A clear glass filled with water, lemon slices, and fresh mint leaves sits on a light-colored wooden surface. The background is softly blurred, showing a white object, possibly a pitcher or another glass, in the upper left corner. The overall scene is bright and fresh, evoking a sense of hydration and natural wellness.

# Five Gentle Infusions for Hot Days, Busy Bodies and Slower Evenings

Notes on Hydration, Rhythm &  
Summer Life

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# Summer Signals

## Children, Microbiomes & Everyday Life

*Summer arrives through small shifts.*

Open windows.

Shoes left by the door.

Longer light stretching into evening.

Cold fruit from the market.

Children moving between heat, noise, movement, rest, and return.

Some moments feel expansive and fast.

Others ask for cooling, slowing, or quiet repair.

Across the day, children move through countless signals:

light, temperature, colour, aroma, sound, touch, rhythm, food, water,  
and emotional atmosphere.

These experiences do more than fill time.

They become part of the environment the body responds to.

Hydration is one of those quiet signals.

Not only through water itself,

but through temperature, minerals, plant compounds, aroma, colour,  
and the sensory experience surrounding it.

A sprig of mint torn between fingers.

Citrus diffusing slowly into glass.

Frozen berries changing the colour of water.

The coolness of something offered after long play in the sun.

These small experiences help shape familiarity, participation, microbial diversity, and relationship with nourishment over time.

The recipes that follow are not intended as formulas, but as small seasonal rituals: gentle moments of hydration, colour, aroma, and slowing woven through everyday summer life.

Some summer moments ask for brightness.  
Others for coolness.  
Others simply for softer landings toward evening.

# Mint + Cucumber + Lemon

For returning indoors after heat and movement.

After long afternoons outdoors, some children need cooling before they need conversation.

Cold water.  
Bare feet on kitchen tiles.  
Something fresh held in glass.

Mint lifts through aroma before the first sip.

Cucumber softens sharpness with water and mineral freshness.

Lemon brings brightness and gentle bitterness — flavours that wake the mouth slowly in heat.

## Summer Signal

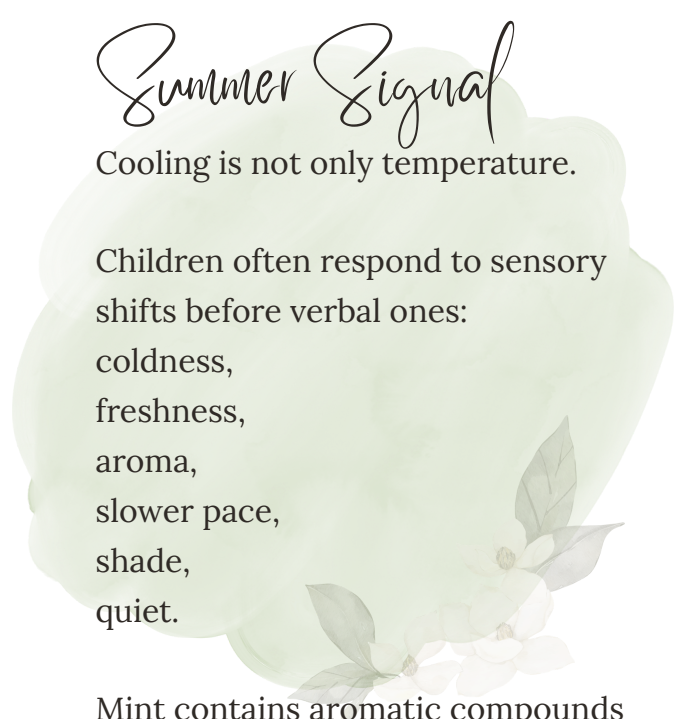
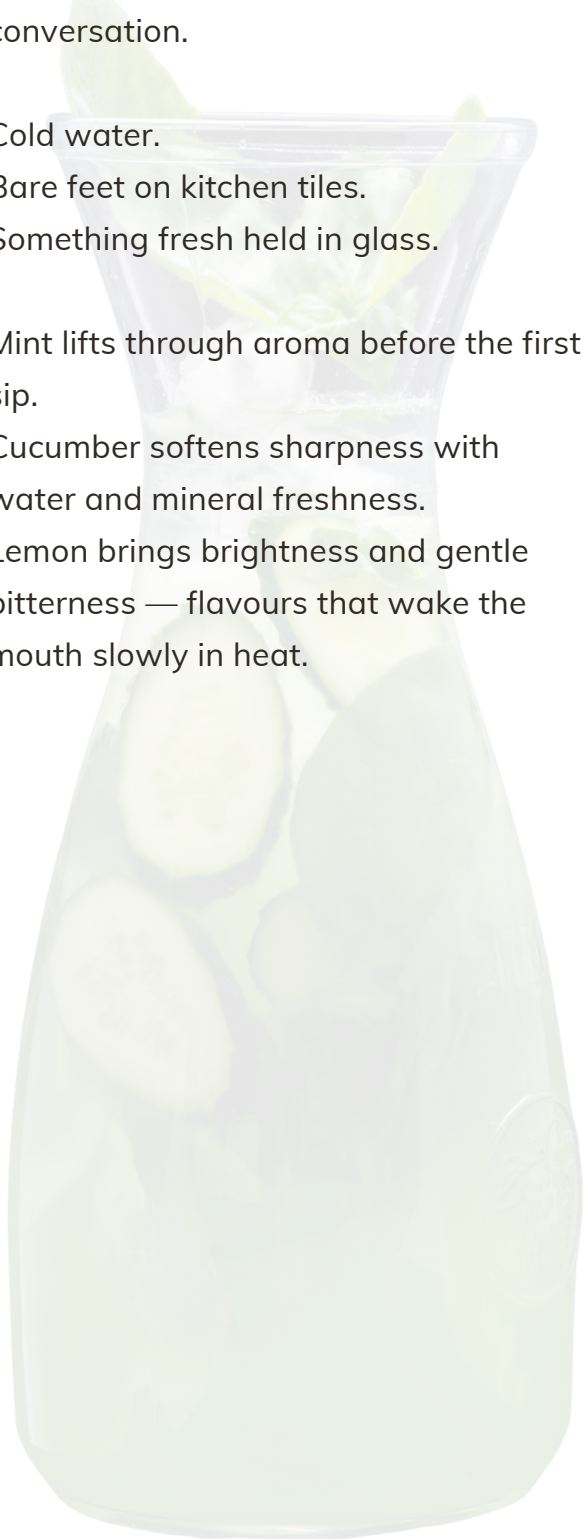
Cooling is not only temperature.

