

# Kefir Recipes & Tips



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Blair's Be Well

### Making milk kefir with fresh or dehydrated kefir grains:

- Make sure all your tools are plastic, wooden, or nylon (spoons & strainers); never use metal or silicone as these can damage the kefir grains.
- Raw milk produces slightly thinner kefir; pasteurized milk produces a slightly thicker kefir.

### Rehydrating Kefir Grains:

Day 1: Place the dehydrated or fresh kefir grain in 2 cups of fresh milk and leave in on the counter for 24 hours at room temperature. Cover the container with a clean coffee filter secured with a rubber band.

Day 2: Strain the grain from the milk. You can discard, compost, or cook with the strained milk if it smells ok. Now, add the kefir grains to fresh 2 cups of milk and repeat letting it sit on the counter for another 24 hours lightly covered with the coffee filter.

Day 3: Strain the grains again from the milk. You can discard, compost, or cook with the strained milk if it smells ok. Once again, add the kefir grains to fresh 3 cups of milk, leave on the counter for 24 hours lightly covered.

Day 4: Strain the grains from the milk. Add the kefir grains to 3 cups of milk and leave on the counter for 24 hours lightly covered. Your strained batch this round is true kefir as the grain are alive and active now.

- If your home is very cold, below 70 degrees, or you are rehydrating from dry kefir grains this may take 4-7 days to fully wake up the kefir grains. You will know it's ready by its clean sour smell and slightly coagulated texture.
- The first few days may yield an overgrowth of yeast or a layer or froth or foam on the milk surface. Within 5-7 days, the bacterial balance should stabilize and the kefir will begin to smell clean, sour, and possibly of fresh yeast. Under some conditions, the kefir grain may take up to 2-4 weeks to start to make kefir, although this is rare.

### Once you have kefir grains hydrated, follow these instructions:

3 Tablespoons of live and active kefir grains

3-4 cups of cow or goat milk [Always choose organic]

#### Making kefir:

1. Place the kefir grain in a glass mason jar with the milk.
2. Cover the jar with a coffee filter secured with a rubber band.
3. Leave the jar in a warm place (68F – 85F, kitchen counter is fine) in your home.
4. After 24 hours, strain the kefir from the grains. Repeat the process. Store the strained milk in the fridge until ready to be used. You can also store the grains (in milk) in the fridge for a time if you don't need to make more.

## What to do if you have extra grains?

- If you have more than 3 tbsp of kefir grains, that's good – it means they are growing! They will actually double in population every ten days.
- You can also dehydrate them in a dehydrator or freeze them – although when you rehydrate them they will take at least a week to wake up and you will have milk to discard until they become active an awake.
- You could also start a new batch of kefir. If you have one tbsp, begin culturing it in 1 ½ cups of milk, adding more milk as they grow so that you are adding a little bit of milk each time. Measure your grains to make sure you're on track.
  - 1 tbsp = 1 ½ cups of milk
  - 1 ½ tbsp = 2 cups of milk
  - 3 tbsp = 4 cups of milk

These ratios produce a mild creamy kefir. If you change the ratio, and you have too many kefir grains in your milk you will end up with a quart of whey. It's always important to measure your grains so you have the right kefir grains to milk ratio.

## What if you go on vacation? (2 weeks or less)

You can occasionally leave them in the refrigerator for 2 weeks or even longer, as long as there is plenty of milk over them. Kefir grains will not thrive forever this way. They like room temperature best and can only grow in room temperature. When you remove them from the fridge to activate them, there will be a few days of wasted kefir until they wake up again.

## What if you go on a vacation longer than 2 weeks?

You can dry out your kefir grains for an extended period of time. Keep in mind, it will take a bit longer to wake them up, at least a week. Rinse kefir grain in cool water. Lay them on a thin kitchen towel and allow them to sit at room temperature until they are fully dried out. Depending on temperature, humidity and size of each grain, drying may take between one to two days for water kefir grains. It takes about 2-4 days for milk kefir grains.

