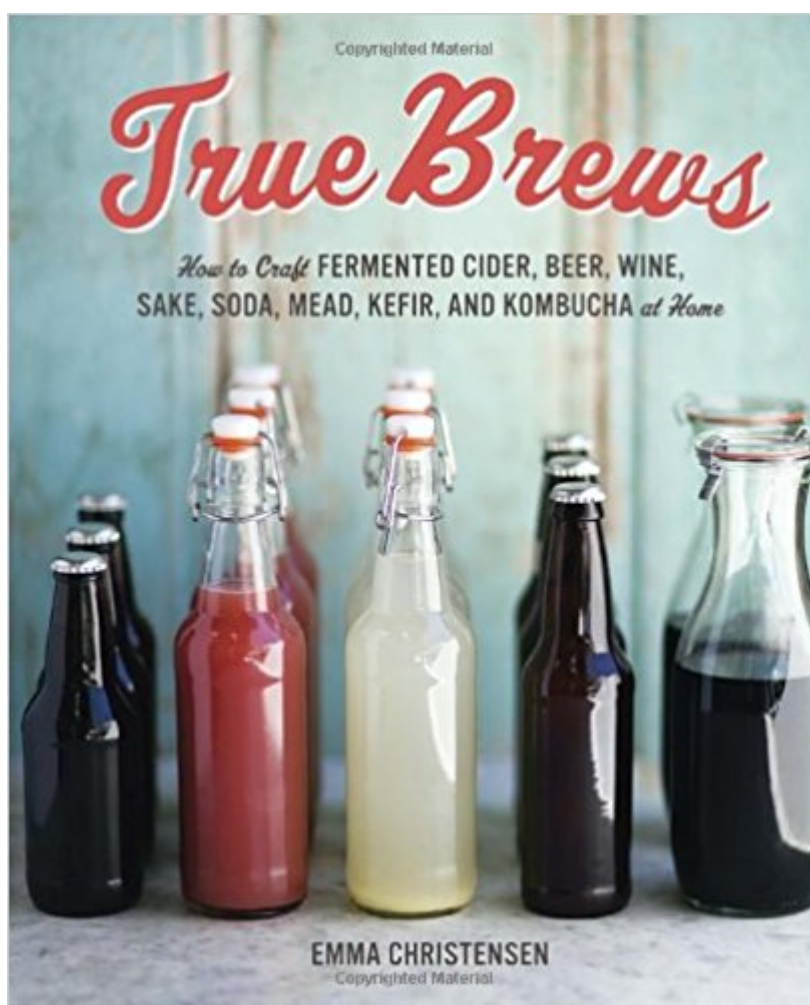


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True Brews: How To Craft Fermented Cider, Beer, Wine, Sake, Soda, Mead, Kefir, And Kombucha At Home



Synopsis

This accessible home-brew guide for alcoholic and non-alcoholic fermented drinks, from Apartment Therapy: The Kitchen's Emma Christensen, offers a wide range of simple yet enticing recipes for Root Beer, Honey Green Tea Kombucha, Pear Cider, Gluten-Free Sorghum Ale, Blueberry-Lavender Mead, Gin Sake, Plum Wine, and more. You can make naturally fermented sodas, tend batches of kombucha, and brew your own beer in the smallest apartment kitchen with little more equipment than a soup pot, a plastic bucket, and a long-handled spoon. All you need is the know-how. That's where Emma Christensen comes in, distilling a wide variety of projects from mead to kefir to sake to their simplest forms, making the process fun and accessible for homebrewers. All fifty-plus recipes in True Brews stem from the same basic techniques and core equipment, so it's easy for you to experiment with your favorite flavors and add-ins once you grasp the fundamentals. Covering a tantalizing range of recipes, including Coconut Water Kefir, Root Beer, Honey Green Tea Kombucha, Pear Cider, Gluten-Free Pale Ale, Chai-Spiced Mead, Cloudy Cherry Sake, and Plum Wine, these fresh beverages make impressive homemade offerings for hostess gifts, happy hours, and thirsty friends alike.

