**Water Kefir Grains**

**STARTER CULTURE INSTRUCTIONS**

You can make delicious water kefir at home!

**Total time:** 5-7 days  
**Active time:** 5-10 minutes every 1-2 days

Water kefir is unique in the world of cultured beverages: rather than developing tart or tangy flavors like most fermented foods, it stays sweet! After culturing, this sweet probiotic drink can be bottled to develop soda-like carbonation and effervescence.

### Activating Water Kefir Grains

1. **Prepare** sugar water: see the box.
2. **Empty** the entire packet of dehydrated water kefir grains into the cooled sugar water.
3. **Cover** the jar with a coffee filter or cloth secured by a rubber band and culture in a warm spot, 68°-85°F, for 3-4 days.

   **/ 68°-85°F / 3-4 DAYS**

4. After 4 days, the grains should be plump and translucent: they’re ready to make kefir. **Strain out** the grains and **discard** the sugar water.

### Making Water Kefir

1. **Prepare** sugar water: see the box.
2. **Add** the water kefir grains to the jar.
3. **Cover** the jar with a coffee filter or cloth secured by a rubber band and culture in a warm spot, 68°-85°F, for 24-48 hours.

   **/ 68°-85°F / 24-48 HOURS**

4. When culturing is complete, **prepare** a new batch of sugar water: see the box.
5. **Strain** the kefir grains from the finished water kefir and **place** them in the new batch of sugar water. **Repeat** this process every 24-48 hours.

**What’s next?** Drink your water kefir! Or flavor, bottle, and carbonate it, plus troubleshooting tips.

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**What You’ll Need**

- 1 packet of dehydrated water kefir grains (in this box)
- Water free of chlorine and fluoride (bottled spring water)
- Stainless steel pot
- Thermometer
- Glass jar or plastic container
- Cane sugar (avoid coconut sugar, maple sugar, etc.)
- Coffee filter or tight-weave cloth
- Rubber band
- Mesh strainer

**Preparing Sugar Water for Kefir**

1. **Heat** ½ cup of water and **pour** it into a glass jar or plastic container.
2. **Dissolve** ¼ cup of sugar in the water.
3. **Add** 2½-3½ cups of room temperature water. The total volume now should be 3-4 cups of sweetened water.
4. **Check** that the temperature of the water is 68°-85°F, and adjust as necessary.

**After Activating**

To make larger batches, use 1 tablespoon of sugar for every 1 cup of water. One packet of grains will make up to 8 cups of water kefir.

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**Water Kefir Grains are alive!**  
Your first few batches of water kefir might be extra sweet as they adapt to their new environment.

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Water kefir makes a great soda replacement. It can be flavored with fruit or juice and bottled to make a lightly carbonated probiotic beverage. This flavoring and bottling period is the second fermentation, as sugars from the flavoring feed the bacteria, producing more gases and resulting in a fizzy drink.

### WHAT YOU’LL NEED
- Finished water kefir (grains removed)
- Flavored (fruit, juice, etc.)
- Grolsch-style bottles or other tightly-sealed containers

### INSTRUCTIONS
1. **Check** the bottles for cracks, as cracks will weaken the integrity of the bottle.
2. **Add** your desired flavoring to the bottle.
3. **Fill** the bottle with water kefir, leaving about 1 inch of headspace. Refrigerate now if you don’t want carbonation.
4. **Close** the bottle securely and let it sit at room temperature for 24-72 hours or until your kefir carbonates. In warm temperatures, burp the bottles once a day to avoid excess pressure buildup.
5. If you desire a cold beverage, **refrigerate** the bottles.

### IDEAS FOR FLAVORING WATER KEFIR
- **Fruit Juice:** Add ½ cup juice per quart of water kefir. For stronger juices, like lemon juice, reduce to ¼-⅓ cup.
- **Dried Fruit:** Add and ferment for 2-3 days or up to a week.
- **Fresh Fruit:** Add and ferment for no longer than 24 hours. For a stronger flavor, change out the fruit every 24 hours and ferment for up to a week.

### Questions? We can help!

**Q** I rehydrated my water kefir grains, and there are no bubbles. Is that normal?

**A** Yes. There may or may not be any bubbling with newly rehydrated grains. Follow the instructions for making the first batch even if there are no visible signs of culturing after 3-4 days of rehydration. Do not culture longer than 24-48 hours per batch.

**Q** It’s been a few weeks and there still isn’t bubbling. What can I do?

**A** Water kefir may not be very bubbly when using a refined sugar. Try a darker sugar or supplement with minerals (check out our website for ideas). It is usually necessary to bottle finished water kefir in a tightly-sealed bottle to create carbonation.

**Q** My water kefir looks cloudy. Is that normal?

**A** Yes, it’s normal for it to turn cloudy as it ferments.

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**BOTTLED KEFIR TIP**

Use caution when opening the bottles. The contents are under pressure! Open them over the sink or outside. Put a towel over the bottle and push down on the cap while opening.

Fermented foods often have a sour but clean aroma and flavor. Never consume anything that smells or tastes unpleasant.

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**Keep track of your batches!** Keep this paper on your fridge or counter.

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