

Flavored Infused Waters can be a Refreshing Beverage

Infused water is a healthy alternative to beverages that are high in sugar. It is as simple as adding some clean, rinsed and sliced fruits or vegetables and herbs to your glass or pitcher of water. These tips might enhance the flavor experience and help make your infused water safe:

- Depending on the added ingredients, either slice, chop or lightly mash fruits or vegetables and either tear or julienne fresh herb leaves.
- Although the flavored water will be served in a single-sized glass, it could be made in either a drinking glass or a large amount in a water pitcher.
- No special kitchen equipment is needed, although there are pitchers and water bottles designed to contain the produce so those ingredients are not floating in the water when it is time to drink it.
- Infused water could be served immediately after it is mixed, but it will not have the maximum flavor.. It is recommended that the water is chilled in the refrigerator from 30 minutes to overnight for optimum flavor. Often the longer it is chilled the more flavors it will have.
- As in any food or beverage preparation, do not forget to wash hands with soap and water before handling the food. Also, wash all produce with clean running water. Use clean containers and sanitize preparation surfaces before starting.
- For food safety, treat the infused water as you would treat refrigerated food. The water can be enjoyed today, stored in the refrigerator until tomorrow or frozen for longer storage. Do not take a infused water made from a previous day and add to it, make a fresh batch.
- Add ice to water and remember that perishable foods should not be left at room temperature more than two hours. After two hours at room temperature, the infused water should be refrigerated or thrown out.
- The produce used in infused water is often thrown away in the trash or down the disposal. Also, composting is a great option for these used ingredients.
- To gain the most nutrition benefits from fruits and vegetables, it is recommended that you eat While infused water is a great way to stay hydrated, these will not count as your servings of fruits or vegetables for the day. The next time you are slicing produce to eat, consider adding a handful to your water pitcher. Infused water can be low-cost by using ends and pieces of produce that are not going to be used for meal preparation. Because it is so easy to make and there is not a right or wrong recipe to try or invent, get the entire

Here are some foods that you can use to flavor your water:

- Berries – strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries
- Melons – cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon
- Apples, pears, peaches, grapes
- Cucumbers, celery, red or yellow peppers, spinach or zucchini
- Herbs – peppermint, spearmint, basil, rosemary, sage, lavender, and lemon balm

Try these combinations:

- Strawberry melon, choose any melon varieties
- Pear, blackberry
- Pear rosemary
- Strawberry basil

Source: Ohio State Extension Chowline