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Customer Reviews

Featured Recipe from True Brews Ginger Ale Makes about 8 cups Ingredients 2-inch piece fresh

ginger root 1 cup water, plus more to fill the bottles 9 tablespoons / 4 ounces white granulated sugar, plus more if needed 1 ½ teaspoon salt 5 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice (from 2 to 3 lemons), plus more if needed 1 ½ teaspoon dry champagne yeast Peel and finely grate the ginger (I use a Microplane). You should have about 2 tablespoons of grated ginger root.

Directions Bring the water to a boil in a small saucepan on the stove top or in the microwave. Remove from the heat. Add the sugar and salt and stir to dissolve. Add the ginger and let stand until cool. Stir in the lemon juice. Pour the ginger water into a clean 2-liter bottle using a funnel. Do not strain out the ginger. Top off the bottle with water, leaving at least 1 inch of headspace. Give it a taste and add more lemon juice or sugar if desired. The extra sugar will dissolve on its own. Add the yeast. Screw on the cap and shake the bottle to dissolve and distribute the yeast. Let the bottle sit at room temperature out of direct sunlight until carbonated, typically 12 to 48 hours, depending on the temperature of the room. Check the bottle periodically; when it feels rock solid with very little give, it's ready. Refrigerate overnight or for up to 2 weeks. Open very slowly over a sink to release the pressure gradually and avoid bubble-ups. Pour the soda through a small fine-mesh strainer to catch the ginger as you pour.

Featured Recipe from True Brews Cloudy Cherry Sake
Makes 1 gallon
Ingredients 1 ½ pounds fresh or frozen sweet cherries 1 gallon dechlorinated water (see page 14) 1 Campden tablet 10 cups / 5 pounds short-grain rice 2 ½ cups / 1 ½ pounds koji rice (page 146, or see Resources, page 176) 1 teaspoon yeast nutrient 1 ½ teaspoon acid blend 1 ½ teaspoon pectic enzyme 1 ½ tablespoons (1/2 tube) liquid sake or lager yeast, or 2 teaspoons (1 packet) white wine yeast

Directions Starting 24 hours before you plan to brew, sanitize a 2-gallon bucket, its lid, the air lock, and a spoon for stirring. Pit and coarsely chop the cherries. Combine the cherries with the water in the bucket. Crush the Campden tablet and stir it in. Snap on the lid and attach the air lock. Wait 24 hours for the Campden to sterilize the cherries. The next day, soak, steam, and cool rice as described on page 140. Add the steamed rice, koji rice, yeast nutrient, acid blend, pectic enzyme, and yeast to the bucket with the cherries. (If you are steaming your rice in batches, combine everything with the first batch and add the remaining rice to the fermenter as it is cooled and ready.) Stir vigorously to distribute the yeast and aerate the rice mash. Snap on the lid and attach the air lock. Store the sake somewhere cool and dark, ideally around 55° F. You should see active fermentation as evidenced by bubbles in the air lock within 48 hours. Ferment the sake for 2 weeks, stirring daily with a sanitized spoon. To finish the sake, sanitize a strainer, flour sack towel, stockpot, funnel, a 1-gallon jug, and its stopper. First, pour the sake through the strainer into the stockpot. Discard all the rice and cherry solids. Set the funnel in the 1-gallon jug and line it with the flour sack

towel. Strain the sake again, this time into the jug. Because of all the rice sediment, this can take a while. Stir the liquid in the funnel frequently to prevent the sediment from compacting and slowing down the straining. If the flour sack towel becomes clogged, rinse it out, sanitize it, and replace. Clean the stockpot. Set the jug of sake, uncovered, inside the pot and fill the pot with water until the water is level with the surface of the sake. Set the pot over medium heat. Warm the sake to 140° F to pasteurize the sake and stop the koji and yeast activity (this does not affect the alcohol content). Allow the sake to cool. To bottle the sake, sanitize ten 12-ounce bottles or six 22-ounce bottles (or five 750-milliliter wine bottles), their caps (or corks), the siphon hose, the racking cane, its tip, and the bottle filler. Shake the jug of sake to make sure the sediment is fully suspended in the sake during bottling. Siphon the sake into the bottles, shaking the jug again if the sediment begins to settle. Cap (or cork) the bottles and label. Sake can be drunk immediately or aged for up to 1 year. Shake the bottles before serving and serve chilled.

