



In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee - September 2018

Fresh Fig Fare

Figs have amazing health benefits. These benefits come from the presence of a variety of vitamins, minerals and fiber. Late summer is the time to include the over 1000 varieties of fresh figs in your menus from appetizers and salads to main courses and desserts to even drinks.



Balsamic-Glazed Fig and Chicken Kabobs

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| 1½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 24 1-inch pieces | |
| 1 tablespoon smoked paprika | ¼ cup balsamic vinegar |
| 1 teaspoon kosher salt | 3 tablespoons honey |
| 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper | 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard |
| 1 teaspoon onion powder | 2 teaspoons olive oil |
| ½ teaspoon garlic powder | 12 fresh figs, cut in quarters lengthwise |
| ½ teaspoon white pepper | 2 ounces crumbled blue cheese |
| ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper | 4 fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced |

In a small bowl combine smoked paprika, salt, black pepper, onion powder, garlic powder, white pepper and cayenne pepper. Rub over the chicken pieces. Covered and refrigerate until ready to cook.

Make a glaze by whisking the vinegar, honey, mustard and olive oil together. Set aside.

On water soaked wooden skewers, thread a fig piece, a chicken piece continuing until there are four pieces of fig and two pieces of chicken on each skewer until all of the chicken and figs are used. Lay the skewers on a baking sheet. Roast in a 400°F oven for 6 minutes.

Remove and brush all sides with glaze and return to the oven for 4 to 5 minutes or until the chicken is done in the center. Remove and again brush all sides with the glaze. Cover with foil and let sit for 5 minutes. Place skewers on a platter; sprinkle with crumbled blue cheese and basil leaves. *Makes 12 skewers*

Fascinating Figgy Facts - from SELF magazine

- Fossil records date figs back to between 9400-9200 B.C.
- Three large fresh figs (a little over two-ounces each) contain just 140 calories and 5½ grams of dietary fiber. That's more fiber than in 1 cup of cooked oatmeal or a slice of a Double Fiber Wheat Bread!
- 3½ ounces of dried figs contain 162 milligrams of calcium. That's 16% of your daily recommendation. In fact, a ½ cup of figs has the same amount of calcium as a ½ cup of milk.
- Since figs hold moisture in baked goods, pureed figs can be used as a fat substitution in recipes. Use half the amount of fig puree as you would use butter or oil.
- Figs have a 55% natural sugar content, making them the sweetest of all fruits.



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Figs with Bacon, Chile and Goat Cheese

3 slices of thick smoky bacon, cut crosswise into 1¼-inch pieces 8 ripe figs, halved lengthwise
Olive oil Chili powder
5 tablespoons pure maple syrup 2 ounces honey goat cheese
4 tablespoons sherry vinegar or fig balsamic vinegar

Cook bacon pieces in a large nonstick skillet over medium-low, until brown and crisp, 8 to 10 minutes.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to a small bowl. Pour off all but 2 tablespoons fat from skillet. If needed, use olive oil to make up the 3 tablespoons oil. Add maple syrup, swirling to combine, and heat over medium-low. Arrange figs in the skillet in a single layer, cut side down. Cook, swirling the liquid occasionally, until figs are slightly softened and caramelized, about 3 to 5 minutes. Arrange figs cut side up on a platter and press pieces of bacon onto the surface of each fig.

Set the skillet over medium heat, add vinegar and stir into the juices. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring constantly, until syrupy, about 1 minute. Drizzle syrup over figs. Sprinkle with chili powder and crumbled goat cheese. *Serves 8*

Flatbread with Fig, Prosciutto and Arugula

2 sweet onions, cut in halves and thinly sliced 12 thin slices of prosciutto
½ cup extra olive oil + 2 tablespoons 2 cups baby arugula
2 teaspoons brown sugar 8 fresh figs, quartered
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar ½ cup toasted hazelnuts, coarsely chopped
6 store-bought small flatbreads Hazelnut oil, for drizzling
½ cup extra olive oil Salt and pepper
1½ cups ricotta cheese

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large heavy skillet over medium heat. Add the onions to the hot oil; cooking stirring occasionally until the onions are softened. Add brown sugar and stir to coat onions. Drizzle the vinegar over onions and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, until onions are caramelized.

Heat oven to 425°F. Arrange flatbreads on 2 baking sheets and brush each with olive oil. Bake 5 minutes. Remove trays from oven. Divide the caramelized onions among the 6 flatbreads. Top with the ricotta cheese and return baking sheets to the oven; bake 5 to 7 minutes, until cheese is melted and browned in spots.

Let flatbreads cool 5 minutes, then top with prosciutto, arugula and fig quarters. Drizzle with hazelnut oil; season with salt and pepper. Cut each flatbread into fourths; serve immediately. *Serves 6*

Fig and Pear Salad

Salad

6 cups mixed greens
2 pears, cored and sliced
½ cup thinly vertically sliced red onion
2 large fresh Calimyrna or other green skinned figs, stemmed
2 large fresh Brown, Turkey, Black Mission, or Striped Tiger figs, stemmed
1 ounce (about ¼ cup) feta cheese, crumbled
1 tablespoon fresh mint, chopped
1 tablespoon fresh basil, chopped
2 tablespoons balsamic glaze
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Dressing

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons honey

For Dressing: Whisk olive oil, lemon juice and honey together.

Arrange greens on a platter; arrange sliced pears on top. Sprinkle red onions over the pears and greens. Halve figs lengthwise and arrange on platter; sprinkle with feta. Drizzle dressing over salad; sprinkle with mint and basil. Drizzle balsamic glaze over salad; season with salt and pepper. *Serves 4*