

Trim Healthy
W I S D O M

Home Fermented Kefir 101 (FP or S)

Kefir making is much easier than you probably thought it to be. Once you start, you'll wonder how you ever lived without it! It makes your food world simpler and reduces kitchen fatigue because you know that at least one of your main meals or snacks every day will be a simple kefir-based one... either a kefir smoothie or a kefir bowl or perhaps you'll pair it with your oatmeal to get your kefir quota. This simplifies your life and boosts your health tremendously. If you don't want to have kefir every single day, you can put your jar of grains and milk in the fridge for a day or two... just so kefir doesn't rule your life. But then we have a feeling you'll really start missing it and want it back.

Health/Weight Benefits and Possible Sensitivities - Trim Healthy Wisdom has a lot of info on how kefir helps you achieve your healthiest weight through far better insulin sensitivity, better gut and immune health, and lowered inflammation. Typically, even those who are milk sensitive can drink milk kefir as the lactose in the milk gets a 99% conversion into lactic acid, which is not sensitivity-causing but rather helps heal sensitivities over time. However, when first starting, you may want to work your way up slowly. Perhaps start at just ½ cup daily (even less if very sensitive) and gradually work up from there. If you find yourself still extremely sensitive to milk kefir, you can use nut milk to make it. The website - [Cultured Food Life](#), has some good recipes using different types of nut milk.

Low or Full-Fat Milk? - If you are in a challenging hormone situation and have lowered CLBM, we suggest using lean milk for your kefir as this is lower in density and, therefore, easier for your body to burn. Once fermented into kefir, lean milk (skim or 1%), which is an E in the THM plan, transforms into an FP since the milk sugars get eaten up during fermentation. This opens a whole new world of E Meal possibilities as you can add carbs to your smoothie or kefir bowl or have it with oatmeal in the morning. If a lowered metabolism is not your issue, you can use whole milk if preferred. Fermenting it will transform it into an S from its original XO form.

(P – Serene made kefir for a full two decades before I decided to finally join her. Now I wonder... why didn't I start earlier? My gut, my bone density, my mood, my hair and nails... and my taste buds thank me for including it. I've whipped my metabolism back into shape after menopause mayhem using our wisdom principles, but I still prefer using skim or low-fat milk for my kefir because I can use it for both E and S creations. Serene uses full-fat, raw, goat, and cow milk from her farm animals that get milked daily, so her kefir creations are S but usually XO's as she adds carbs to stay at a healthy weight. I buy regular pasteurized milk

from the store... yet I still have received many amazing benefits. The fermenting gets rid of toxins in the milk and brings this pasteurized form back to life, so it is teeming with gut-healing enzymes! This store-bought milk option is just simpler for my life. As a Drive Thru Sue, I am not one to want to milk cows and do all sorts of “from scratchy” things that Serene does. But we can both receive the benefits of kefir in our own ways. And so can you... no matter which sister you relate to more. If you do have farm animals or have access to raw, grass-fed milk, you can still lean it up if you have greater metabolic challenges than Serene by skimming the cream off to make butter (or to use as cream) and using the lean milk for your kefir.)

Items You Need to Get Started

- Kefir grains ([Donna's Live MILK Kefir Grains](#) is a great source)
- Sterilized pint or quart-sized jar
- 1 cup milk
- Fine mesh sieve (see our brand recommendations [HERE](#))
- Bowl with pouring spout (see our brand recommendations [HERE](#))

Now For Some More Deets on Getting Started

1 – Acquire Your Grains: Find a friend who makes kefir and ask them for some grains to get started, or alternatively, buy your grains online. We have kefir grains available on our website that are the best in the world in our minds (and we've tried a lot of them over the years). They have more healthy microbe strains than most other kefir grains and produce the most amazing, vibrant kefir!

2 – Sterilize Your Fermentation Jar: You won't have to do this sterilization thing much, so don't let it stress you out. You only really need to do it when you start your first ferment or when you change jars. Put a metal butter knife or a fork into a clean pint or quart-sized glass jar (depending upon how much kefir you plan on making – pint is fine at first). You're using a knife or fork to help prevent the glass from cracking when you add boiling water. Pour boiled water into the jar, allow that to sit for a minute then pour it out. Allow the jar to dry.