“I dare you to get through the first chapter of True Brews without running to your kitchen to try a recipe. Emma Christensen demystifies the process of homebrewing with her clear, empowering, and enticing recipes, showing us the full brewing potential of even the smallest and most basic kitchens. Even more, her enthusiasm is entirely infectious—get this book into enough hands, and I predict a homebrewed revolution.”

Alana Chernila, author of The Homemade Pantry

“Fermented beverages come in many varied forms, and True Brews explores a vast array of them. I applaud Emma Christensen for this user-friendly compendium of ancient wisdom, modern methods, and inventive flavor combinations. Invite microbes into your life via some of these lively brews. Become part of the fermentation revival!”

Sandor Ellix Katz, author of The Art of Fermentation and Wild Fermentation

“I confess: I was skeptical about brewing at home before picking up Emma Christensen’s True Brews. My skepticism was immediately quashed by this book, which like a shaken-up bottle of homebrewed soda, positively explodes with accessible techniques, enticing recipes, and best of all a clear, enthusiastic voice that guides you through the process. Thanks to this book, I can’t wait to start brewing and drinking my own beer, wine, and soda at home.”

Adam Roberts, author of The Amateur Gourmet and Secrets of the Best Chefs

“Are you fed up with the homogenized commodity beverages that often dominate the shelves of your local retailers, devoid of flavor, texture, and personality, but bountiful in marketing campaign dollars? Then do yourself a favor and learn to make your own! Use quality ingredients to create flavors that you want to drink—with True Brews as your guide,

it's not so hard to do. Cheers!
•Greg Koch, CEO and cofounder of Stone Brewing Co.
“Small-batch beverage-making encapsulated in a neat, easy-to-follow book. With 1-gallon introductory recipes and procedures making this all the more interesting (and fun), there are beverages for all tastes, ages, and circumstances. Health and refreshment be with you.”
•Charlie Papazian, author of The Complete Joy of Homebrewing

This is a very basic book on brewing a lot of different things. While we've brewed mead, beer, cider, and wine (not fruit wine), the clear recipes are handy even for these (except beer we're pretty experienced with beer... although these recipes are for 100% mashed, and we've tended to use a mix of mash and extract). One of the nicest things about these recipes is their small scale. If one does not know what one is doing, it helps not to be trying it in 5-gallon sizes! Even the 100% mash beer would be possible for us in a 1-2 gallon size, though it's unwieldy at 5+ gallons. I am very interested in learning to make soda. I am also finding the kefir and kombucha fascinating, because I think I could use some more probiotics in my diet and these recipes look tasty. I'm also intrigued by the fruit wines, especially in the smaller quantities described here. I've got some basic kefir started now, and am looking forward to exploring more of these very accessible brews.

I bought this book primarily to make soda since I already make kefir at home and as far as kombucha goes.. I just can't with the SCOBY. It's too... gelatinous for me. Anyway, the very first thing I did was to make the watermelon mint soda. WORTH IT. Oh My Gawd. I'm hooked.. some of these methods are too involved for me, like the sake, but I'm very interested in brewing mead and hard lemonade. My favorite bit about this book is that everything is small batches. You get to dip your toe into brewing without a huge investment. My first batch of soda was made in the recommended washed out two liter bottle. Less than a dollar for champagne yeast, a watermelon and some mint from my garden and I was all set to make the best soda ever in the world. Emma gives you a basic recipe/method for each thing to make.. a Master recipe, if you will. I'm already dreaming of the different kinds of soda I can make with this new information. I'm also looking forward to making hard cider as soon as it's apple season. UPDATE: 02/08/14: Well, I have a SCOBY because someone sent me one... and let me tell you, it's totally awesome once you get past the "omg what is this?" factor. I have made the blackberry sage kombucha and it's totally one of my favorites. I've also made the pear water kefir.. DELISH. I'm currently working on the Sweet Mulled Cider.. I'm adding the yeast tomorrow.. it'll be a long wait but it will be ready in October.

