

Serving Suggestions

- » Combine herbs for interesting combinations. Good options include: chamomile or alfalfa and mint; lemon herbs (like lemon verbena, lemongrass, lemon balm) and mints; sage and lemon herbs; peppermint and elder flowers; hibiscus and lemon verbena or rosehips; alfalfa and mint; clover and spearmint; licorice root or spearmint and rosemary.
- » Other good combos include green teas and apple juice; raspberry tea and orange juice; and lavender with mint and grape juice.
- » Use iced teas to boost your immunity or address health issues. Sipping iced teas throughout the day is a great way to reap the most health benefits from the herbs.
- » Include spices in your teas for added depth. Cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, allspice, and ginger are good bets.
- » Citrus enlivens almost any iced tea. Use fresh lemon or lime juice, slices, or peels, and/or granulated lemon.
- » Chill your serving glasses ahead of time, and prop a piece of fruit (a strawberry, lime, orange, or lemon slice) on the edge.
- » Add frozen fruit to your drink. Whole strawberries, raspberries, or blueberries are fun.
- » Add edible flowers (organic violets, nasturtiums, rose petals, and scented geraniums, for example) to your ice cubes.
- » Combine an herbal tea with your favorite black, green, white, or oolong tea—like Darjeeling and peppermint, Earl Grey and lemongrass, green tea and chamomile. Of course, all teas are delicious iced! (You may want to pour any leftover warm tea into a pitcher in the refrigerator to serve iced another time.)
- » To dissolve your sweetener, you can make a syrup by cooking the honey or sugar in a bit of water (or juice) and stirring for a minute or two. Then add the syrup directly to the batch of sun tea, once brewed.
- » Serve herbal iced teas with complimentary treats, like lavender cakes or cardamom scones, anise cookies or gingersnaps.

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Herbs On Ice— Summer Teas

How to make...

- » Citrus Hibiscus
- » Lavender Lemon Honey
- » Lemon Balm Punch

Tips for Making Iced Tea

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Q&A

I'm not comfortable steeping herbs in the sun because of the risk of bacteria. How else can I make herbal iced teas?

You can make herbal iced tea by brewing tea as usual (with boiling water) and then cooling and serving over ice. You might also try making herbal tea in the refrigerator. Follow the directions for sun tea, but leave your container in the refrigerator overnight rather than in the sun for a few hours. This method works better with stronger herbs, like the mints, than subtler ones, like chamomile. And each of the methods produces a slightly different tea, so experiment until you get the right ratio of herbs to water.

What's the best way to store herbs for teas? Spice jars are too little!

Large glass jars with lids are perfect. Just keep in mind that you want to keep them out of the sunlight until it's time for steeping. Store them in a dry place out of the heat and light (like in a cupboard away from the stove). Amber jars help protect the herbs from light, too.

My herbal teas are delicious until I add ice cubes. Then they're too watery. Any suggestions?

You can make your tea stronger to start with, so when the ice melts your beverage will still be flavorful. Or you can make ice cubes out of a tea that blends well with many other teas—like a mint. You can also use ice cubes that are made out of fruit juices, which will add interesting flavor and color.

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Iced Tea

For nourishing refreshment, nothing quenches better—or is easier to prepare—than herbal iced tea.



Make your own with the help of the sun. Use your favorite herbs alone or in combination. Drink them plain or sweetened, or mixed with juices, sparkling waters, or natural sodas. Serve them to guests, but make them part of everyday family fare, too.

To make herbal sun tea all you need is a large glass jar or pitcher, fresh water, and herbs. Try about two heaping Tbsp. of herb per quart of water.

Place the herbs in the container and fill with cold water. You can tie the herbs in cheesecloth or place them in a muslin bag or tea infuser first for easy removal. Cover the container.

Set your container in a sunny place and let nature do the brewing. No need to set a timer—just leave the tea until it's as strong as you prefer it.

When the tea looks and tastes ready, bring it in and take out the herbs. Squeeze them before discarding to release all the flavor into the tea. Store the container in the refrigerator and serve over ice.

Note: There's some concern that brewing tea in the sun can harbor bacteria, and this is a possibility. That's because the water will get warm enough to provide a friendly environment for the bacteria, but not hot enough to kill it. To minimize the risk, use a perfectly clean container (scrub it in soap and hot water and rinse well) and don't leave the tea to steep for more than a few hours. Make just enough tea for the day, and keep it refrigerated. If the tea becomes thick or syrupy, discard it. (By the way, teas that contain caffeine are less prone to bacterial contamination.)

Citrus Hibiscus

This colorful beverage brings a vacation on the beach to mind.

- 1 tsp. peppermint
- 2 cups water
- 1 tsp. rosehips
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 tsp. orange peel
- 1 cup cold sparkling water
- 2 tsp. hibiscus
- 2 Tbsp. honey (or to taste)
- 2 tsp. lemongrass

Steep peppermint, rosehips, orange peel, hibiscus, and lemongrass in the two cups of water. Strain. Add orange juice and refrigerate. When ready to serve, pour over ice cubes and add a splash of sparkling water to each glass. Sweeten if desired.

Lavender Lemon Honey

Use this sweetener in tea, or as a glaze on plain pound cakes, angel food cakes, honey cookies, biscotti, or scones for herbal tea time.

- 4 Tbsp. lavender flowers
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1/4 cup honey

Crush the lavender flowers in your hand as you place them in a bowl. Combine with honey and lemon juice.

Lemon Balm Punch

Serve this easy and economical party beverage with floating slices of fresh lemon in the punch bowl or a slice or two of crystallized ginger in each glass.

- 2 Tbsp. lemongrass
- 2 Tbsp. lemon balm leaf
- 2 cups water
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- 2 cups natural ginger ale
- lemon slices (optional)
- 1 Tbsp. crystallized ginger, sliced (optional)

Make sun tea with lemongrass, lemon balm leaf, and water. Strain and add honey and ginger ale.