3 – Make Your First Ferment: Typically, when buying your grains online, you'll only have about a tablespoon or so to start with. Place these in your sterilized jar, then add 1 cup of milk. Now, put a plastic lid on your jar and place your jar in a cupboard or on your counter. Allow the jar to sit for about 24 hours. Once that time has passed, put the sieve over the bowl. Pour the fermented grains and milk from the jar into the sieve. The

grains will sit in the sieve, and the liquid will pass through. Using a spoon or a spatula, mash the grains against the sieve rather vigorously so you get all the white-colored kefir protein that surrounds them pushed through the sieve and into the bowl. You'll want to discard this first ferment as your grains have probably not revived fully yet. Or you can give it to a pet if they like it. Typically, with grains purchased online, it takes several days or up to a week of 24-hour ferments until the grains become active enough to turn milk into fully fermented kefir. The grains we have available on our website are stronger, so it only takes two to three 24-hour ferments for them to be ready. After the third ferment using them, taste the kefir. If it tastes good and sour, you're ready to use it.

4. Keep the Cycle Going: Put your grains back into the same jar you used to ferment them in and add another cup of milk. (Don't wash this jar before putting it back in... you can use the same jar for a good long time and only wash it, then sterilize it if it has been several weeks or months, and it looks a bit disastrous.) Put the plastic lid back on and ferment the milk for another 24 hours. As mentioned, after the third ferment (if using the grains available on our website), you should be ready to use rather than discard the harvested kefir. Try any of the recipes using it that we have in our Wisdom Recipe Collection or just drink as is or add a doonk of stevia if you can't tolerate the sour. Your grains will start to multiply soon. Over the next few weeks, you'll discover that you have larger and larger amounts of grains. The grains have babies while you're not looking!!!! We (your sister authors) prefer keeping generous amounts of grains in our jars... some people say only to have 1 Tbs. or even 1 tsp. of grains per cup of milk. We like more... we love a good, sour, well-fermented kefir, so we allow our grains to get to a large handful (perhaps ¼ cup) for fermenting 2 cups of milk; that's at least double what some others prefer. Once you have too many grains, you can blend up excess in the blender if making smoothies (they're so healthy when eaten) or add them to your kefir bowls, give them to pets, or just throw them out... which is sad, but some people do that, and we won't judge – ha! If you leave far too many grains in your jar, your milk may get overly fermented, and the healthy microbes may diminish.

Stripped Down into Basics

Once you have your grains activated and they've started growing in size, you can ferment more than 1 cup of milk at a time. In fact, you can ferment up to a gallon of milk or more at a time. (*S – I use a full gallon for my Super Quark recipe, which is a creamy kind of high-protein yogurt/cheese, so check that recipe out.*) Fermenting large amounts of milk at one time works great if you have multiple family members using kefir. You can also do multiple ferments at a time if needed. (*P – I always have two kefir jars going. One for myself using lean milk and one for my husband using full fat for his morning kefir smoothies and afternoon puddings that have helped his gut so much. These are Charlie's Gut Healing*

Kefir Smoothie and Charlie's Kefir Pudding) (S – I have two jars always going as well. I have one for my goat's milk and one for my cow's milk... oh and I also make L Reuteri Yogurt, so there are usually three milk ferments going on in my home at any given time.)

Once your grains are established and going strong, here is the most basic of kefir recipes:

Home Fermented Kefir Recipe

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Tbs kefir grains ([Donna's Live MILK Kefir Grains](#); at least 1 Tbs but feel free to use more)
- milk (lean or full fat) any amount you wish to ferment... the more milk you use, the more grains you need)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Put kefir grains into a quart jar. Add milk... close the jar with a plastic lid, and then leave for 24 hours (can go up to 36 hours if needed).
2. Strain the grains through a sieve into a bowl. (Use a spoon or spatula to push the grains against the mesh in the sieve to help get all the kefir through.) The kefir grains will be left in your sieve.
3. Place the kefir grains back into the same jar that you just used to ferment them in (no need to wash the jar).
4. Add more milk to the jar, replace the lid, and leave for another 24 hours.
5. If you do not use your harvested kefir right away, transfer it from the bowl into another jar, close it with a lid, and store it in the refrigerator for later use.
6. Keep the cycle going every 24 hours or so. However, if you don't want to make kefir every day, you can give it a little fridge rest for a couple of days here and there. If you must go away on vacation for longer than a couple of days, do the following below.

Harvest Your Kefir: Pour fresh milk over your grains, put a lid on, and place them in the fridge. You can leave the grains in the milk for up to two weeks or so. Once you return home, you'll want to harvest the kefir and discard it, as the microbes will not be sufficient. Start another fresh ferment. After the next ferment or two, your grains should be back to doing well again, as they'll have fresh food to chow down on.