

# Making Wild Herbal Soda



Elder Flower & Rose Wild Soda

Wild Sodas are a fun and easy way to make living, medicinal, naturally probiotic beverages that are made by wild fermentation- we don't add any yeast- the wild yeast on the flowers and yeasts in the raw honey are what cause the fermentation! They can be made with 100% local ingredients, making them a wonderful example of "localvore medicine" that reflects the true terroir of the land and has a super small carbon footprint. I mostly make them in the warmer months, but they can be made year-round. They can be made purely for taste preferences and pleasure, or the herbs can be selected based on desired medicinal effects- the choice is yours! Below I've shared the two methods of wild sodas that work best for me (although there are definitely other methods out there!). I share some of my favorite herbs for wild-soda-making and their medicinal actions as well!

# Wild Soda with Fresh Herbs



Lilac Wild Soda made with fresh flowers

## *Ingredients:*

- 12 tbsp fresh herb of choice (you can also add fruit for added flavor)
- 1/2 c Raw Honey
- 1/2 gallon un-chlorinated Water (spring/well water best)

## *Method 1: Hot Water Infusion*

Put your herbs in a half-gallon mason jar and fill the jar with boiling water. You can put a lid loosely on at this point to prevent volatile oils from escaping while it steeps. When it has cooled completely, add the 1/2 cup raw honey and mix well. It's ok if it doesn't all dissolve right away if your honey is crystallized, as it will dissolve on its own in a day or two. Cover with cheesecloth or a bandana or thin cloth so it can still breathe but bugs can't get in, like fruit flies. This method arguably creates a more medicinal brew than the cold water infusion method below because you are essentially making a tea, which will broadly extract the active plant constituents.

Now you wait for it to start fermenting! It's important to stir it a few times a day and when it starts fizzing/bubbling when I stir it, I know it's started fermenting. Time to

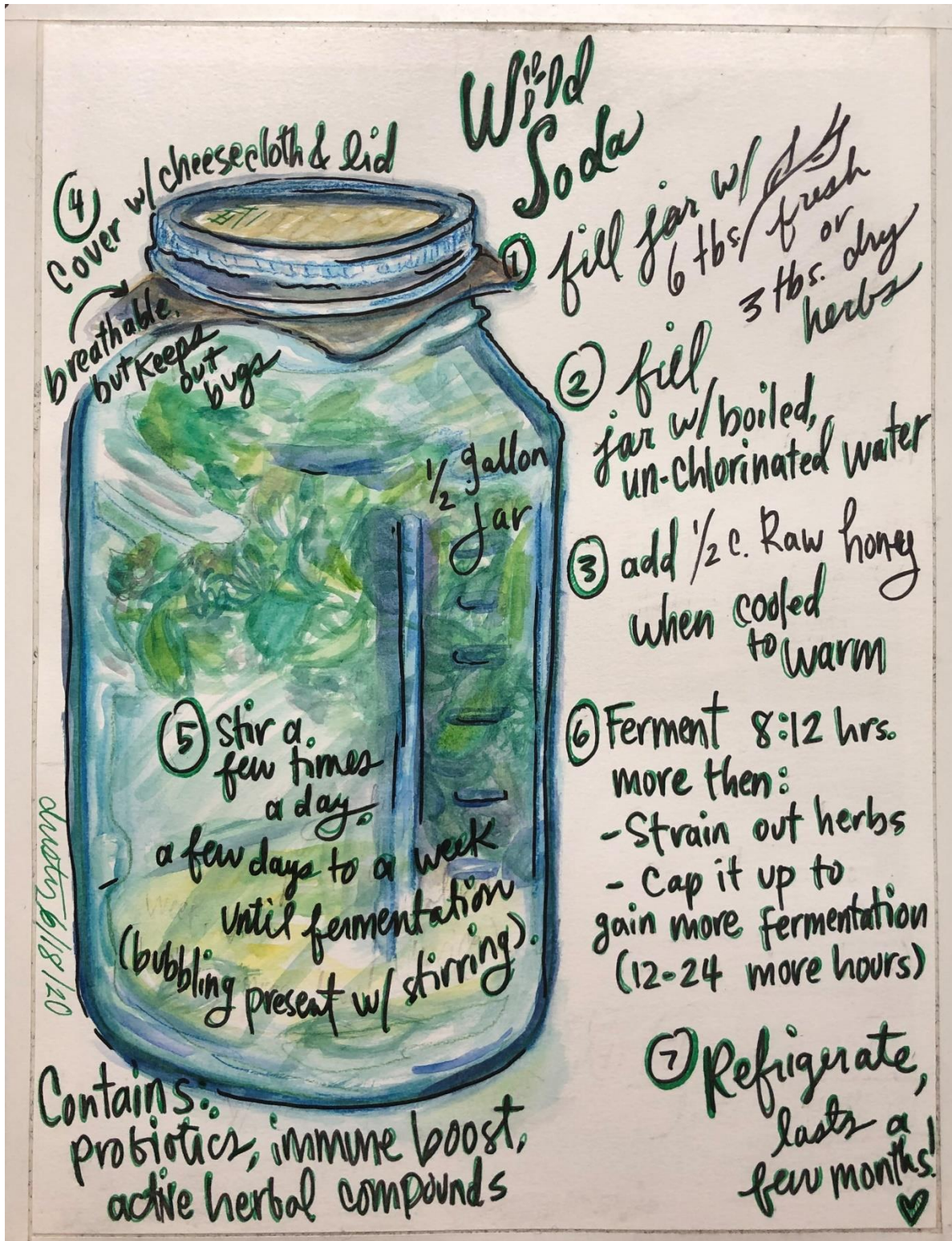
initial fermentation can be a few days to over a week depending on ambient temperature. Once it starts bubbling, I usually let it ferment for another 24-48 hours, being sure to still stir it. It's best to taste it a little bit every day (using a clean spoon each time) once it starts fermenting as a litmus test for when it's time to strain- you want it to taste sparkling and effervescent before you strain it. When you feel it's ready strain out the herbs, cap the jar, and let it sit out at room temperature to build carbonation. This timing can vary, but often 24-48 hrs is a good amount of time to build-up good carbonation. A nice trick is to put some of your strained wild soda in a small jar as a tester for the fizz factor as you can test it for fizziness without losing the carbonation in the big jar each time to test it. Store in the fridge where it will last for at least 3 months and likely longer- I just usually drink it by then!

