HOW TO MAKE
Ginger Beer Plant

WHAT TO DO ONCE YOUR GINGER BEER PLANT ARRIVES
Once you receive your ginger beer plant culture from us, it’s important to get it fermenting as soon as possible. If your unable to do that right away, please ensure you activate it before the use by date that is stated on the packaging. Your order will contain 20g of ginger beer plant culture. This is enough to make a 500ml bottle of ginger beer.

- WHAT EQUIPMENT DO I NEED? -

**GINGER BEER PLANT AND METAL**
You will often hear that you should not use metal utensils while making ginger beer plant. Although this holds some truth, it has been greatly exaggerated! Ginger beer plant gets very acidic, if left in contact with metals for long periods of time, in theory it could degrade and rust the metal. That metal would then end up in the ginger beer plant and eventually in you. However, using a stainless steel strainer/sieve or spoon while making ginger beer plant will not cause any problems. The contact time between the metal utensils and ginger beer plant will always be very short. Never leave anything metal in contact with ginger beer plant for long periods of time.

**BREWING JAR**
You need something to brew your ginger beer plant in. We recommend using something glass. Glass is much easier to clean and keep sterile. Plastic tends to degrade over time and is prone to scratches which can harbour unwanted bacteria. Plastic also carries a risk of chemical contamination from the materials contained inside of it such as bpa. A glass kilner style jam jar is perfect to use.

**STRAINER/SIEVE**
You also need a plastic strainer/sieve.

**WATER FILTER**
We also recommend you buy a water filter to remove the chlorine from your tap water. You can use bottled water, but this tends to get expensive. You can also use coconut water in place of standard water.

**JAR COVER**
You also need something to cover your jar with. We recommend paper kitchen towels as they are easy to discard and replace. You can also use a muslin cloth or similar if you wish. Rubber bands also come in handy to secure the cover to the jar.

You can also remove the rubber seal from the lid of any swing top jar (such as the kilner jars supplied in our kits). With the seal removed you can close the lid while still allowing airflow during fermentation.

**BOTTLES**
You also need some bottles to store your ginger beer in. We recommend using plastic bottles. Ginger beer gets very fizzy. Make sure you use bpa free plastic.

**FUNNEL**
It is useful to get a funnel to help pour the liquid into the bottles.

**GLASS/PLASTIC MEASURING JUG**
It is also useful to have something to decant your strained mixture into. Glass or plastic measuring jugs are perfect.
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WHAT INGREDIENTS DO I NEED?
You only need 3 ingredients to make ginger beer, ginger, water and sugar. We prefer to use organic powdered ginger, but you can experiment with fresh ginger if you prefer. The water used must not be chlorinated. This is very important as chlorine will damage and possibly kill your ginger beer plant culture. It is important only to use golden granulated cane sugar or refined white cane sugar. Do not use unrefined brown sugar or molasses with your ginger beer plant. As these will over mineralise the culture leading to problems.

ACIDIFIER
Ginger beer plant likes an acidic environment. There are some ways you can achieve this. You can use ascorbic acid (pure vitamin C), cream of tartar or lemon juice. Add approximately half of a teaspoon per 500ml of any of these to each brew that you make. Failure to do so can lead to a build-up of unwanted bacteria in your brew, leaving a slime like substance which is unpleasant to drink.

ACTIVATION
You need to activate your ginger beer plant; this is to revive them from the shipping process. Add 250ml of non-chlorinated water to your jar. Add two tablespoons of sugar (30g) and stir, so the sugar begins to dissolve. Add half a teaspoon of your chosen acidifier. Place your ginger beer plant into the jar and cover it. Leave them for 48 hours. Strain out the ginger beer plant and discard the sugar water. Your ginger beer plant is now activated and ready for your first brew.

THE FIRST BREW
Pour 500ml of non-chlorinated water into your jar. Add 50g of sugar and your chosen acidifier. Stir the water mixture, so the sugar begins to dissolve. You can use warm water if you wish, however, we have never found any real need for this. Never use boiling/hot water. This will harm the organic ginger beer plant culture. Always allow any water to cool back down to room temperature (21 celsius) if needed before continuing.