Children often respond to sensory shifts before verbal ones:

coldness,  
freshness,  
aroma,  
slower pace,  
shade,  
quiet.

Mint contains aromatic compounds such as menthol, traditionally associated with freshness and cooling during heat.

Repeated encounters with herbs, citrus, and plant diversity also widen the sensory landscape children grow through — a small part of how food familiarity and microbial diversity develop over time.



# Mint + Cucumber + Lemon

Preparing the Infusion

## Ingredients — 1 litre

- Small handful of mint leaves (prefer organic or home-grown)
- 1 small cucumber
- 2 slices of lemon
- 1 litre of filtered or glass-bottled mineral water

Lightly bruise the mint leaves before adding them to water to release aromatic oils.

Slice cucumber finely for greater surface contact. Keep peel if organic.

If using lemon peel, organic citrus is preferable, as compounds in the peel and pith contribute much of the aroma and flavonoid content.

Infuse in glass where possible and refrigerate for 4–6 hours.

The flavour deepens gradually as aromatic compounds and plant pigments diffuse slowly through the water.

Child Participation

Children often enjoy:

- ★ tearing mint leaves
- ★ watching cucumber float
- ★ adding ice cubes
- ★ smelling the herbs before infusion
- ★ tasting the water before and after resting

*Participation builds familiarity gently.*

# Strawberry + Basil

For slower afternoons and softer pauses.

Some summer afternoons ask for less noise.

A quieter room.

Slower hands.

Colour gathering softly in glass.

Strawberries release sweetness gradually into the water, while basil brings freshness through aroma before flavour fully arrives.

The changing pink tones often become part of the experience itself.

Children frequently notice colour, scent, and small visual shifts long before they understand nutrition.

A drink beside a puzzle.

A shaded table.

Something cool held between moments of movement and return.

Strawberry and basil create contrast gently:

fruit and herb,

sweetness and greenness,

familiarity and discovery carried together through summer light.

## Summer Signal

Children often approach colour before flavour.

Bright fruit, herbs, and changing water tones can become part of how curiosity develops around plants and nourishment.

Strawberries contain colourful plant compounds called anthocyanins, while herbs such as basil introduce aromatic complexity in gentle ways.

Repeated sensory exposure helps widen both familiarity and diversity over time.