Dry all the grain well to completely dehydrate them. Place the dry grains in an airtight sealed jar and store in the refrigerator (DO NOT FREEZE). Add a little dry milk powder with the dehydrated milk kefir=grains, adding enough powder to completely cover the grains. Dehydrated kefir grains may be stored for up to 18 months.

## Coconut Milk Kefir

1-2 tbsp milk kefir grains

14 ounces Coconut Milk: homemade, canned or boxed coconut milk. Avoid brands with additives as they can be hard on the kefir grains (guar gum does not seem to be problematic).

½ tsp molasses or maple syrup

Stir coconut milk and molasses in a medium sized glass bowl and add in kefir grains, cover loosely (a towel works great) and allow the coconut kefir to culture on the counter for 12-24 hours. After 12 hours, check the coconut kefir every few hours so you can remove the kefir grains once the coconut kefir reaches the desired consistency. If your home is on the cool side, it can take a few hours longer for the milk kefir to culture. **Generally, 12 hours is enough time.**

Sometimes kefir grains will require an adjustment period so the first batch of coconut milk kefir may not culture as desired. Simply use the non-kefired coconut milk for cooking and place the kefir grains in new coconut milk.

**Milk Kefir Grains can be cultured in coconut milk regularly but should be allowed to culture in cow or goat milk for 24 hours once every few weeks to revitalize.**

*\*Coconut milk kefir when made with milk kefir grains is not completely dairy free until the 4<sup>th</sup> batch.*

## Coconut Kefir Ice Cream

1 1/3 c unsweetened coconut milk (divided)

2 tsp unflavored gelatin or ¾ tsp agar agar powder

1/3 c honey, additional 1 to 2 tbsp as needed

1/8 tsp finely ground, unrefined sea salt

1 2/3 c Coconut Milk Kefir

2 c Fresh strawberries – rinsed, drained, hulled & sliced

½ tsp clear stevia extract

1 ½ tsp pure vanilla extract

Add 1/3 c coconut milk to a small saucepan. Slowly sprinkle with gelatin or agar agar powder. Let stand for 2 minutes until it softens. Warm over medium-low heat, without stirring, until gelatin dissolves. Scrape the mixture into a blender. Add the honey and sea salt. Cover and process until smooth. Add reserved 1 c coconut milk. Pour into a bowl and set aside

Puree the coconut kefir and fresh strawberries in a blender. Combine this with the gelatin-coconut milk-honey mixture. Taste, add the stevia. If a sweeter taste is desired, add more honey. Blend until smooth.

Pour into one or more wide mouth jars. Cover and refrigerate for at least 6 hrs before churning.

Scrape the chilled custard into the canister of your ice cream maker. Churn according to the manufacturer's instructions. Serve immediately or cover & freeze for 3 or more hrs for a firmer texture.

## Water Kefir

- The type of water matters. Well water or spring water is best due to the high mineral content.
- We do not recommend using water filtered through a carbon activated filter (e.g. Britta) or reverse osmosis water due to the depleted mineral levels.
- If using tap water, remove the chlorine prior to making water kefir by boiling the water and allowing it to cool
- If using filtered water, uses molasses, ½ pastured egg shell, powdered coral calcium, or liquid minerals to replenish minerals.
- Once rehydrated, kefir grains can take up to 6-8 weeks to being multiplying

## Rehydrating the Grains (From cultures to health)

When you first buy water kefir grains, just like dairy kefir grains, they must be rehydrated. Which is not as big of a deal with water kefir grains and you are just left with water to get rid of.

1. Dissolve 4-6 tbsp of sugar in 4 cups of water. You may 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. Do not allow the mixture to sit for more than 5 days.
3. Once the grains are rehydrated, following the instructions below for making water kefir.

### Grains to water ratio:

¼ c grains for 1 quart water kefir

½ c grain for 2 quart water kefir

## What can you do with water kefir?

- Start slow, begin drinking about 1-2 ounces per day until your system is use to it.
- After removing the grains, feel free to allow it to sit on the counter another 24 hours to allow even more of the sugar to be eaten. This is called **Second Fermentation**.
- Water kefir tastes best chilled, if you are skipping secondary fermentation, chill it after removing the grains and add any flavors you wish (*see Water Kefir Recipes*).
- If you need to take a break from your water kefir grains, cover them with the sugar water mixture and keep in the fridge. Change the water weekly if possible. Once you take them out to begin the fermentation process, there will be an adjustment period. Generally, discard the first 2-3 batches.
- Add it to smoothies
- Use it to make dairy free coconut milk kefir

## Basic Water Kefir

¼ c Water kefir grains or 2-3 tbsp milk kefir grains

¼ c Sugar (coconut palm, organic brown sugar, etc)

1 tbsp Molasses or pinch of baking soda or ½ pastured egg shell and/or 4 drops liquid minerals

4 c water (avoid tap water, chlorine harms kefir grains)

- Combine water and sugar until dissolved. You may need to heat it up to dissolve the sugar.
- Allow the water to cool to room temperature before continuing to the next step.
- Pour the sugar water into a mason jar. Add minerals of your choice and water kefir grains; stir gently.
- Cover with a coffee filter and secure with a rubber band. Allow to ferment on the counter 24-48 hours. The longer you let it ferment the less sweet it will be. Bubbles may appear as it cultures. While it is normal – it does not always happen.
- Strain the grains from the water kefir and add water kefir grains to a new batch of sugar water to repeat the process. Plain water kefir does not have the best taste, use the flavoring options below.

*\*\*There is a small amount of alcohol that is produced as the microbes feed on the sugar and produce lactic acid, alcohol (ethanol) and carbon dioxide. This is what causes the bubble/carbonation. The alcohol content in kefir varies with the fermentation time and is usually less than 1%.*

## Flavored Water Kefir

**Cream Soda:** 1 Tbsp quality Vanilla per quart to your prepared water kefir.

**Fresh Fruit Flavored:** Add your choice of fresh organic fruit to the water kefir. Change the fresh fruit out daily and replace with new fresh fruit. Good Choices: Strawberries, orange slices, kiwi slices, mango slices, sliced grapes, lemon slices, pineapple, etc.

**Dried Fruit Flavored:** Add your choice of dried organic fruit to the water kefir. Change dried fruit out every 7<sup>th</sup> day.

**Fruit Slushy:** Blend your water kefir with fresh fruit and ice cubes for a refreshing treat. Strawberries and kiwi or strawberries & banana are good combos.

**Cucumber Lemon Mint:** Add cucumber slices, mint leaves, and lemon slices to your water kefir. Change out fruit every 24 hours.

**Ginger lemon Flavored:** Add ¼-1/2 c freshly squeezed lemon juice to your water kefir. Then add lemon slices, 4tbsp fresh ginger, and 1 tbsp quality vanilla.

# Recipes

## Cultured Butter (probiotics butter)

1 Tbsp Kefir

1 quart cream

Mix together kefir and cream. Allow to ferment on the kitchen counter lightly covered at room temperature for 24 hours. You now have kefir cream, nothing to strain since you were using kefir and not kefir grains. Take your kefir cream and pour it into a food processor. Turn on the food processor and run it until the butter forms in a ball on top of the blades. This will take a couple of seconds to a few minutes. Drain off the resulting liquid, which is buttermilk. Drink and enjoy or use in other recipes. Scrape the butter in a bowl and keep pressing it to remove all the liquid. Once all the liquid is out you may add salt (1/4 tsp or less) or leave plain. Shape into a brick and wrap with parchment paper or spread it into a small glass dish. Lasts about a week – you can freeze it for longer storage.

## Kefir Cheese (Kefir Laban)

1 quart of kefir

A fine mesh strainer

Cheese cloth, a thin dish cloth or paper towels

Place towel of your choice over your strainer and place over a bowl. Pour kefir into a towel-lined strainer, and fold sides over top to cover loosely. Let it drain for 24 hours.

Open the cloth and remove cheese; this is also called kefir laban.

***All other kefir cheeses begin with kefir laban. You can consume it as is, or use it in any recipe calling for cottage cheese, cream cheese, or use to make dips sauces or mayonnaise.***

## Kefir Laban Dip

Kefir laban from 1 quart of milk

1 clove chopped garlic

1 tsp dried dill or 2 tsp fresh (use any herb you like: parsley, chive, etc)

1 tbsp minced fresh scallion

1 tsp olive oil

2 tsp lemon juice or 1/8 tsp apple cider vinegar

Mix all ingredients together. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking. Chill and serve with chips or veggies.

## Kefir Banana or Pumpkin Bread

1 1/3 c Sugar	½ c Butter, softened (or coconut oil)
2 Eggs	½ c Kefir, (dairy or coconut)
1 1/4 c Pureed pumpkin or mashed bananas	1 tsp Vanilla
1 tsp Baking Soda	1 tsp Baking Powder
2 c Flour (Wheat or gluten free all purpose blend)	¾ c Nuts, chopped (optional)

- If desired, 12-24 hours prior to making bread, mix the flour and kefir together. Cover and allow the flour to soak.
- Preheat to 300 degrees
- In a large bowl, mix together sugar, butter, vanilla, eggs, bananas/pumpkins and nuts.
- Add the kefir and flour mixture. Mix just until blended. Add the baking soda and baking powder and mix.
- Pour into a greased bread pan (9" x 5")
- Bake approximately 90 minutes until an inserted toothpick comes out clean.

## Ranch Salad Dressing

1 c Kefir	¼ c Kefir cheese (kefir laban)
¼ c Mayonnaise	2 tbsp Olive oil
1 tbsp Fresh lemon juice	1 Minced garlic
2 tbsp Chives, chopped	1 tbsp Italian parsley, chopped
Kosher salt & pepper	

Put all the ingredients except the olive oil, in a blender or food processor. Puree until all ingredients are well incorporated. Drizzle in the olive oil while processing. Continue to blend for another 20 seconds or so. Best if refrigerated overnight, as it allows the dressing to thicken slightly and the flavors to mingle.

## Lemon-Herb Kefir Dressing

1 c Dairy kefir	4 tbsp Extra-virgin olive oil
2 tsp Finely chopped fresh thyme (or 1/2 tsp dried)	2 tbsp Fresh lemon juice
2 tsp Finely chopped fresh oregano (or 1/2 tsp dried)	1 tbsp Finely chopped shallot
1 tsp Raw honey	1 tsp Dijon mustard
1/8 tsp Sea salt	

Whisk together all ingredients in a bowl or jar until well combined. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour to let flavors to mingle; can be made a day ahead.



## Leek Asparagus Soup with Celeriac Root & Kefir

1 tbsp Olive oil	1 Medium Leek; cleaned and thinly sliced
2-3 Cloves of garlic, peeled and minced	1 ½ lbs Asparagus, trimmed & coarsely chopped
1 Celeriac root, peeled & quartered	2 Medium potatoes, peeled & quartered
1 Yellow onion, peeled & chopped	¼ c Plain kefir (dairy or coconut)
2 c water	1 tsp Salt
1 tsp Pepper	1 tsp Celery salt
1 tbsp Dried dill	

- In a medium sauce pan, sauté the onions, leeks and garlic in the olive oil till tender.
- Add the water, celeriac root, potatoes, asparagus, dill and celery salt. Bring to a boil and simmer until the potatoes are tender about 30-40 minutes.
- Puree the soup in a blender.
- Add in kefir, salt and pepper and blend until combined. Serve warm.

## Gluten Free Pancakes (Soaked)

1 ½ c Kefir (dairy, coconut or water kefir)	2 tbsp Coconut oil or olive oil
1 tsp Vanilla	1 c Millet flour
1c Brown rice flour	1 Egg
2 tsp Baking powder	½ tsp Baking soda
1 tsp Sea salt	2 tbsp Sweetener of choice (Honey, coconut palm, etc)
1-2 tbsp Freshly ground flaxseed (optional)	¼ c Arrowroot flour (optional)

- Combine the kefir through the brown rice flour and mix well. Cover & let sit for 12-24 hours.
- After soaking, add the rest of the ingredients and mix for a minute more.
- Prepare the pancakes on a warmed, lightly greased cast-iron griddle.  
This recipe makes 15 or more pancakes

## Kefir Ice Cream

2 c Kefir (Dairy or coconut)	2/3 c sugar (Honey, coconut palm, etc)
1 c Heavy whipping cream	2 tsp Vanilla extract
1 tsp Arrowroot powder (optional, but provides better texture)	

- In a medium bowl, stir together the kefir and sugar until the sugar is dissolved. You can warm it slightly to assist in the dissolving process.
- Stir in the cream and vanilla; refrigerated 8 hours or overnight.
- Pour mixture into your ice cream maker bowl and churn until thick and creamy.

### Strawberry Banana Smoothie

- |                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 large Banana               | 1 c Frozen strawberries |
| ½ c Kefir (dairy or coconut) | ½ c Water               |
| 2 tbsp Honey                 | ¼ tsp Vanilla           |
| 1 c Ice                      |                         |

Place all ingredients into a blender. Blend until smooth.

### Orange Julius

- |                              |               |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 Large banana               | 2 Oranges     |
| ½ c Kefir (dairy or coconut) | ½ c water     |
| 2 tbsp Honey                 | ¼ tsp Vanilla |
| 1 c Ice                      |               |

Place all ingredients into a blender. Blend until smooth. Serve and Enjoy!

### Chocolate Kefir Smoothie

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|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 c Kefir (Dairy or coconut) | ½ c Water                        |
| 1 tbsp Cocoa powder          | ½ tbsp Vanilla                   |
| 1 tbsp Coconut oil           | ¼ c Pitted Dates or 3 tbsp Honey |
| 1 Banana                     | 12 Ice cubes                     |

Place all ingredients into a blender. Blend until smooth. Serve and Enjoy!

### Pumpkin Kefir Smoothie

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|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 c Pureed Pumpkin (refrigerated or frozen works best) |                                  |
| ½ c Coconut milk kefir                                 | 1 ½ c Almond milk (or 1 c water) |
| 1 Banana   | ½ tsp Cinnamon                   |
| 1/8 tsp Ground ginger                                  | 1/16 tsp Nutmeg                  |
| 2 tsp Vanilla  | 3-4 tbsp Honey                   |
| 1-2 c Ice  |                                  |

Place all ingredients into a blender. Blend until smooth. Serve and Enjoy!

## Lemon Ginger Water Kefir

¼ c Water kefir grains	1-2 Dried figs (or 1-2 tbsp organic raisins)
½ c Organic sugar	½ Organic Lemon
1 Thin slice fresh ginger, peeled	1 quart Chlorine-free water

- Dissolve sugar into water. You may use heat to dissolve, just allow the water to cool to room temperature before going on to the next step.
- Add water kefir grains, dried fruit, half a lemon and slice of ginger to the mixture of sugar water in a ½ gallon mason jar.
- Allow your water kefir to brew in a lidded mason jar at room temperature for 24-72 hours depending on the strength you prefer and the temperature of your home.
- Strain the water kefir grains, raisins, lemon, and ginger from the water kefir. Bottle the liquid into smaller containers.
- Allow the smaller bottles to sit out for another 24-48 hours to continue fermentation and produce natural carbonation. Serve cold over ice.

## Juice Kefir using water Kefir Grains

\* It's best to have separate grains for culturing juice. You will also want to keep the grains strong by giving them a break every few weeks in sugar water as the juice is a little hard on the grains.

½ c water kefir grains	2 quarts organic grape juice
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All the juice to culture for 24-48 hours. Please note, a longer fermentation period will yield a higher alcohol content due to the amount of sugar in the juice. Please use good judgment if serving kefir juice to children. Variation: Use organic apple juice.

We also advise you to use separate sets of kefir grains for culturing juice and culturing sugar-water. Juice tends to be very hard on kefir grains and they do tend to break down a bit. It helps to culture them in sugar water every few batches. Unfortunately, when you use water kefir grain in juice and then move them to sugar water, the resulting kefir usually tastes very unpleasant, thus our recommendation for keeping two sets of grains. This can be easily accomplished by waiting for your kefir grains to multiply and then splitting them.

## Herbal Water Kefir

1 Part water kefir	1 Part Herbal infusion
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Mix on part finished water kefir with on part herbal infusing (e.g. Nettle Leaf, Red Raspberry Leaf, etc.). Herbal infusions are made by combining a handful of fresh or dried herbs with on quart boiling water. Allow the herb & water mixture to sit for 6+ hours. Be sure the herbal infusion is completely cooled prior to mixing it with the finished water kefir. \*Do not use Dong Qui

### Bee Pollen Water Kefir

¼ c Water kefir grains or 2-3 tbsp milk kefir grains      ¼ c Sugar (coconut palm, brown sugar)  
 4 c Water (avoid tap water)      2 tbsp bee pollen  
 1 tsp molasses (or pinch of baking soda/ ½ pastured egg shell and/or 4 drops liquid minerals)

- Mix water and sugar till dissolved. May use heat to dissolve fully, just allow to cool to room temperature before next step.
- Pour the sugar water into a 1 quart jar and had minerals of your choice, bee pollen, and water kefir grains; stir gently.
- Cover well and allow to ferment on counter 24-48 hours.
- Strain the grains from the water kefir.
- Add the flavor of your choice and served chilled.

### Ginger Beer Water Kefir

4 c Spring Water      ½ c Organic sugar  
 1 tsp Black strap molasses      2 oz (50g) Fresh ginger root  
 Slice of lemon      1 Dry fig or 3 tsp raisins  
 1/3 c Water kefir grains      1/8 tsp Pure baking soda  
 ¼ of eggshell from a boiled egg, either used as flakes or coarsely ground to grit

- Juice the ginger through a juicer or blend/pound it & strain.
- Add it to a quart jar along with baking soda, sugar, molasses, and eggshell grit in a glass jar with 4 c of water. Stir well to dissolve all the sugar & molasses. Add rest of ingredients.
- Seal the jar and let it stand for 2 days at room temperature. Stir contents after 24 hours and again a few times after that.
- Strain the ginger beer water kefir and store in airtight sealable bottles. Best if enjoyed chilled after 1 to 2 days refrigeration. This will also increase carbonation to give it a nice, refreshing fizzy ginger root-beer.

### Lemon Lime Kefir-ello: Water Kefir Gelatin

1/3 c Fresh squeezed lemon juice      3 tbsp Fresh lime juice  
 2 tbsp Great lakes gelatin  
 1 2/3 c lemon lime water kefir (2<sup>nd</sup> fermentation was 2 oz fresh lemon juice with a splash of lime to 14 oz of water kefir, in a sealed bottle for fizz)

- Stir gelatin into lemon/lime juice to soften. Warm stove on low just enough to completely dissolve.
- Gently pour lemon lime water kefir into bowl then stir in gelatin mixture
- Pour into molds & chill for 2 hrs. Mix & match your favorite flavors of this well.