If you want to use fresh ginger, add two tablespoons of chopped ginger (25g) to the sugar/water mixture at this stage of the process. Do not chop the ginger too finely. This will make it difficult to remove from the brew later on. We recommend chunks around 1-2cm wide. Add your organic ginger beer plant to the mixture. Cover the jar and leave it at room temperature (21 celsius) out of direct sunlight for 48 hours. If you want to use powdered ginger, do so only at the bottling stage.

Never leave any fermenting product in direct sunlight. This can lead to unwanted bacteria and pathogens forming.

The second brew
Strain the mixture into a measuring jug, ready to be bottled. Remove the old chunks of fresh ginger if needed. Now repeat the process from the start, making another batch of ginger beer with the strained ginger beer plant.

People ask how often they need to clean their fermentation jar. We tend to use a clean jar each time ourselves here at freshly fermented to keep our kefir making process as hygienic as we can. However, many of our customers tend to clean their fermentation jars on a weekly basis.

Bottling the ginger beer
It is now time to bottle your brew. At this point, you can either choose to add more ginger back to the strained mixture or leave it as it is. This is a taste preference. If you want to use powdered ginger (1 teaspoon), add this to the mixture now and stir well. Adding more ginger will make a much fierrier tasting ginger beer. Experiment to find your preference. Add one teaspoon of sugar (5g) to the strained mixture and stir well. If you want to increase the alcohol content, you can also add more sugar at this stage. We recommend only adding a maximum of 1 tablespoon (15g) of sugar however.

Using your plastic funnel, pour the mixture into your bottles, and seal them. Place the bottles at room temperature for 3-5 days. Check the bottles each day. Once they become firm, they are ready.

It is important if using glass bottles to check and burp (release some of the gas build up) daily to minimise the risk of explosions.

The ginger beer is now ready to drink. Place your bottles in the fridge too cool. Be very careful when opening the bottles. Ginger beer plant produces an extremely fizzy beverage that is prone to exploding out the bottle. We prefer to strain out any pieces of ginger or powdered ginger before drinking. You can now enjoy your authentic ginger beer.

Your organic ginger beer plant will grow quite slowly, but grow none the less. A good rule of thumb is to use 50g of sugar 20g of organic ginger beer plant. With a maximum 50g of organic ginger beer plant per litre of water. Too much sugar or too much ginger beer plant can lead to problems.
I’ve made my first brew, how do i make a larger amount than 500ml?

Once up and running with your organic ginger beer plant, you can increase the amount of water and sugar to make larger amounts of ginger beer. You want roughly 100g of sugar for every litre of water and around 10g of gbp per litre. If you reach a stage it is not carbonating well, you need to decrease the amount being made. A little trial and error is required but a small amount of organic ginger beer plant can often make a fair amount of ginger beer. In time, the culture will increase in size/weight. That does happen very slowly though!

I’VE FOLLOWED THESE STEPS, AND NOTHING IS HAPPENING.

Ginger beer plant very hardy. It’s unlikely they would have died during the shipping process. If you are experiencing problems, please do get in touch with us. Don’t worry, were always more than happy to resend more ginger beer plant if required.

WHY DOES MY GINGER BEER HAVE SLIME IN IT?

The ginger beer plant needs a low ph to make a ‘clean’ brew. It does lower the ph itself, but sometimes it needs a helping hand especially at the start of the brew when ‘bad’ bacteria have it easy. If you have a well established, very active ginger beer plant, you might be able to get away without acidifying it, but in the long term, you will need to lower the ph. The brew can get smelly or go very slimy if you don’t get the ph low quickly enough in the brew. We recommend always using an acidifier.

GOING ON HOLIDAY?

If you’re planning on going on holiday, you’re probably concerned about leaving your ginger beer plant unattended. Don’t worry though. Place them in a fresh batch of water and sugar and pop the jar into the fridge. It will keep like this for 2-3 weeks.

If you have more than one fermenting food culture at home, we recommend that you keep them at least 1 metre apart from each other at all times. This is to stop cross contamination of the different cultures. If you are working with dairy in particular, this is very important. Please contact us if you require further assistance with fermenting more than one culture.