

# szechuan ginger beer

*The schizoid effect of ginger on the palate — at once hot and cooling — is reinforced in this recipe with an added kick of aromatic Szechuan peppercorns. This pepper, named after its native Szechuan province of China, is the dried berry of prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum spp.*) and is not related to the vine peppercorn (*Piper nigrum*) commonly served at tables. It has a fruity, floral fragrance that is a wonderful complement to the pungency of ginger.*

This recipe does not begin with a flavor base. Follow the complete brewing instructions to make one gallon of Szechuan Ginger Beer.

## TO BREW

- 3½ quarts water
- 4 ounces fresh ginger-root, coarsely grated
- 1 tablespoon Szechuan peppercorns
- 1 pound sugar
- 2 tablespoons unflavored rice vinegar
- ⅛ teaspoon champagne yeast (*Saccharomyces bayanus*)

### 1 GALLON

Combine the water, ginger, and peppercorns in a large pot. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Let simmer for 5 minutes, then add the sugar and vinegar, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Remove from the heat and let cool until the mixture reaches warm room temperature, from 75 to 80°F. Strain out the ginger and peppercorns. Add the yeast, stirring until it is completely dissolved.

Pour the mixture into sanitized plastic bottles (see page 25) using a sanitized kitchen funnel, leaving 1¼ inches of air space at the top of each bottle. Seal the bottles. Store for 3 to 5 days at room temperature. When the bottles feel rock hard, the soda is fully carbonated.

Refrigerate for at least 1 week before serving; drink within 3 weeks to avoid overcarbonation.