

## Ginger Beer

### Equipment:

Sharp knife and/or grater  
Large saucepan or stockpot, ~1 gal.  
Metal spoon  
measuring cup  
cheesecloth  
funnel  
empty swing-top glass or 2-liter soda bottles

### Ingredients:

½ lb. Fresh ginger  
Dried ground ginger (for final flavor adjustment)  
3-4 Key limes  
2 c. dark sugar  
1 packet dry yeast

### Procedure:

1. Grate or thinly slice the fresh ginger. You can peel it first if you like, but it won't make any difference.
2. Put 2 qts water on to boil.
3. When the water has come to boil, remove from heat, stir in the sugar. Stir until completely dissolved.
4. Return to heat. Add ginger. Bring to boil.
5. When the beer comes to the boil, halve the citrus. Squeeze the juice thoroughly into the pot, then toss the remnants therein.
6. Switch off heat. Cover.
7. Wait for beer to cool. (4 hours or so)
8. Taste. If beer is too sweet, dust the surface with dried ginger to taste.
9. When beer is room temperature, add yeast. Recover with clean aluminum foil and let it sit for 24 hours.
10. Assemble enough clean, sanitary bottles to accept all of your precious fluid. I like to use swing-top beer bottles. The best part is I get to buy the Grolsch and drink it first. :)
11. Clean your funnel. Clean your metal or glass measuring cup.
12. Line the funnel with cheesecloth.
13. Place the funnel in the mouth of the bottle.
14. Use the measuring cup to scoop the beer from the pot into the bottle.
15. Lather, rinse, repeat until you run out of beer. Have some ice and rum handy, because you very likely won't have enough beer to fill the last bottle, but you don't want to waste it.

- Just strain it into a glass over ice, add rum, and savour your reward. :)
16. Cap the bottles tightly, put 'em in a cardboard box with a lid. Wait 24 hours.
  17. Refrigerate.

#### NOTES:

Keep your ingredients as fresh and organic as possible for full points. I can get locally-grown ginger at the farmer's market here, but I live on a Caribbean island.

Base the number of Key limes you use on size - if your Key limes are small compared to regular limes, get enough to equal two regular limes. If you can't get Key limes, use regular limes, but dock yourself several points.

Sugars can be Turbinado, Demerara or Muscovado. DO NOT USE BROWN SUGAR. The point here is to have a sugar which has not been fully refined. Dark sugars like those listed have not been refined completely to the white sugar you find in the market. "Brown sugar" is merely white sugar with molasses added back in. Molasses is what's left after the refining process. Molasses is what rum is made from. Kismet. :)

For yeast I use bread yeast, because that's what's in the store here. It works fine. Dry champagne yeast is said to be superior, however, and can be found at any decent homebrewing store. It will also work more quickly and ferment more completely, resulting in a drier product.

I use swing-top beer bottles. You can buy new swing-tops from the local homebrew store, but that's expensive. When I lived on the mainland, I used Grolsch bottles, because buying them with beer in was cheaper than buying new empty swing-tops from the homebrew store.

You can also use a growler from your local brewpub or 2-liter soda bottles, but you need to drink the ginger beer up quickly if you go that route; that's good for parties.

Regardless what you use to package the final beer in, keep them clean and sanitary. You can rinse with a chemical solution of ¼-oz bleach to 1 gal cold water to sanitize a clean bottle. I use the dishwasher set to "sanitize". :) Of course, you MUST ensure all paper labels have been removed before doing this, unless you want to buy a new dishwasher.

When adjusting the taste with dried ginger, keep in mind the fermentation process will result in your now-sweet beer becoming more dry and ginger-y. Also, dried ginger powder is very strongly flavored indeed, and it's really easy to go too far.

The 24 hours in the bottle at room temperature is to allow the beer to carbonate. If you want uncarbonated ginger beer, just bottle it and immediately refrigerate it.

Using the cheesecloth will keep the large chunks out of the final bottles. You will still have some

floaters. It happens, and it's harmless.

Don't try to get every last fluid ounce out of the pot. If you do, that last bottle will be mostly yeast and gunk, and it will taste AWFUL.

The yeast and gunk left in the bottle will be very much appreciated by your compost pile. (You \*do\* have one of those, right?)