### *Method 2: Cold Water Infusion*

Put your herbs in a half-gallon mason jar and fill the jar with cold or room-temperature water. Next add the 1/2 cup raw honey and mix well. It's ok if it doesn't all dissolve right away if your honey is crystallized, as it will dissolve on its own in a day or two. Cover with cheesecloth or a bandana or thin cloth so it can still breathe but bugs can't get in, like fruit flies. This method arguably creates a less medicinal brew than the hot water infusion method above because you aren't making a tea- the process mainly pulls-out volatile oils, which are of course medicinal, but things like minerals and alkaloids are likely not going to be in the finished wild soda. That being said, this is still my favorite method!

Now you wait for it to start fermenting! It's important to stir it a few times a day and when it starts fizzing/bubbling when I stir it, I know it's started fermenting. Time to initial fermentation can be a few days to over a week depending on ambient temperature. Once it starts bubbling, I usually let it ferment for another 24-48 hours, being sure to still stir it. It's best to taste it a little bit every day (using a clean spoon each time) once it starts fermenting as a litmus test for when it's time to strain- you want it to taste sparkling and effervescent before you strain it. When you feel it's ready strain out the herbs, cap the jar, and let it sit out at room temperature to build carbonation. This timing can vary, but often 24-48 hrs is a good amount of time to build-up good carbonation. A nice trick is to put some of your strained wild soda in a small jar as a tester for the fizz factor as you can test it for fizziness without losing the carbonation in the big jar each time to test it. Store in the fridge where it will last for at least 3 months and likely longer- I just usually drink it by then!

A few years ago one of my students, Laura Dusty, made this gorgeous illustration of the process of making Wild Sodas with fresh herbs using the cold infused method!



# Wild Soda with Dried Herbs

## *Ingredients:*

4 tbsp of dried herb (you can also add dried or fresh fruit for extra flavor)  
1/2 c Raw Honey  
1/2 gallon un-chlorinated Water (spring/well water best)

## *Directions:*

This is essentially the hot water method described above. Put your herbs in a half-gallon mason jar and fill the jar with boiling water. You can put a lid loosely on at this point to prevent volatile oils from escaping while it steeps. When it has cooled completely, add the 1/2 cup raw honey and mix well. It's ok if it doesn't all dissolve right away if your honey is crystallized, as it will dissolve on its own in a day or two. Cover with cheesecloth or a bandana or thin cloth so it can still breathe but bugs can't get in, like fruit flies. This method arguably creates a more medicinal brew than the cold water infusion method above (made with fresh herbs) because you are essentially making a tea, which will broadly extract the active plant constituents.

