

Ginger beer

Makes 128 oz.

Equipment:

- Large cooking pot
- 1 [128oz jug](#) for primary fermentation
- Funnel
- (7) 16 oz. glass flip-top beer bottles
- (1) 16 oz. heavy duty plastic bottle (such as Perrier or a soda bottle)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh ginger, chopped or grated
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup Ginger Bug starter
- 128 oz non-chlorinated water

You really only need a few things to get started making homemade ginger beer. First, you make a flavoring base for your ginger beer that is called a [wort](#). You can also think of it as a simple soda syrup that's made with fresh ginger, water, and sugar. That's it.

Fill a pot with half of your non-chlorinated water and bring to a boil. Don't forget, boiling water doesn't remove chlorine!

Chop or grate your fresh ginger. Add to pot and boil for 15 minutes.

Add sugar and stir to dissolve. Taste. It should taste very sweet and spicy with ginger flavor. Keep in mind that we're going to be adding the other half gallon of water so this will dilute the end result in half. If you want it even stronger or sweeter add more ginger or sugar.

Fill the sink with cool water and even ice cubes and put your hot pot of ginger beer wort in the sink to cool it down faster. We like to stir the pot to transfer the heat from the pot into the cool sink water and even changed the sink water out two times to speed the process up.

Add the other half of your non-chlorinated water to the pot and let sit until the entire batch cools to room temperature or is not warm to the touch. This is important as the next step we're adding our live ginger bug starter and you don't want to kill it!

Primary fermentation for ginger beer

Next we're doing a primary fermentation in large jars or jugs to get the bacteria and yeast excited!

Stir to distribute and strain off ginger pieces into a large measuring cup. We like using a strainer on top of a measuring cup to make the next step easier and not to make a huge mess.

Transfer your ginger beer wort to your fermentation vessel (or vessels). I like splitting the entire gallon between two 3 liter wine jugs filled about two thirds of the way. It makes it easier to manage later when pouring into bottles so it's not so heavy. Make sure while you're dividing it up to keep stirring the mixture to distribute evenly. The stronger ginger flavor likes to settle to the bottom.

Add your ginger bug starter. Since we're using two bottles, first stir up the ginger bug and then measure out 1/2 cup into one bottle and 1/2 cup into the other bottle.

Cover loosely with a cap or towel and let sit between 3 days to 1 week. This will vary depending on how cool your house is and how active of a ginger bug starter you have. Check on it every day to see how it's progressing.

What to expect during fermentation

Usually between one to two days, we'll start noticing white bubbles appearing on the surface of the ginger ale. At first glance you might be taken aback because it looks a little like mold on the surface.

After three days things start getting crazy with the bubbles multiplying into a solid foam on the surface. At this point you could probably bottle, but we like to wait another day or two to let things settle down a little bit.

After five days, you might notice that fermentation has slowed and there might be less bubbles appearing on the surface. Once you've passed this point, it's time to bottle!

Secondary fermentation and bottling

Any time we mention bottling an active ferment, we want to caution you that this can be dangerous! When you have pressure building up inside a glass bottle, you basically have a little glass bomb so be careful!

For 128 oz of ginger beer, we need (8) 16 oz. bottles. A trick we like to add a margin of safety is to use one heavy duty plastic bottle as a tester. You can squeeze it to get an idea of how much pressure might be building up inside the glass bottles.

Speaking of beer bottles, we love using these [flip-top beer bottles](#) for homebrew to make all of our bubbly sodas. You'll want to use something that can hold pressure. A mason jar is not good for this as it will easily crack or explode.

Time to bottle!

Grab a funnel and begin transferring your ginger ale into the bottles while you keep stirring to make sure everything is evenly distributed. You'll want to fill the bottles to the neck line to leave enough headroom for the building pressure. Don't forget to reserve one bottle as the plastic tester. Flip or screw the tops to put the pressure on.

In this secondary fermentation stage, over the next couple of days we're going to squeeze the tester bottle to gauge the pressure.

Since no air can escape, CO₂ is forced into the liquid causing your ginger ale to carbonate. If you don't like carbonation, feel free to skip this step completely and enjoy your ginger ale without the bubbles.

For us, we normally bottle about 2-3 days making sure to squeeze the plastic tester bottle a couple times a day. Whenever it gets firm without any give, it should be ready!

Once you're happy with the pressure, move all of your bottles to the refrigerator to slow down the fermentation process.

Beware! Your ginger ale bottles will keep fermenting and building up pressure over time even in the refrigerator. Make sure to enjoy them often! You can always make more.

Do some batches ferment faster or slower than others?

When adding your ginger bug starter, make sure to stir it completely before you take some, because yeast tends to sink to the bottom. Also when transferring your wort or bottling, make sure to stir the batch while you're pouring and dividing to make sure all of the ingredients are uniform.