

Turn up the volume

A little bit fizzy, a tiny bit tart and brimming with sweetly refreshing flavours, Amplify Kombucha has arrived in New Zealand.



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Meet the Amplify team. Top: Ben Walkley, Greta Knarston, Sam Azamir and Fernando Wan – who found the SCOBYs and helped develop the recipe.

The kombucha buzz has been fizzing quietly around the country for a while now, but it's set to get a lot louder as more people are choosing naturally-made, low-sugar drinks that are actively beneficial for their health.

A 'living' beverage, kombucha is fermented tea that naturally contains live cultures. It's these live cultures that are known to support good gut-health – they're what makes drinking kombucha good for you.

People have been drinking kombucha and fermented drinks for their health benefits since ancient times. Kombucha originates in China and versions of it are found around the world.

“Live cultures and fermentation are everywhere,” says Ben Walkley, Project Lead at Amplify Kombucha. “Products such as yoghurt, cheeses and sourdough bread all either have, or start with, a live culture when they are made. Fermenting provides brewed notes to kombucha; other products including soy sauce, sauerkraut and beer are all fermented.”

The small team at the Amplify boutique

brewery in Sydney was set up by Kiwi's – and everyone is a dedicated fermentation fan. To produce their kombucha they use a traditional fermentation process involving a blend of three organic teas and a live culture known as SCOBY – the acronym for symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast. It's the kick-starter to the fermenting process and is key to making any kombucha. “SCOBY's job is to consume any sugar that's present – that's its food,” says Ben. “In the process, it produces good acids and bacteria that give the tea a tangy and refreshing taste.”

It takes about a month to batch-brew the kombucha and it requires constant monitoring and tasting to know when the batch is ready.

“We all live and breathe kombucha and have been doing so for a while,” says Ben. “Siewerd is our marketing expert and led the charge in developing the brand, while Hal has been up to his elbows in the factory since we got the filling line delivered late last year.”

The team also includes production manager Sam; Karl and Helen, who lead sales and marketing in Australia, and Angela, who looks after New Zealand. “Then we have Sandra, Ursula and Fernando, our brewmeisters, who have all helped to develop our great-tasting product,” says Ben. “They're always trying out new flavour combinations.”

The clean, smooth, rounded finish without any vinegary aftertaste is something the Amplify team has worked hard to produce – and it's what makes their kombucha just that little

bit more accessible.

They've also paired flavours we all know and love – like fruity raspberry with lime or warming ginger and lemon. “The aim for us was to demystify kombucha by bringing recognisable flavour combinations – with a twist,” says Ben. “Our kombucha is for everyone who wants a great-tasting alternative to sugary soft drinks or alcohol, and to feel good from the inside out.”

Another appealing thing about their kombucha is its low-sugar content – on average less than a quarter teaspoon per 300ml bottle of Amplify – which makes it a guilt-free drink for any day of the week. The kids can enjoy it instead of soft drinks, and the fizzy, tangy, low-sugar sweetness makes it an excellent substitute for bubbly or beer at social occasions.

The brown Amplify bottle looks a lot like a craft cider or beer, and that's not the only thing that makes it a great option instead of alcohol or sugary soft drinks. Amplify Kombucha ticks a good number of lifestyle boxes – it's gluten-free, vegan, paleo friendly and contains no artificial flavour, colours or sweeteners. And it's organic too. You can find it in the chiller at all good supermarkets and cafés.

“We are all really proud to have such a great tasting, good-for-you beverage on the market,” says Ben. “Try Amplify, we think you'll be pleasantly surprised.”

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