

Cidrani Kombuchaga esencija s kavom – Cidrani Kombuchaga Essence with coffee (Croatia)

Product developed in EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project

Can you imagine your morning without a cup of favorite coffee? Older consumers have established food habits and do not want to change them dramatically. They are however health conscious and willing to experiment with new products. Inspired by the importance of Croatian coffee culture and generational knowledge about fermented products, with the help of innovative technology Croatian start-up Cidrani created the new product combining the best qualities of each worlds – Kombuchaga Essence: kombucha with chaga mushroom and coffee.

Innovative food product

Kombuchaga Essence is the first kombucha essence in the world with added chaga extract and coffee in practical single-dose packaging. The Croatian start-up decided to look at fermented drinks, known for their health benefits, in a new, refined way that resulted in ready to prepare essence of kombucha enhanced by chaga mushroom and coffee aroma. *Kombuchaga Essence* can be an improvement of everyday habits – it can serve as an enhanced way of having one's coffee just in a healthier way – by combining rich aroma of coffee with kombucha and chaga qualities or promoting consumption of fermented foods. Contrary to kombucha drinks offered on the market, this essence comes in a powder and can be diluted at home whenever needed.

Good for health

Kombuchaga Essence acknowledges the importance of providing older adults with functional and fortified foods. The product is rich in post biotics, metabolites of fermentation, which enhance gut microbiota diversity, boosting overall gut health and lowering inflammatory processes. The importance of fermented foods and drinks for the wellbeing of gut system is invaluable. *Kombuchaga Essence* facilitates consumption of fermented products by serving it in a tasty and refreshing drink. Its composition is refined with the extract of chaga mushroom (*inonotus obliquus*), which has traditionally been used to boost immunity, increase vitality, help with building stress resilience and improve cognition function. The added coffee gives *Kombuchaga Essence* a unique and rich flavor, as well as the functionality of coffee – antioxidant boost and supports focus and energy. Moreover, it does not contain any artificial aromas, sweeteners or additives.

Preferred by older adults / Co-designed with older adults for older adults

Kombuchaga Essence combines the best qualities of fermented drink with the deep aroma of coffee. Hence, the new product could be easily served all day – as a new, healthier morning habit or as an afternoon refreshment. Characteristic acidic taste profile is familiar and pleasing for older adults as they associate fermentation with traditional foods from childhood. The format of the product is lightweight making it convenient to shop, carry and store at home. It comes in a single-dose packaging so it will not cause any food waste in single person households. Packaging is easy to open and includes instructions to make it even more convenient for consumers. *Kombuchaga Essence* is easy and intuitive to prepare – needs to be just mixed with water and can be quickly and without any hassle turned into a healthy and energizing drink.

Different from existing products

Kombuchaga Essence is different from the products available on the market as it comes in the form of a convenient sachet with powdered kombucha essence that should be diluted. This solution not only minimizes the weight of the product, making it more convenient to carry and store. It is also the only kombucha drink that combines healthy factors of fermented drink with chaga mushroom qualities and coffee. The new product is not only healthy but also meets the convenience standards of older consumers. Technological innovation used during the production allows for powdered formula of the final product – reducing carbon footprint up to 90% in comparison to regular kombucha beverages in bottles.

Additional information about the project:

Cidrani Kombuchaga esencija s kavom is a product designed during the co-creation processes, held as a part of the RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project. The project is coordinated by the University of Warsaw and financed by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), under the Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation, as a part of EIT Regional Innovation Scheme. The project's main aim is to address the needs of elderly consumers in the food and beverages market by applying novel methodology which engages consumers, stimulates creativity, and fosters the acceptance of new products. The concept of *Cidrani Kombuchaga esencija s kavom* was designed in 2021 through co-creation processes, which involved the identification of consumer preferences and new product ideas put forward by older consumers from multiple European countries and the subsequent formulation and design of the final product by the representatives of food producer from Croatia – Cidrani. Following the co-creation process, the actual product was developed and introduced to the market by Cidrani in 2022.

Find out more about the project at: <http://timo.wz.uw.edu.pl/cel>