

# KAHUNA KOMBUCHA



Alicia Balmoja has long worked as a professional bartender, playing around with flavors to create craft cocktails. So when she embarked on her kombucha brewing journey at the start of the pandemic – something she has always wanted to do as a dedicated kombucha drinker – she was able to transfer her cocktail expertise to design unique and dynamic flavors.

One of her biggest sellers is Hawaiian Sunset, which features passionfruit, guava, coconut, and mango. Also popular are Pineapple Express, made with pineapple, lavender, and mint; Purple Magic, brewed with hibiscus, green tea, butterfly pea flower, and lavender; and Blue Maui, a blueberry, lemon, basil, and maui mango tea flavor combination.

This may be Kahuna Kombucha's first farmers market season, but they have already become a strong presence on the market streets. Alicia quickly attracted regulars who come to fill up their growlers each week. She has made connections with fellow vendors, incorporating basil from Columbia Gorge Garlic in her Blue Maui Madness flavor, and loganberries, marionberries, blackberries, and boysenberries from Muñoz Berry Farm in the Ginger Beer-y and Guavaberri flavors. She is also working with 2 Angry Cats to brew kombucha for their green Cujamenta sauce made with jalapeños, tomatillos, cilantro, onion, and garlic.

Alicia lived in Hawaii for 18 years and hopes to bring Hawaiian flavors to the Pacific Northwest. She named the business with the Hawaiian word "kahuna," which is the name for a sorcerer, magician, or wizard. "I feel that kombucha is magical for what it does for the body," she said. Kombucha introduces lots of probiotics which support gut health, she said. The fermentation process produces B6 and B12 vitamins that provide an energy boost.