I bought this book for a recently-initiated brewer who was interested in learning how to make sodas and some other alcohols and drinks. This book seems to be designed for the non-brewer, and the recipes looked like they were written to be made with kitchenware, so I don't think many or any brewing-specific tools are needed. I would not recommend this for an advanced brewer with a general knowledge of brewing and drink recipes, but it is a useful, accessible book with a true variety of introductory recipes. This book is a hardback with colored pictures and very aesthetically pleasing shots, I'd recommend this as a keepsake and as a useful recipe book.

I purchased this book looking to expand upon my small-batch operations spurred on by the Brooklyn Brew Shop kits. I already had the supplies, I figured I'd try making other beers and other brews! I had never heard of kefir or kombucha, and they seem weird so I'm unsure of whether I'll try those or not... So those are not mentioned in this review. Soda: so far I have made the orange cream and cherry lime sodas. They were very easy to make and tasted great. Many people said the cherry lime one tasted like cherry pie in a bottle! I agree. Just make sure you let the soda carbonate fully before drinking! My first one came out a bit flat, which was my fault for rushing. Beer: the Mocha Stout I made via this recipe has been pretty good. The book is VERY basic on the brewing process, and doesn't give you all the information you need to make GREAT beer. From my limited experience in making over half a dozen beers over the past 2 months, I have found that having a decent library of other brewing books and advice from experienced brewers will help you make a better product. When I first tasted the Mocha Stout, it had a strong sort of olive aroma, which I learned comes from the roasted malts. This will mellow with age, so I have put the rest of the batch in the fridge and will try it over the next several weeks/months to learn about the mellowing process. Overall, the recipes are ok but are very basic. If you really like brewing beer you will need to go beyond this book. Cider: I am currently aging the Sweet Spiced Mulled Cider produced from the recipe in this book. It seems to be coming along well, as it's been aging a little over a month and was recently racked to its third fermentation stage to get it off the sediment. My first cider started out brown and murky, and is starting to clarify beautifully. It has an amber, golden aura and is truly beautiful. When I racked it over to another glass fermenter for longer aging, I was hit with yeasty and spiced aroma that was almost overwhelming but then I had a small taste. Those strong smells and tastes faded, and left me with a clean tart apple and sweet honey taste. I can tell this will be amazing after bottled and left to age so the initial funk dissipates. IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT CIDER: again, I had to find this information out from sources other than this book... Most cider you

find in grocery stores and farmer's markets is strictly a "sweet" apple cider. The sweeter the cider, the less actual apple taste you will end up with. I happened to stumble upon a sweet-tart organic cider from a small farm near Richmond, VA that seems to be ideal so far. Many orchards apparently do make batches of cider specifically for home brew cider making, so ask around and try to get some of the cider that has a good amount of tart apples if you want that apple flavor. Wine: mead will be first on the list, but I haven't tried it yet. Seems similar to the cider section so I'm confident I can do it with these recipes!

I gave this to my daughter as a gift, as she has made kefir and is interested in making wine. This book has a LOT of interesting things to try in it, and best of all you can make small batches and don't need a lot of expensive equipment! I have to admit, now I want to borrow it....I may have to give in and buy my own copy.

This was my first brewing book of any kind and it was a good book. As a beginner I found everything easy to follow and understood. I do not like alcoholic drinks and so I bought the book mainly for the soda drinks. However I want to make my own vinegars from start to finish, so I needed to learn how to brew in order to go from start to finish. This book does an excellent job with all of it.

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