



A trendy drink to make at home – bubble tea



Tipp von Esther Kern



Bubble tea has been a trendy, popular drink for years, especially with kids and young people. The drink, containing tapioca pearls which are sucked through a thick straw, is enjoying a surge in popularity. Countless videos are appearing on TikTok and the number of bubble tea shops in cities is on the rise.

Bubble tea originated in Taiwan, where tea was mixed with fruit puree until bubbles formed on the surface – hence the name bubble tea. The famous balls of tapioca flour – which are now so characteristic of bubble tea – came later.

A cup of bubble tea can cost up to CHF 10 in Swiss cities. That's a lot of money when you can make your own bubble tea at home.

First off, thick straws are essential. You can get them from many places these days – the glass ones that come with a cleaning brush are great.

Bubble tea traditionally uses black or green tea as a basis. A fruit syrup or fruit puree is then mixed in, and



sometimes milk, too. I have used lemongrass tea as a basis for my version of bubble tea. I mix it with a little fruit and then add a dash of syrup later – see below – as it has to be sweet!

The trickiest part is the pearls. These chewy balls are made of tapioca flour, which comes from cassava root and can be found in health food stores. You will find countless recipes for these pearls online, some of which are very time-consuming. The simplest recipe I have found is this one: in a bowl, mix 100 g of tapioca starch with 50 g of boiling water (or part syrup if desired). Start by mixing together with a wooden spoon and then knead by hand. Be careful: it doesn't take long for the mixture to go from crumbly to very sticky. In other words, if the dough is a little on the dry side, only add a tiny bit of water – ideally a drop at a time.

Then shape the dough into little pearls – the kids will love to get involved with this. The pearls should be no more than 5 mm in diameter so that they don't get stuck in the straw. They will expand a little as they cook. If the dough is crumbly, you can moisten it with water and then knead.

Next, boil a pan of water and add the pearls. Ideally they should be cooked at a simmer (not boiled) for around half an hour and then left to stand for another half hour before draining. Transfer them immediately to a very sweet syrup to prevent them from sticking together. You can then pour the syrup and pearls into glasses and top them up with the tea. Add ice cubes and then decorate with fruit, as desired. And don't forget a thick straw to suck up the pearls.