

Activity: Food/Cooking Goal: Social Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Making Agua Fresca

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Original publication: Hewson, M. (2022). *Cultivate* 2(4), 6-8.

https://www.flhhn.com/uploads/1/3/8/6/138696150/fall_2022.cultivate.flhhn.pdf



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will make and drink agua fresca as a social activity, practicing good hydration with a nutrition focus.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Practice reading skills on recipes

Physical: Improve range of motion, manual dexterity

Psychological/Emotional: Practice safety precautions & safe handling of kitchen knives

Sensory: Improve nutrition as a healthy lifestyle choice

Social: Make & consume food/drink from plants as a social activity

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather fruit, vegetables, pitcher, glasses, knives, recipes & other materials.
2. Facilitator begins session by asking participants to write an agua fresca recipe from the poster/chalkboard that they would like to make now & in the future. Safe food handling & safety rules are discussed.
3. Participants gather in groups based on similar recipes they have chosen. Wash hands & gather edible & equipment materials for their recipe.
4. Begin fruit/veggie preparations based on recipes: washing ingredients, slicing, cutting, measuring, taking turns & working cooperatively with their group.
5. All ingredients are assembled, adding fresh water last.
6. Once assembled, participants sample their agua fresca & other groups' flavors too.
7. Discussion about nutrition, hydration, handling of fruits & vegetables, ideas for other infused water drinks & taste preferences supports the social aspect of this activity.
8. Facilitator shares tips for making agua fresca as a review or as additional information: wash fruit before using; use organic blemish free firm edibles avoiding waxy vegetables (absorption low due to wax); & remove fruit stems/seeds, rough spots. Edible flowers can also be used in agua fresca – pansy, nasturtium, roses, hibiscus & daylilies (as long as they haven't been sprayed with chemicals).

Materials

recipes on poster or chalkboard
recipe cards, pencils

assorted fruit, herbs, veggies
(from recipes)

recommended fruits: apple,
apricot, blackberry, black
currant, blueberry, cherry,
Clementine, elderberry, grape,
grapefruit, kiwi, lemon, lime,
mango, melon, watermelon,
nectarine, orange, pear, peach,
plum, raspberry, strawberry

veggies: avocado, cucumber

herbs: anise, mint varieties,
lavender, basil, cilantro, lemon
balm, dill, lemon grass, tarragon

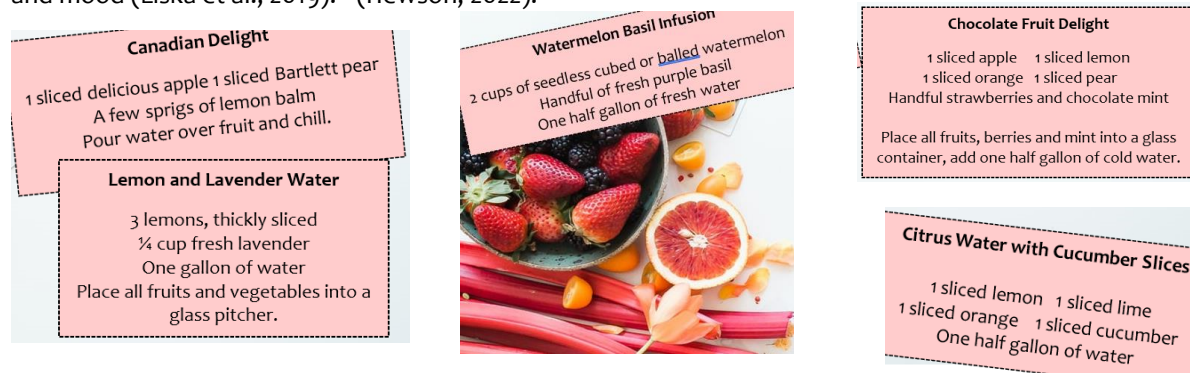
pitchers, glasses, spoons, knives
measuring cups
wipes

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: “Thirst quenching infused waters can stimulate a client’s palate and hydrate the body using fruit, vegetables, and herbs. Traced back to Spanish cuisine, fruit waters or aguas frescas, are gaining in popularity as flavorful and healthy thirst quenchers. Infused waters can provide an alternative drink offering flavor, color, texture, and creativity for HT programming. For populations that have a tendency to become easily dehydrated; seniors, people on certain medications, or for anyone outdoors in hot temperatures, infused water may be one approach to combining hydration, nutrition, and horticultural therapy in a long, tall glass.

There are many therapeutic benefits of making and drinking infused water as a horticultural therapy activity: an activity focused on healthy food choices, one that can be complementary to a program growing edibles, and natural drinks without artificial ingredients using fresh ingredients loaded with vitamins and antioxidants. The preparation of infused waters provides a range of movement, exercise, manual dexterity, and hand-eye coordination as evidenced by (AEB) the ability to cut fruit, hold knives, and use of pincer grip to place fruit into blender. Adaptable for all ages and abilities, Sophia Podrozny RD, Clinical Dietitian, Homewood Health Centre states ‘preparing infused waters helps us re-connect to healthy food and practice food preparation skills’.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Prior approval for consuming, drinking and eating ingredients should be obtained with consideration for allergies, swallowing & medicine interactions. Knives and pencils may not be approved for use by some populations. Alternatively, slicing of fruit/veggies can be done ahead of session by facilitator or volunteers.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: “Proper hydration is important for maintaining a healthy body- boosting cellular energy production and lessening daytime fatigue (Benton & Young, 2015). Hydration impacts many body parts including reducing joint pain by providing synovial viscous fluid as a lubricant surrounding joints and making joint surfaces spongier (Bezci et al., 2015). Brain function can be impaired by even mild dehydration (Miller, 2015); hydration loss of 1-2% of body weight decreases cognitive performance (Pross, 2017) and impairs concentration and mood (Liska et al., 2019).” (Hewson, 2022).



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Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2023.
 TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.