth mouth feel)
- fresh lemon and/or lime sliced thinly or juice & zest only. You could try oranges too.

Method Stage 1

- If you have a juicer, juice the ginger root to make 1/4 to 1/3 cup of juice. If you don't have a juicer then grate or mash the ginger. A chinese ginger grater is excellent for this.
- Any citrus fruits can be sliced finely or you can use the juice & the zest of the fruit.
- Put the water into a large pot & bring it to the boil. Add the ginger & sugar plus any optional spices or fruits. Stir well until dissolved.
- At the same time add the yeast & yeast nutrient to half a cup of warm (not hot) water & stir well.
- Meanwhile let the mixture in the pot boil for a few minutes. If you are using fresh lemons or diced ginger you might want to boil longer to extract more flavors. When you have finished boiling turn off the heat & cool the mixture. You can use cold water & ice in a sink to speed the cooling.
- Use sterilizing compound to sterilize a fermenter according to the directions on the packet.
- When it has cooled enough to handle, strain the liquid through a sieve lined with cheesecloth or panty-hose into a suitable sized container (fermenter). When the temperature is 30C or less add the yeast, stir well, and then seal the fermenter with a brewing airlock or stretchy food wrap with a pin hole to allow gas to escape.

Stage 2

- The mixture should start fermenting some time during the first 24 hours. It is time to bottle when it is producing a steady stream of bubbles.
- You will need 6 x 750ml plastic lemonade bottles (or 8 x 600ml, 9 x 500ml, 12 x 375ml)
- Clean & sterilise the bottles & a pouring jug. Use sterilizing compound according to the directions on the packet.
- Decant the ginger beer into the jug (or pour directly from the fermenter if you can) without disturbing too much sediment in the bottom of the fermenter. It does not matter if a little sediment goes into the bottles. Fill each bottle to about 50mm from the top and screw on the plastic lid firmly.
- Squeeze all the air out of one bottle & re-seal it. Store all the bottles in a warm place.
- Keep an eye on the squeezed bottle. When it has re-inflated, the other bottles will probably be ready to drink. Put them all in the fridge straight away. This will cool the ginger beer so it stops fermenting & the pressure will stop building up. The squeezed bottle will need more time before it goes in the fridge.
- Once you have reached this stage, the bottles must be stored in the fridge all the time. If they are allowed to warm up again, the fermentation will re-start & the pressure will build up. It may even cause the bottles to explode.

Notes

Fermentation is the process where yeast consumes sugar & makes alcohol & carbon dioxide gas. Most yeasts work when the mixture is warm (say 15C to 30C). If the mixture stays warm, the yeast will continue to work until the alcohol is up to about 15%. It produces a huge amount of gas at the same time.

When you are making wine or beer or spirits, this is what you want. When you are making soft drinks, you only want to use fermentation to make a little bit of gas to make your drink fizzy.

Also, you have extra sugar in your recipe to make your soft drink taste sweet. You do not want the yeast to use up all the sugar because it will not be sweet & the gas pressure in the bottle will blow all the ginger beer out of the bottle as soon as you open the cap or even burst the bottle. This is the reason you put your bottles in the fridge & leave them there. It stops the fermentation.

There is a little bit of alcohol in your soft drink but will only be about 0.5% or less.

Because you are using yeast, there will also be some yeast sediment in the bottom of each bottle. You can shake the bottle gently & drink this, it is full of B group vitamins & it is good for you. If you don't want to drink it, pour the ginger beer very carefully & leave the yeast in the bottle.