

NATURAL, REFRESHING ALTERNATIVES TO SODA

It is easy to become a "Pepsi-aholic." There is definitely an allure and addiction of soda pop, otherwise known as liquid candy. You can also find the smell and taste of soda offensive as my taste buds have acclimated to a more natural palate.

If you are transitioning off regular soda, but not quite ready to let it go, try the more natural varieties now widely available such as Blue Sky or Hansen's. Eventually, you will want to reduce these to a minimum or eliminate them altogether as they are not much better than the big brands.

Try these delicious beverages as an alternative. Realize, that if you are accustomed to the "extreme" taste of soda, they may not seem satisfying at first. This will change, however, so be patient and give your taste buds a chance to catch up with your desire to make more healthful choices.

Tangy Lemonade

1 cup fresh lemon juice (approx. 8-10 lemons) or
1 cup Santa Cruz organic 100% lemon juice (not from concentrate)
4 cups purified water
1/4 - 1/2 tsp. liquid Stevia
1/4 cup plus 1 tbsp. pure maple syrup
1/4 cup pure cranberry juice (optional, for pink lemonade)
1 lemon sliced very thin to add as garnishment

Mix liquids together in pitcher or 1-2 quart glass jar. Add thin lemon slices as garnishment. This is tangy lemonade that can withstand a little dilution from added ice on a hot summer's day. It's also a powerful liver cleanser.

Apple-Orange Soda

2 parts pure unsweetened apple juice
1 part pure unsweetened orange juice
1 part sparkling mineral water or plain Club Soda

If the fizz is what excites you about soda, this is a delicious alternative you'll love. This is the basic recipe for starters, but don't feel you have to stick to it. Children especially love to experiment to find their own favorite ratio of the ingredients.

Herbal Iced Tea

4 bags fruity herbal tea of your choice (blackberry, strawberry, apple cinnamon, etc.)
1 quart pure water
1/4 tsp. liquid Stevia

This mild, refreshing recipe is "so easy" to make! Just place the herbal tea bags in a quart jar, fill with pure water, add the stevia shake and place in the fridge for a couple hours or so. Voila... fruity iced tea! Add a little apple juice for a bit more zing, if you like.

These refreshing drinks will keep you cool, satisfied and healthy all summer long. After drinking them regularly, soon you'll find you have lost the desire for regular soda and won't miss it at all.

Bring a quart or two to work and save all the money you would have spent on soda from the vending machine. Reward yourself at the end of the summer by spending the money you saved on something special for yourself. (Perhaps a new outfit in a smaller size!)

Making the switch to healthier alternatives can be an enjoyable adventure. So, experiment and have fun!