

BASIC PINEAPPLE TEPACHE

Recipe based on "fermented probiotic drinks at home" by Felicity Evans

A sweet, bubbly, fragrant and hydrating easy-to-make fermented drink. Try to catch the ferment just in time, as the longer it ferments, the more alcohol it will produce. It can turn vinegary and viscous.

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Fermentation time: 2-10 days

Makes: about 2 quarts

Shelf life: up to 2 months in the refrigerator

TOOLS NEEDED:

2 quart wide mouth jar
cheesecloth
rubber band
funnel
tall tapered jars with seal, such as spring-top
bottles or home-brew bottles

INGREDIENTS:

2 quarts filtered water or spring water
1 cup raw sugar, or brown sugar
1 pineapple

PRIMARY FERMENTATION

Bring 1 cup of the filtered water to a boil. Add sugar to a heat-proof 2-quart wide-mouth jar. Pour in the boiling water and stir until well dissolved. Add enough of the remaining water to fill the jar to $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Set aside to cool.

Wash the outside of the pineapple. Don't scrub too hard, you want to keep the natural bacteria. Using a sharp knife, cut off the pineapple skin, leaving a little bit of flesh attached. Add the skins to the sugar water solution and stir vigorously (I often put on a lid and shake.)

Top up with the filtered or spring water to fill the jar. Cover the jar with a piece of cheesecloth (I use a coffee filter). Secure in place with a rubber band.

Place the jar out of direct sunlight in a warm spot and leave for 1-7 days, depending on the room temperature. If it is very hot, check after 12 hours as this may be sufficient time for fermentation to occur. Give the tepache a vigorous stir each day and check the taste. If the pineapple skins pop out of the liquid, push them back down to reduce the chance of mold. Skim foam from top of the jar as needed.

HOW TO KNOW WHEN TEPACHE IS READY TO BOTTLE (secondary fermentation process)

Smell: The tepache should have a slight vinegary smell – the smell of pineapple will be present, but it will be a little more acidic.

Look: You should see small bubbles on the side of the fermentation vessel. There might be white foam (which you will spoon off) on the top, and you may see bubble rising up from the bottom of the jar to the top. This is fermentation in action.

Taste: You should notice a change in flavor from sweet to a little more savory as fermentation develops. The finished tepache almost tastes buttery, with toasted caramel flavors. It has a delicate balance between sweet and savory. It is light on the palate, very clean and refreshing.

SECONDARY FERMENTATION

Bottling:

Remove and discard the pineapple skins. Skim off any foam/scum from the top of the tepache.

Put a funnel in the opening of a glass bottle and put a piece of cheesecloth or fine strainer in the funnel. Pour tepache into bottle leaving 2" from top. Repeat with remaining tepache and bottles. Some use 1-quart bottles, I use 16oz.

Tightly seal the bottles and leave the bottles on counter to build up carbonation. This could take 1-3 days, depending on room temperature. "Burp" the tepache daily, twice a day if very warm, to release some pressure by opening the lids slightly then tightening them again. Depending on residual sugars and fermentation activity, pressure can build significantly. In order to prevent the bottle from exploding, test the fizz every day.

DRINK UP!

When the tepache is as fizzy as you prefer (this could range from a small spritz to a ferocious fizz), store in the fridge to slow fermentation process, and enjoy it cold.

TROUBLESHOOTING

What if the brew turns moldy? Throw it out. (This has not yet happened to me.)

What if the brew isn't fermenting? If your tepache is not fermenting after 7 days, ask yourself the following questions:

- ~Have you been regularly and vigorously stirring the tepache?
- ~Is the brew too cold? (try moving to a warmer spot)
- ~Does it have enough sugar? (try pouring out a cup of liquid, replacing with sugar water)
- ~Are there pesticides on the pineapple skins? (this could inhibit fermentation)

What if the tepache is too thick? Generally this is still fine to drink, just try diluting it with sparkling mineral water or soda water.

What if my tepache isn't sweet enough? If you prefer sweeter drinks, just add more sugar at the first fermentation stage.

What if the tepache turns alcoholic? All ferments are a little alcoholic, but the high sugar content of pineapple means that tepache has the potential to become more alcoholic than other ferments. Enjoy it cold at happy hour, on a hot night, or as a spritzer mixed with sparkling mineral water or coconut water.