# Strawberry + Basil

Preparing the Infusion

## Ingredients — 1 litre

- Tub of fresh strawberries (use organic or home-grown)
- 3 or 4 fresh basil leaves
- 1 litre of filtered or glass-bottled mineral water

Gently bruise the basil leaves before adding them to water to release aromatic oils.

Halve strawberries lengthwise. Keep leaves for visual contrast.

Infuse in glass where possible and refrigerate for 2–4 hours.

Basil is best infused gently for shorter periods to preserve freshness and balance.

The flavour deepens gradually as aromatic compounds and plant pigments diffuse slowly through the water.

## Child Participation

This recipe especially lends itself to:

- ★ watching the water blush pink
- ★ tearing basil leaves
- ★ smelling basil beside strawberries
- ★ choosing “how red” the infusion becomes
- ★ freezing strawberries into ice cubes
- ★ noticing and naming colours

*Sensory participation helps curiosity settle into familiarity.*

# Orange + Rosemary

For warm light that softens towards evening.

As afternoon light begins to soften, the atmosphere of the home often changes with it.

Windows remain open.

Voices lower.

Movement slows almost imperceptibly.

Orange brings brightness and warmth together — sweetness carried through citrus oils and gentle bitterness held within the peel and pith.

Rosemary adds aromatic depth:

green,  
resinous,  
sunlit.

Together they create an infusion that feels both bright and grounding, suited to the slower transition between active afternoons and quieter evening rhythms.

Sometimes children approach herbs first through scent:

crushed leaves between fingers,  
citrus lifted from the glass,  
warm air carrying aroma before the first sip.

## Summer Signal

Scent often shapes experience before flavour fully arrives.

Children frequently engage through smell, colour, and observation long before analytical understanding develops.

Repeated sensory encounters with herbs, citrus, bitterness, and plant diversity help widen familiarity gradually over time.

Rosemary has traditionally been associated with memory, clarity, and warmth in Mediterranean food cultures — not only through taste, but through the atmosphere it creates around shared spaces and meals.

# Orange + Rosemary

Preparing the Infusion

## Ingredients — 1 litre

- 1 orange
- 2 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- 1 litre of filtered or glass-bottled mineral water

Slice the orange, keeping the peel if organic.

Use fingers to gently scrape the leaves off a sprig of rosemary. Pinch them lightly before adding them to water to release aromatic oils and avoid an overpowering infusion.

Add the 2<sup>nd</sup> fresh rosemary sprig into the jug whole for visual richness. Keep the flowers on the sprig if there are any.

Infuse in glass where possible and refrigerate for 4–6 hours. This infusion can be enjoyed lightly chilled or at room temperature, where the citrus and rosemary aromas unfold more gently.

Over time, citrus oils and aromatic compounds settle gradually into the water.

Citrus peel and aromatic herbs release volatile plant compounds into both air and water, becoming part of the sensory atmosphere surrounding a drink.

## Child Participation

This recipe lends itself beautifully to:

- ★ smelling rosemary before and after pinching
- ★ twisting orange peel
- ★ observing oil release on water surface
- ★ naming and observing citrus colours & texture
- ★ comparing scent before and after infusion
- ★ choosing thin vs thick slices

*Shared sensory moments become part of nourishment too.*

# Peach + Very Mild Ginger

For soft landings after long summer days.

By evening, some children no longer need brightness.

They need softness.

Lower light.

Quieter rooms.

Something gentle carried slowly through the body after long hours of movement, heat, and sensory activity.

Peach releases sweetness gradually into the water:  
round,  
fragrant,  
sun-warmed.

A very small amount of ginger adds quiet depth beneath the fruit — not enough to dominate, only enough to bring gentle warmth and balance.

Together they create an infusion suited to slower evenings, softer conversations, and the gradual unwinding that often follows long summer days.

Sometimes nourishment is simply part of the transition toward rest.

## Summer Signal

Children often respond to atmosphere before instruction:

lower light,  
slower pacing,  
familiar aromas,  
gentler flavours.

Sweet fruits such as peach introduce softness naturally, while small amounts of warming spices can deepen flavour without overwhelming the senses.

Ginger has traditionally been used in many food cultures to bring warmth and digestive ease, particularly when used gently rather than intensely.

Repeated sensory rituals around evening nourishment can become part of how children recognise slowing, comfort, and transition over time.

