



Fabulous Summer Mocktails

Written by Jill Grunewald and published in part in tastebud magazine, July 2008

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We have not yet borne the brunt of summer's wrath, but prepare yourself, it's on its way. While 'tis true that some Kansas City summer days are even too warm for the Slip 'n Slide, others warrant escaping the confines of an air conditioned environment and instead a gathering of leisurely merrymaking on the patio or lawn with a chilled cocktail.

Yet hard alcohol and heat go together like wool in the desert. It is dehydrating and depleting, as is the heat, and who wants a double whammy fast track to fatigue and confusion when the daylight hours go well past dinnertime? Opt for the cooling therapies of fruits and herbs that beat the heat and keep you sharp, hydrated, and nourished, and you won't have to worry about crashing before the party is over.

In the sake of full disclosure, I'm all for the occasional mood-altering happy drink, but aside from the usual suspects sans the alcohol, it can be challenging to find healthy and unusual alternatives on a restaurant menu. So plan a party on your own patio or lawn and impress your guests, as these summer coolers are gorgeous, out of the ordinary, and healthy to boot! And don't forget the kiddies; these delicious summer mocktails are also a great way for them to join the festivities.

Green Tea and Mango Splash

1 cup strongly brewed green tea (2 tea bags to 1 cup water)
2 cups mango nectar
Ice cubes
Mint sprigs for garnish
Mango slivers for garnish

Combine tea and mango nectar in a pitcher. Serve over ice, garnished with mint sprigs and mango slivers.

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HEALTHFUL ELEMENTS



Herbal Rosemary-Raspberry Lemonade

1 quart water
1/4 cup fresh or 1/8 cup dry rosemary leaves
3 medium-sized lemons
1/4 to 1/2 cup honey or maple syrup
1 cup fresh or frozen raspberries
Ice cubes

Edible flowers for garnish

For the rosemary infusion:

1. Measure out 1-2 ounces (about 1/2 -1 cup) of dried herbs per quart of boiling water. If using fresh herbs, double the amount of plant material. Combine the herbs in a pot.
2. Pour 1 quart of boiling water over the herbs.
3. Strain, and sweeten lightly with honey if desired.

For the lemonade:

1. After the rosemary infusion, stir, cover and allow to steep for 15-20 minutes.
2. Strain out the rosemary leaves, and add the fresh lemon and honey or maple syrup. Stir well and transfer to a festive glass bowl.
3. Add the raspberries and ice cubes, and garnish with a few sprinkles of edible flowers such as basil blossoms, borage, calendula, lavender, rose petals or nasturtiums.

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Blueberry Lime Margarita (alcohol-free)

2 cups ice
1 cup frozen blueberries
1 cup blueberry nectar
1/4 cup seltzer
2 tablespoons frozen limeade
1 tablespoon lime juice
1 lime wedge Coarse salt

Combine ice, blueberries, blueberry nectar, seltzer, limeade, and lime juice in a blender and blend until smooth. Rub rim of 2 glasses with lime wedge and dip in salt. Divide the margarita between the prepared glasses and serve.

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