



### **Milk Kefir Instructions**

#### ***Welcome to the kefir family!***

*There is some guidance to set you off on your milk kefir journey and to support the milk kefir workshop.*

*Kefir is a fermented milk similar to yoghurt. The kefir grains can be used with organic cow, goat and coconut milk.*

*These grains hold thousands of years' worth of history and a little mystery. They originated in the Caucasus mountains 2000 years ago, where the drink was fermented naturally in bags made of animal hides. The kefir grains have been passed on for generations and generations and now some to you.*

*If you look carefully at your milk kefir grains, they are not grains, so much as tiny clumps of bacteria and yeast that look like small cauli flower florets. These live happily together suspended in a kefir polysaccharide matrix.*

*It is said that the kefir has all kinds of powers. It is a probiotic food containing lactic acid bacteria with anything from 35 to 60 strains. More studies are being made on Milk kefir, the bacterial strains within it and their individual roles and benefits. It contains microorganisms that can survive in the digestive tract and offer a health benefit to that individual. The kefir milk is also said to be rich Vitamin B12, B1, B3 (Niacin) and K. It also contains minerals such as calcium and magnesium. The kefir grains, when given milk, go through a process that takes the lactose (sugar) within the milk and deconstructs it into lactic acid. In 24hrs it produces a fermented drink.*

*Live milk kefir grains are reusable. Once a batch of milk kefir has finished culturing, simply remove the kefir grains and place them in fresh milk.*

*If cared for properly, milk kefir grains have an unlimited life span and can be used repeatedly to make kefir. The grains will grow yielding a larger quantity of kefir drink or some to share with friends!*

***What will I need? Very little equipment.***

*A spoon*

*Plastic Sieve*

*Bottles/Jar to store your fermented kefir in*

*Clean Clip top Jar*

*Glass or plastic bowl*

*Muslin and elastic band (Optional)*

*The grains do not work well with metal utensils or metal containers. The metal can harm or kill them)*

### **Milk Kefir Instructions**

***Where do I start?!***

*Milk – Use 1 cup of milk (250ml) to 2 tsp of milk kefir grains to start off with. This can increase as you will see your grains growing too! The kefir grains thrive on the lactose in the milk.*

*You will be able to ferment up to 500ml of milk with those 2 tsp of milk in further batches after the first.*

*Cows milk, cream, goats milk and coconut milk are fine (It is not recommended to use UHT milk. This is completely dead milk for culturing grains)*

*When your milk kefir grains arrive in your home they will be hungry after their journey. The milk grains may take a couple of milk changes, up to a week or more to acclimatize and to settle into to their new home. Please be patient with them. The first couple of batches may taste a bit strange as the grains are adjusting, so feel free to dispose of the first couple of batches. This is normal too. A fresh change of milk every 24hrs to start off with will refresh them and they should be fine.*

***What Shall I do with my grains?***

- 1. When you get your grains, please deal with them as soon as you can as they will be hungry.*
- 2. Place your grains into the jar.*
- 3. Place 1 cup/250ml of cold or room temperature milk into a clip top jar and allow ½ to 1 inch at the top of the jar.*

4. *Cover the top of the jar with cloth or paper towel and secure with an elastic band or seal your jar or keep your jar closed. Using the closed jar method will produce a less yeasty ferment.*
5. *Let them stand (out of direct sunlight) for 24hrs or more. I leave them for up to 48 hours. The longer they are left the tangier/more sour the kefir drink is. (It is not advisable to leave for more than 5 days as your kefir will be hungry and the level of good bacteria produced will have dropped off).*
6. *You can stir the kefir.*
7. *Homemade Kefir will be stronger and tangier than shop bought. See what tastes right for you. If the kefir seems too sour after 24hrs use more milk next time to get a smoother, milder drink (eg another cup full) The grains may be ready quicker in the summer months with the warmth and slower to ferment in the winter. It is normal to see separation of the whey and milk and the milk looking like curd, it means it is fermented and time to replenish. It is normal for there to be a cream crust layer. When the kefir grains are ready to be changed, just stir everything together, including the layer on top.*
8. *When your grains are ready, separate the milk kefir grains from the kefir milk. Tip everything into the sieve and collect milk kefir in a bowl.*
9. *Replace your grains in a clean jar and add your milk to them again.*
10. *Bottle your strained kefir. It should be sour and have an effervescent texture.*
11. *If you are trying different milks at some point... Keep enough kefir grains to continue your usual milk and use excess grains to experiment with.*
12. *Refrigerate your milk kefir and drink within 10 days. It will keep for up to 2 weeks/3 weeks. It can be used for cooking after this time. Trust your judgment. I always recommend that you do not consume anything that looks, tastes or smells unpleasant.*
13. *You should not need to rinse your grains very often if at all. Only rinse if they do not seem to be working as effectively. Use milk to clean the*