# Peach + Very Mild Ginger

Preparing the Infusion

## Ingredients — 1 litre

- 2 ripe peaches
- 1 very thin slice of fresh root ginger
- 1 litre of filtered or glass-bottled mineral water

Cut the peaches into quarters, remove the stone and leave the skin on if organic.

Add the very thin slice of ginger and peaches to the jug of water.

Infuse in glass where possible for 2–4 hours. Room temperature works beautifully for this infusion. It can even be slightly warmed.

Avoid over-infusing the ginger, simply allowing it to bring a gentle warmth beneath the softness of the peach.

## Child Participation

This infusion invites quieter forms of participation:

- ★ smelling ginger after slicing
- ★ touching peach skin texture
- ★ comparing ripe vs firmer peaches
- ★ watching peach colour diffuse slowly
- ★ comparing scent before and after infusion
- ★ noticing the warm lifting aroma of ginger vs the sweet soft smell of ripe peaches

*Gentle sensory rituals can become part of unwinding over time.*

# Berry + Hibiscus

For the final softening of summer light.

As evening deepens, colour changes too.

The brighter tones of the day soften into richer shades:

berry,  
plum,  
crimson,  
deep rose.

Hibiscus slowly releases colour into the water, creating an infusion that feels both vivid and calm at once.

Berries bring sweetness, gentle tartness, and richly coloured plant pigments, while hibiscus adds floral depth and softness beneath the fruit.

Together they create a drink suited to quieter evenings, slower rhythms, and the gradual settling that often follows long summer days.

Sometimes children pause longest over colour itself:

watching water darken,  
berries soften,  
petals drift slowly through crimson water.

## Summer Signal

Colour often becomes part of sensory memory long before nutritional understanding develops.

Deep berries and hibiscus contain richly coloured plant compounds that contribute not only flavour, but visual diversity and sensory familiarity.

Children frequently engage through observation first:  
changing water tones,  
floating fruit,  
contrast,  
light passing through glass.

Repeated encounters with varied colours, herbs, fruits, and plant aromas gradually widen the sensory landscape children grow through — one small part of how familiarity and diversity develop together over time.

In many food traditions, darker evening infusions have long been associated with slowing, gathering, and transition toward rest.

# Berry + Hibiscus

Preparing the Infusion

## Ingredients — 1 litre

- 2 or 3 dried organic hibiscus flowers
- Some fresh mixed berries — blackcurrants, blueberries, raspberries...
- 1 litre of filtered or glass-bottled mineral water

Lightly crush the berries.

Add the hibiscus flowers and berries to the jug of water.

Infuse in glass where possible, for 2–4 hours, allowing the changing colour to remain visible as the hibiscus and berries slowly deepen the water.

Beautiful lightly chilled earlier in the day, or at room temperature as evening descends.

Hibiscus can become overpowering if overused. Just a few are sufficient.

## Child Participation

This infusion invites slower forms of noticing:

- ★ watching colour deepen gradually
- ★ observing berries soften in water
- ★ comparing lighter and darker berry tones
- ★ noticing floral aroma before tasting
- ★ watching light move through crimson water
- ★ comparing chilled vs room-temperature flavour

*Shared evening rhythms become part of nourishment too.*

# What Children Grow Through

Children grow through repeated encounters with atmosphere, rhythm, colour, aroma, touch, light, movement, food, water, and relationship.

Many of these moments appear ordinary:  
fruit sliced into water,  
mint torn between fingers,  
berries slowly deepening colour in glass,  
something cool offered after heat,  
something softer carried quietly into evening.

Yet these small experiences become part of the sensory world children repeatedly move through.

Over time, repeated contact with herbs, fruits, aromas, colours, textures, and shared food rituals helps widen familiarity, participation, and diversity — not only within the microbiome, but within a child's relationship to nourishment itself.

The body continuously responds to signals from the environment around it:

light,  
temperature,  
stress,  
rhythm,  
materials,  
food,  
water,  
and emotional atmosphere.

Summer often creates more space to notice these rhythms.

Longer evenings.

Open windows.

Slower mornings.

Shared meals.

Children lingering near kitchens, markets, gardens, books, puzzles, conversations, and glasses slowly changing colour on the table.

None of these moments need to be perfect to matter.

Often, it is simply the repetition of gentle sensory experiences — carried through everyday family life — that quietly shapes familiarity, resilience, and relationship over time.

Perhaps nourishment is not only what children consume.

Perhaps it is also the atmosphere they repeatedly grow through.

—

Layo