Now you wait for it to start fermenting! It's important to stir it a few times a day and when it starts fizzing/bubbling when I stir it, I know it's started fermenting. Time to initial fermentation can be a few days to over a week depending on ambient temperature. Once it starts bubbling, I usually let it ferment for another 24-48 hours, being sure to still stir it. It's best to taste it a little bit every day (using a clean spoon each time) once it starts fermenting as a litmus test for when it's time to strain- you want it to taste sparkling and effervescent before you strain it. When you feel it's ready strain out the herbs, cap the jar, and let it sit out at room temperature to build carbonation. This timing can vary, but often 24-48 hrs is a good amount of time to build-up good carbonation. A nice trick is to put some of your strained wild soda in a small jar as a tester for the fizz factor as you can test it for fizziness without losing the carbonation in the big jar each time to test it. Store in the fridge where it will last for at least 3 months and likely longer- I just usually drink it by then!

# Enjoying Wild Sodas



Violet flower wild soda garnished with Wild Rose petals

I turn towards Wild Sodas heavily in the warmer months and often drink them in place of tea or for a refreshing afternoon drink when I want something tasty and don't want to turn to caffeine. Taste-wise they are very similar to kombucha- effervescent, sweet, and a little sour. When I drink them, I almost always garnish with flowers for what I consider to be a fairy cocktail and the effect of just looking at this gorgeousness while you sip on it is deeply healing and grounding- it's beauty medicine. I especially love using aromatic flowers so I can get a sweet inhale of their aroma as I sip!

I also love adding tinctures and elixirs to wild sodas for a fermented "mocktail" or you could add a splash of an herbal vinegar or oxymel too! For instance, you could add some Wild Rose Cordial to your Wild Rose Soda for an extra kick, and so on. I don't generally dilute them with sparkling water as I feel that this is a beverage that easily stands on its own. I consider a medicinal dose to be 1 cup and as far as I can tell there's really no limit to how much of these you could consume in a day, as they're very gentle, however I tend to treat them like I do most fermented things and don't overdo it and generally keep it to a few cups/day.

# Recipes



Yarrow Wild Soda

I make Wild Sodas the same way I cook- I rarely follow a recipe and things never come out quite the same way twice! I encourage you to approach wild sodas similarly. These recipes (and the basic recipes above) are meant to get you started. The water: honey ratio should always be followed but you can play around with herbal amounts to your liking! It's fine to use a combo of fresh and dried herb too. Experiment and keep notes as you develop your favorite combinations. Keeping a kitchen journal of your fermentation adventures is highly recommended!

Some herbs I commonly make into wild sodas include Wild Rose, Dandelion Fl, Lemon Balm, Lemongrass, Lemon Verbena, Elderberry, Elderflower, Tulsi, and Violet Fl. You can combine herbs for desired medicinal effects and flavor profiles. Aromatic herbs with lots of volatile/essential oils make great wild sodas, as do fruits and flowers.

I most often make them as “simples” aka with just one herb, but here are some flavor combinations I love and a few recipes:

- Elderberry & Tulsi
- Lemon Verbena & Tulsi
- Lavender Fl & Sage Lf
- Elder Flower & Rose
- Violet & Dandelion Fl

### Summer Soother Soda

Mint (spearmint or peppermint) 1 part

Hibiscus Fl 1/2 part

### Immune-Boosting Soda

Elderberry 1 part

Tulsi 1 part

Ginger 1/4 part

### Good Mood Soda

Lemon Balm 1 part

Tulsi 1 part

Rose 1/2 part

### Chill & Relax Soda

Elder Flower 1 part

Rose Petals 1 part

### Lemon Love Soda

Lemon Balm 1 part

Lemon Verbena 1 part

Lemongrass 1/2 part

### First Flowers of Spring Soda

Dandelion flowers 1 part

Violet flowers 1 part

Ground Ivy (Glechoma hederacea) flowering tops 1/2 part

The possibilities are endless- feel free to craft your own recipes!



## References & Resources

The Wildcrafting Brewer: Creating Unique Drinks and Boozy Concoctions from Nature's Ingredients

By Pascal Baudar

The New Wildcrafted Cuisine: Exploring the Exotic Gastronomy of Local Terroir

By Pascal Baudar

Wildcrafted Fermentation: Exploring, Transforming, and Preserving the Wild Flavors of Your Local Terroir

By Pascal Baudar

