UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE VIÇOSA
CENTRO DE CIÊNCIAS EXATAS E TECNOLÓGICAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE TECNOLOGIA DE ALIMENTOS
Secretaria da Pós-Graduação em Ciência e Tecnologia de Alimentos

Campus Universitário – Viçosa, MG –36570-900 – Telefone (31) 3612-6705/6760 – E-mail: tca@ufv.br

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KOMBUCHA AND KOMBUCHA-ANALOG BEVERAGES: INNOVATIONS, CHARACTERISTICS AND HEALTH BENEFITS

Graduate student: Roberta Aparecida Alexandre
Advisor: Prof. Frederico Barros (Departamento de Tecnologia de Alimentos)
Co-advisor: Prof. Monique Eller (Departamento de Tecnologia de Alimentos)
Nível: (X) MS ( ) DS

Kombucha is an ancient fermented beverage prepared from *Camellia sinensis* infusions with the addition of sugars and a symbiotic culture of microbiologically active bacteria and yeasts, popularly known as SCOBY. In recent years, the demand for this beverage has increased worldwide due to its health benefits and attractive sensory properties. Several studies have confirmed the antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and antiproliferative effects of kombucha, which are mainly attributed to its phenolic compounds, the major group of antioxidants present in this beverage. In this context, kombucha-analog beverages have emerged as innovative products that, through the same type of symbiotic fermentation, use alternative substrates to conventional tea, such as juices, vegetable by-products, and herbal infusions, capable of enhancing the bioactive and sensory profile of traditional kombucha. This presentation demonstrates, through scientific studies, how current research, driven by numerous innovations, can enhance the physicochemical, functional, and sensory properties of kombucha and its analogs. In addition to their favorable sensory profiles and health benefits, the development of these beverages can also contribute to the economic growth of the sector.

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Graduate student