*grains. The thicker outer liquid is kefir and an important part of the kefir.*

- 14. To get used too drinking the kefir, I used a small amount, as little as a teaspoon, so that your body can adjust receiving the probiotic food to the gut. The taste can be an adjustment as well.*
- 15. Using a muslin cloth you can filter off some whey and use that in fermented foods like chutneys etc or for soaking grains over night, for amazing porridge or pancakes. It is possible to make soft and hard cheese from the kefir depending on how long you strain it for.*
- 16. And repeat! Have fun and enjoy the healthy drinks you make.*
- 17. When your grains have grown, share them with your friends and family and share the kefir love! : ) you can eat the probiotic grains or add them to your compost bin. You can blend the grains into smoothies or into your kefir.*
- 18. Kefir contains lots of good bacteria, yeast and lactic acid so start with small amounts. Everybody reacts differently. Please listen to your body and start slowly and build up.*
- 19. If you need a break or are going on holiday, the grains will keep in the fridge in kefir in milk for up to a month before needing a feed. (Up to 2-3 months before the grains will not be active)*
- 20. Any longer than 1 month you would need to dehydrate the grains (this is not something I have not tried) you can rinse and dry them on a paper towel. Dry them at room temp for 2-5 days if you don't have a dehydrator. In a dehydrator at 75 f or less for 12-24hrs. When they are hard and dry you can then store them at room temp in a jar with cotton balls. Grains can be used again after a year or more.*

*Please always use clean equipment and surfaces to avoid contamination. If you find coloured mold on the surface of your milk kefir, my inclination is to dispose of it and start again. Always trust your gut.*

## Recipes for Milk Kefir

*There are lots of recipes using milk kefir.*

*I am just putting a couple on here but there are lots of recipes on the internet to access...*

### Strawberry and banana smoothie

*1 fresh or frozen banana*

*1 cup of strawberries (This can be for any berries like raspberries, black currants etc)*

*1 cup of milk Kefir*

*1 tsp vanilla (optional)*

*Sweetener... to taste (maple syrup, honey or stevia) I find that I do not need any sweetener as I prefer the sourness.*

*Blitz with a hand blender (I use this sometimes as a carrier for things I want to take like turmeric, ginger, cinnamon, cayenne pepper, macca).*

### Chocolate Kefir power drink

*Use all the above ingredients and replace the fruit with Tbsp of good quality 100% cocoa powder.*

### Lemon Kefir Ice cream

*2 cups of kefir*

*1 grated lemon zest from large lemon (Organic preferably)*

*¼ cup lemon juice*

*1/3 cup of sweetener (Honey, maple syrup) try according to your tastes*

*(A dash of Limóncello or Rum for special occasions!)*

*Blitz together and put in a tub in the freezer. If you do not have an ice cream maker just take out and blitz it again every hour as the ice cream freezes*

### Breakfast Porridge

*1 cup of oats*

*1 cup of warm filtered water and 2 tbps of kefir whey or kefir*

*½ tsp of salt*

*(We would add raisins, ground almonds, egg yolk, cinnamon, toasted coconut chips and a little honey for a filling breakfast)*

*Mix and soak the porridge oats in the water and kefir overnight or up to 24hrs in a warm place. This helps with digesting oats (phytic acid break down). Boil an additional cup of water and salt. Add the soaked oats, lower the heat, cover and let simmer for several minutes. Sally suggests you serve with plenty of butter or cream and a natural sweetener if needed like rapadura, honey, maple syrup. There are many recipes using the whey or kefir to soaks grains in to make recipes like pancakes, scones etc.*

## **COCONUT MILK KEFIR**

### **How to make coconut milk kefir**

1. *Take 2 tsp of kefir grains*
2. *Add to ½ tin (200ml) of coconut milk to start off with, then you may increase to 1 tin or 400ml (I recommend coconut milk not containing preservatives and additives as grains are not keen on them.) Grace and Biona are great brands.*
3. *Give it a stir with a non metal spoon*
4. *Let it sit in a jar on the side similar to the milk kefir grains*
5. *These will culture over 12 to 24hrs. The first few batches of milk will be different as it is changing from milk kefir. Use this coconut milk for cooking. After the transition it produces a really tasty kefir drink. The coconut kefir does produce every 12/24hrs and needs a little more attention to timescale than the dairy kefir.*
6. *I use a clip top jar lid sealed.*
7. *Coconut milk grains can be in coconut milk mostly but they do need to revitalise in dairy milk every f3 batches or use a date paste to feed them. For a dairy milk revitalize. Leave in the milk for a 24hr soak.*

### **Date Paste**

1. *12 dates & ½ cup of water to cover the dates. Soak the dates until soft. When the dates are soft, drain the dates and reserve the soaking liquid.*
2. *Place the dates in a food processor or blender. Process the dates, adding the soaking liquid, 1 tablespoon at a time until the mixture is smooth, but still thick. This will require 1/4 to 1/2 cup of soaking liquid depending on the type of dates, freshness of the dates, and the length of time they soaked.*
3. *Place the paste in a jar with a secure lid and store in the fridge*

*Coconut milk kefir grains will not grow but will be maintained. They may not have the same probiotic value as milk kefir but will be probiotic and produce a fabulous tangy ferment.*

*Coconut kefir has a great coconut and tangy taste rather than sour. It can be used in place of sour cream, whipped cream, as a dessert sweetened with fresh fruit, made into ice cream (e.g with raspberries = an amazing coconut raspberry ice cream!) Just eat like a yoghurt (The longer the coconut milk ferments, the thicker the kefir)*

*“The Kefir Cookbook” Julie Smolyansky is a great reference for recipes.*

*“From Kefir with Love” is useful for the health benefits, and more in depth information*

*“Wild Fermentation” Sandor Katz is a great general fermentation resource and starting point for other ferments.*

*“The Clever Guts Diet” Michael Moseley*

*I hope you have lots of fun and great health with your milk kefir. Please feel free to come back to me with you have any queries or if there is something I have not covered. We are keen to improve what we have to offer.*

*Many thanks,*

*Emma*

[www.wildpickle.co.uk](http://www.wildpickle.co.uk)