

# GINGER BEER

With Okinawan beet sugar

Summers can get hot in Tokyo and cooling off soon becomes an imperative. But when you're clocking up 80% plus humidity on the thermometer everyday, often before you've had your bean paste, rice and お茶 for breakfast, it's easier said than done. Fortunately, 田中さん, my elderly neighbour in the Yokohama Docker's Residential Hotel that I checked into many years ago when I first set foot in 日本, had the answer! She swore by the cooling powers of this ginger beer recipe and always insisted that the only ginger worth using was from China, but I've often had to use some whose ancestors had missed out on revolutions in culture and it tasted pretty damn good, too.

## Ingredients

4,5 litres of water

150 grammes of fresh root (okay, from 中国) ginger, peeled and chopped into small pieces

4 cloves

405 ml of cane (brown, or Okinawan beet) sugar

2 flat teaspoons of dry active yeast

## Instructions - preparation

1. Boil the water and then remove it from the stove.
2. Add the sugar, chopped ginger and cloves, stirring them in well until they become good buddies with the H<sub>2</sub>O.
3. Several hours later, once cooled to a lukewarm temperature, add the yeast.
4. After 20 minutes and again every hour, or when ever it takes your fancy, cajole the diluting, foaming yeast into the ginger beer-to-be.
5. Leave covered for 24-36 hours and then filter into bottles\* using coffee filter paper or muslin placed in a funnel (preferably melted around the edges thanks to your kid's distilling experiments with basil leaves and water on an open gas flame).

Close tightly and refrigerate (the fermenting process slows down with the cold of the fridge, but shake the bottle before serving to activate the yeast [but be careful it does not gush out like champagne!]).

Serve fresh with crushed ice and a slice of lime or lemon!

\* It is better to use plastic bottles to accommodate the fermenting yeast.