

Iced Tea with a Twist

Cate O'Malley, A Nice Cuppa - For those looking for a caffeine bolster in the dog days of summer, a tall glass of iced tea might be just the ticket. But instead of going with the same old, same old, try these new twists from Better Homes and Gardens and perk up your summertime tea:

- Frozen frills: Freeze edible flowers or mint leaves with water in ice cube trays; add to a pitcher of chilled tea just before serving. Or, freeze the flowers and/or mint leaves with water in a metal ring mold, which can be added to a punch bowl.
- To be edible, flowers must be free of both naturally occurring and human-made toxins. Flowers from your garden will work nicely, provided that neither you nor your neighbors use chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Pick flowers just before making the ice cubes. Remove stems and leaves. Rinse blooms, and gently pat dry with paper towels. Or, look for edible flowers in the produce section of your supermarket.
- Floating color: Float fruit slices or edible flowers, such as pansies, on top of single servings of iced tea.
- Fruity touches: Wrap thin orange or lemon peel strips around skewered berries and insert into fruit-flavored teas.
- Herb flavors: Snip fresh herbs from your garden. Mint is perfect for fruit-flavored teas. Try pairing a sprig of mint with fruit slices or fresh berries. Garnish regular or lemon-flavored tea with an aromatic herb, such as rosemary.
- Extra tea taste: When mixing a pitcher of iced tea, freeze tea in one or two ice cube trays. Then use the cubes to chill your tea without diluting it. If you prefer lemon-flavored tea, try freezing lemonade to add to your tea. If that isn't enough, try this fresh Rhubarb Iced Tea, or one of the other tea ideas from Better Homes & Gardens here.