

Water Kefir Instructions

Before you begin:

- The water kefir grains you received were dehydrated prior to transport. This ensures they are shelf stable and can make the trip more safely.
- You have received two teaspoons of dehydrated water kefir grains which will rehydrate to approximately 3-4 tablespoons and culture up to three quarts of water kefir. The grains you received may be brown in color. This is due to being grown using molasses. The color is not permanent and will fade if the grains are cultured with white sugar.
- We recommend using glass jars (such as canning jars) and wooden utensils for culturing water kefir.
- Do not consume any kefir which smells, looks or tastes unpleasant.

Supplies:

- One jar : Quart to Half Gallon
- One plastic or wood stirring utensil (never use metal in contact with a kefir grains!)
- One towel or paper coffee filter
- One rubber band
- Water kefir grains
- ¼ cup organic sugar per quart of water:
 - Evaporated cane crystals or rapadura work best
 - Honey can be used but is antibacterial in nature and will weaken the culture over time
- Water (non-chlorinated)
 - Well water or spring water is best due to higher mineral content
 - Do not use water filtered through a carbon activated filter (e.g. Britta)
 - If using tap water, remove the chlorine prior to making water kefir by either boiling the water and allowing it to cool or by aerating the water using a blender.

Rehydrating Water Kefir Grains:

1. Dissolve 4 to 6 tablespoons of sugar in 4 cups water (you will likely need to heat the water so the sugar will dissolve). Be sure to allow the water to cool to room temperature before proceeding to the next step.
2. Place the dehydrated kefir grains in the water and cover with a towel or coffee filter secured with a rubber band. Allow the mixture to sit for 3-4 days until the grains are plump and the mixture is slightly bubbly (if you watch your jar of kefir, you will occasionally see tiny bubbles rising to the top). Do not allow the mixture to sit for longer than 5 days.
3. Once the grains are rehydrated, follow the instructions below for making water kefir.

Making Water Kefir:

1. Dissolve sugar in a small amount of warm/hot water.
2. Add enough cool water to almost fill the jar leaving 1-2 inches of headspace.
3. When the water has cooled to room temperature, add the kefir grains and give the mixture a quick stir with a wooden or plastic spoon (not metal).
4. Cover tightly with a towel and rubber band to keep out fruit flies and ants.
5. Allow the kefir to culture for 24 to 48 hours. 24 hours will yield a sweeter water kefir. However, if you are sensitive to sugar, culture the kefir for 48 hours to give the grains a chance to consume a larger portion of the sugar. Stir once or twice a day while the kefir cultures. Do not let the kefir grains culture longer than 72 hours. As the kefir grains culture, you will notice tiny bubbles forming and traveling to the water surface.
6. Once the kefir has finished culturing, strain off the finished liquid into a separate container (don't use a metal strainer) and cover with a tight lid. Finished water kefir does not require refrigeration, but can be refrigerated if you desire a cold beverage.
7. Add the grains to a new batch of sugar water and proceed with your next batch.

Important Information:

- Water kefir can be flavored dried or fresh fruit, flavoring extracts or juice. Dried fruit can soak in the finished water kefir for up to a week. Fresh fruit must be changed daily. Other flavoring options:
 - Cream-soda type beverage: Add 1 T. vanilla extract to 2 quarts water kefir
 - Lemonade: Add ½ -1 c. lemon juice to 2 quarts water kefir made with evaporated cane crystals
 - 1 cup fruit juice (we recommend blueberry-pomegranate)
- Water kefir grains can be used with fruit juice rather than sugar water. We recommend caution however as some juices (citrus for example) can harm the grains. We recommend apple juice until you are accustomed to fermentation. Many people have success using grape juice although there have been reports of damage to the grains.
- Water kefir grains are often reluctant to multiply. Even if the kefir grains do not multiply, they can be used repeatedly to brew water kefir.
- Water kefir grains can sit directly in the liquid or can be contained in a large fabric pouch. Be sure the pouch is large enough to accommodate the multiplication of kefir grains should it occur. The pouch may need to be secured with a rubber band to ensure the kefir grains do not escape.
- If you are culturing multiple products (e.g. different varieties of yogurt, buttermilk, kefir, Kombucha, etc.) be sure to keep a distance of at least several feet between cultures so they don't cross-contaminate each other. Over time, cross-contamination will weaken the cultures.
- After rehydration, you may not see very many (or any) bubbles forming in the liquid. That's okay. Often the bubbles are so tiny and infrequent, you would need to watch very carefully for an extended period of time. Transfer the grains to new sugar water and proceed with making your first batch.
- To determine if the grains are "working", simply taste the liquid before and after the fermentation process. Although finished water kefir will still be sweet, it will not be nearly as sweet as the original sugar water.
- Water kefir carbonation will vary greatly from batch to batch. A lack of carbonation does not indicate a problem with the water kefir grains. Factors influencing carbonation include the type of sugar used (using less processed sugars such as rapadura or adding molasses to white sugar will generally produced a more carbonated beverage). After fermentation (following removal of the grains), fruit juice can be added to the finished kefir and the mixture stored in a container with a tight lid for several days to improve carbonation (use caution when removing the lid!).

Trouble-shooting: