

How-To Make and Flavor Water Kefir

by Linda Dami

What Is Water Kefir?

Water kefir is a probiotic drink made with water kefir grains, sugar, and water. Organic or unbleached cane sugar is the best kind of sugar for making water kefir. Please use filtered water or spring water so your water kefir grains will stay healthy. Water kefir actually has more probiotics than kombucha with a much milder and non-vinegar-y taste. It is lightly sweet and pretty neutral tasting on it's own so perfect for flavoring with lemon or lime juice for a lemonade, or you can use tea, or dried or fresh fruit.

Supplies to make: 1 glass quart jar, organic or unbleached sugar, filtered water, water kefir grains, paper towel or cheesecloth, rubber band.

Supplies to flavor: another glass jar or pitcher, plastic mesh strainer, citrus, fruit, herbs, crystalized ginger, or tea depending on what flavor you want to make. If you want it carbonated you will also need some fermentation grade flip top bottles or empty kombucha bottles (which are made to withstand the pressure that is created when fermenting things).

Making water kefir:

1. Get some water kefir grains from a friend or supplier, rehydrate them per directions if required.
2. Dissolve $\frac{1}{4}$ c organic or unbleached sugar (such as Morena brand, which is not organic but *is* unbleached) with $\frac{1}{2}$ c hot water in a quart sized glass jar. Add room temperature water almost to the top of the jar but leave at least an inch of room.
3. Add strained water kefir grains to the sugar water, cover the jar with a paper towel or cheesecloth and rubber band to keep any pests out and protect the water kefir (do not use an air-tight lid, the water kefir needs to breathe).
4. Let sit 1-3 days in a warm place out of direct sunlight until the water kefir becomes a little cloudy and if you taste it, doesn't taste like raw sugar anymore. It may or may not be bubbly. It should smell pleasant and not smell sour/should not have any mold. (if your house is warm it will probably be ready in 24-48 hours, if your house is cold it may take 3 or 4 days)
5. Strain the grains from the finished water kefir, and repeat steps 1-4 in a new clean empty jar for the next batch of water kefir, you can reuse the grains indefinitely as long as you give them fresh sugar water regularly and don't accidentally kill them by putting the grains in hot water.
6. Take finished water kefir from step 5 and flavor it however you'd like. If you want it to be carbonated Use a funnel to put the water kefir in a flip top jar and flavor it in the bottle (leave at least 2 inches from top of bottle as headspace), leave it for 1-3 days at room temp til you see extra bubbles when you shake it, chill, and drink.

Resources: <https://www.culturesforhealth.com/> for water kefir grains and supplies, FAQ, and articles. Or get some grains from a friend who has some. Some homebrew stores also have supplies and water kefir kits.

Have Questions or Need Help with your water kefir? Email me!

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