

Naturally Fermented Ginger Beer

This ginger beer is not too sweet, almost a little dry, but incredibly thirst quenching, with enough spiciness and hit to give it a valid place in your fridge as your Friday night sundowner.

A healthy ginger beer always begins with a healthy ginger beer bug, and it does take time to get to know your bug and understand how it needs to be treated in different environments. Likewise, with the ginger beer itself your first batch may not be perfect. It may be too dry for your liking, or have too much fizz, or not enough. There are a lot of variables at play such as the time of the year, the quality of your ginger, and the temperature while the ginger beer is brewing. But if you have a bit of patience and take the time to learn from your mistakes, then you will be rewarded with a thirst quenching, delicious all-natural fizzy drink, all for the cost of some ginger, sugar and time.

Ingredients

- 100 grams fresh ginger, preferably organic, finely grated
- 1 cup raw sugar
- 1 ½ cups water
- 200 ml bubbly active ginger beer bug, fed twice the day before using, then again the morning you intend to make ginger beer, 2 – 4 hours before making
- 4 litres water, rainwater or untreated is best
- Optional: 1-2 lemons

Method

1. Place the grated ginger into a pot with the first measure of water and bring to the boil. Simmer for 8 - 10 minutes with the lid off until the ginger is softened.
2. Remove the pot from the heat and add the raw sugar, stirring to dissolve.
3. Measure out the remaining 4 litres of water into a large bucket or large wide mouthed glass vessel. Add the ginger and sugar mixture and mix it in to cool it down – if you add the ginger beer bug to hot water you could kill it.
4. Once mixed, add the ginger beer bug and mix well again. If using lemons, clean them, cut them in half, squeeze the juice in and then put the juiced halves in too, skin and all. ***This is the perfect time to feed any remaining ginger beer bug.*
5. Sit the lid on the top of the bucket or vessel without sealing it – just sit it on top. If you don't have a lid a large plate will do.
6. Place the bucket into a warm part of the house out of direct sunlight. I put it about a metre away from our fireplace in the corner of our lounge – in winter the fire keeps it a nice temperature and in summer this is also a dark warm part of our house.
7. You will keep the bucket here for 2-3 days, stirring at least once every day before replacing the lid.
8. When you begin to see little bubbles around the edge of the bucket or through the glass, take a bit of ginger beer out and taste it. It won't taste fully finished yet, or have a huge amount of fizz,

but you are analyzing the sweetness and dryness of the drink. If it has that classic dry ginger beer flavour and isn't too sweet, you are ready to bottle it.

9. Drain the ginger beer into another large bucket or pot with a colander and cheesecloth placed over the top. Squeeze the cheesecloth out well. Using a funnel, pour the ginger beer into clean plastic or glass bottles – see note below. Ensure you leave a decent amount of room at the top of each bottle to give the bubbles room to expand. Secure lids tightly.
10. Now that your ginger beer is bottled you are going to put it back into a warm place. At this stage I find the landing at the top of our stairs is the best area as the temperature is consistently warm.
11. The next day release a little bit of pressure by gently opening the lid of each bottle. Do this the following day as well and have a small taste of one of the bottles. If it now has ample fizz and tastes like ginger beer, it is ready. If not, give it one more day. This is something that you will get better at gaging the more you make ginger beer. Once ready place into the refrigerator and consume within 7 - 10 days.

***Plastic gives a much better fizz to your ginger beer, so we use recycled 1.5 litre fizzy drink bottles that we have sourced from family, and we just keep reusing the same bottles. If you are using glass bottles, the ones with the flip top stoppers are the best for keeping the fizz in.*