

# DIY Fermented Root Beer: A Beneficial Beverage to Support your Health

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Did you know traditionally made soda used for be good for us? Well, it still can be especially if we make it ourselves. The idea of making your own herbal sodas or fermented drinks can be intimidating but it is very easy and fun, so I encourage you to try it and creatively blend your own favorite recipes.

If you are interested in learning more about the benefits of making your own root beer and how the herbs and beneficial microbes support our health, check out Nourishing Herbs Blog and read “*Homemade Old-Fashioned Root Beer: A Beneficial Herbal Soda*” which includes the very interesting history of Root Beer, how it was made popular with the adorable story of Maybell, the controversy of safrole and a few recipes to get you started. Check it out at

<http://nourishingherbs.blogspot.com/2017/12/homemade-old-fashioned-root-beer.html>

## Instructions for Making and Fermenting Herbal Soda:

### STEP 1: Make Herbal Infusion

Add all herbs and water into a large pot and cover with a lid to make the infusion. As soon as the mixture reaches a rolling boil, reduce the heat to low and allow it to gently simmer for 20 minutes. I allow my mixture to steep for another 5-10 minutes and cool slightly before straining but keep in mind the sugar will dissolve more easily in the hot infusion so avoid over-cooling it. If it does cool, you can re-heat the liquid again.



### STEP 2: Strain

Strain the infusion through a fine-mesh strainer or a colander lined with cheesecloth/muslin into a large jar or pitcher.

### STEP 3: Inoculate

Stir the sugar into the hot infusion until it dissolves and allow it to cool until the mixture reaches “body temperature”. Stir in the starter of choice (ginger bug, fresh whey or kefir grains, champagne yeast). Mix well and clean the area around the mouth of the jar, if needed.



### STEP 4: Allow to Ferment

Cover the jar with muslin or a towel and secure it using a rubber band. For best results use a jar or pitcher that is just the right size, leaving about 1-2 inches of head space from the top. Allow the root beer to ferment for three to four days at room temperature (ideally 72-75°), keeping in mind that it will likely ferment more quickly in warmer climates and may need more time during colder months or in colder climates. Longer ferments will result in more of the sugar to be fermented, more carbonated fizz and a stronger, more medicinal flavor. If you desire a sweeter root beer, consider a shorter ferment. You can use the taste method to determine the desired length of fermenting. Taste it after you see it bubbling and continue to ferment until desired flavor and fizz is achieved.



### **STEP 5: Bottle**

Once it is ready, pour the mixture into individual bottles, preferably the ones with the flip top or cap. Make sure your bottles have been cleaned well with warm water and gentle soap or vinegar.

### **STEP 6: Age & Enjoy!**

Transfer your bottles to the refrigerator for an additional 1-3 days to age. In cooler months I leave mine outside in an area where the temperature consistently stays cool, like the garage or back porch. Just keep in mind your root beer will continue to ferment even in the fridge. The process just significantly slows down. When you are ready to serve the root beer, be careful as it may explode when you open it to release the carbon dioxide, a natural by-product from the fermenting process which contributes to the natural bubbling fizz. Open the bottle over a bowl or sink to catch any overflow.

If your bottle explodes, which is known to happen, you can try to leave a little more head space in your bottles and/or reduce the amount of time you ferment it at room temperature. If you live in a very warm climate where your room temperature exceeds 75°, you may need to store your ferment in a cooler cupboard or pantry to regulate and slow down the fermenting process.

### **Fermented Fall Tonic Root Beer**

*A nourishing, healing & restoring tonic to support our immune system and more through the fall and winter months.*

- 2 tablespoons sassafras root
- 2 teaspoons sarsaparilla root
- 1 tbsp of fresh burdock root, shredded (or use 2 tsp of dried root c/s)
- 2 teaspoons licorice root (I use 1-2 tbsp of marshmallow root instead as my family and I are sensitive to licorice)
- ¼ cup of shredded astragalus
- ½ teaspoon anise seed
- ½ small cinnamon stick (I sometimes use 1 small cinnamon stick for an extra cinnamon note)
- ½ gallon of filtered water
- 1 1/2 cups of brown sugar (or use another unrefined sugar)
- 1/4 cup of ginger bug OR ½ cup of kefir grains OR champagne yeast