

# MAKE YOUR OWN KEFIR

Kefir is a cultured and fermented milk product that tastes like a drinkable yogurt. Kefir can be found in the refrigerated dairy section of most health food stores, but did you know you can make your own right at home? Kefir grains can be ordered online from trusted websites, like [culturesforhealth.com](http://culturesforhealth.com) or [bodyecology.com](http://bodyecology.com). Or, if you have a friend who makes kefir, ask him or her to pass some on to you!

Kefir grains come from what's called a "mother culture." When you make kefir, the mother culture is fed and grown. Eventually, you have to remove or give part of your culture away. This can be a fun and community-building activity – to share grains and experiences. You can also order a milk kefir starter culture which contains bacteria that can culture your milk. However, this doesn't come from a mother culture. But, either will work! Play around.

Making kefir is like taking care of a pet. Every one or two days, most of the liquid needs to be poured out into a glass or jar. This liquid is yours to drink, but the grains need to be saved.

## MILK KEFIR



**PREP TIME** 5 min



**FERMENTING TIME** 24 hours



**SERVINGS** 8

### INGREDIENTS

- Kefir grains  
(fresh or dehydrated)
- 1 quart milk, left out at room temperature

### DIRECTIONS

1. Combine a starter culture, or 2-4 tablespoons of milk kefir grains, with 4 cups of dairy milk in a glass jar. (Either whole or low-fat milk will work. Low-fat milk will produce a thinner kefir.)
2. Cover the top of the jar with cheesecloth to keep out any insects, while letting it breathe.
3. Store in room temperature for 12-24 hours, until lightly thickened and pleasant smelling.
4. Strain out the kefir grains over a bowl, and gently wash them under room temperature water. Return the kefir to the now empty jar, and add more milk to start a new batch. Repeat this process every 24 hours.

### Top Tips:

- It's best to strain your kefir through cheesecloth or a nut milk bag. Wire can cut the kefir grains. Remember: Grains are living cultures!
- Wash the grains under room temperature water. Hot water can cause damage to the grains.
- Use clean hands when handling your kefir grains to avoid contamination with unwanted bacteria.

You may be thinking, “But, kefir contains dairy. It can't possibly be good for me!” Kefir originates from dairy, but the lactose is eaten by the bacteria – *Lactobacillus casei*. For this reason, many people who are mildly lactose intolerant or don't do well with dairy do well with kefir since the lactose is removed. This is an area of bio-individuality. Kefir is still considered dairy, so those who don't or can't consume dairy are advised to try coconut kefir.

You can use kefir grains with coconut milk. But, this requires an additional step of first reviving the grains in dairy milk for 24 hours and again in every *other* batch to maintain the integrity of the kefir grains. The kefir grains may be gently rinsed with water to remove the lactose.

To avoid dairy entirely, you may purchase water kefir grains and use with coconut water, according to the directions.