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Tips, Tools & Ingredients / Ingredients

Figs

By Amy Albert
 Photograph by Richard Pierce



The luscious fruit of the fig tree, with soft flesh and tiny seeds, is available from summer

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through mid-fall. Because figs require extra care in harvesting and handling, they are not cheap but are worth the splurge.

A fig's complex flavor is floral, jam-like, herbal, and honeyed. Delicious with simple seasonings, like fresh herbs and heavy cream, figs also hold their own alongside assertive ingredients, including meats, garlic, and brandy. Ginger and orange partner well with figs, which also taste great with any cheese you can think of.

How to Buy and Store

Buy plump fruit with no bruises. Small cracks are okay, but check for mold. Ripe figs are fragrant; when pressed, they give. Overripe figs have a sour odor and feel mushy. If underripe, store figs uncovered in a single layer at room temperature. Loosely covered in a single layer, ripened figs will keep in the fridge for a few days; rinse them briefly and pat dry before using. Leave the peels on, but snip off the stems.

Quick Fig Recipes

- **Cocktail Food:** Wrap whole fresh figs with pancetta, secure with a skewer, and grill until the meat is cooked through.
- **Appetizer:** Cut an X in the top of each fig, open like a flower, and fill with fresh ricotta. Scatter thyme leaves over; drizzle with balsamic vinegar.
- **Salad:** Toss sliced fresh figs with frisée and toasted walnuts. Scatter a little crumbled blue cheese over and dress with a Sherry vinaigrette.
- **Main Course:** Sauté sliced figs in butter and Cognac or a light-bodied red wine; serve with seared sliced duck breast.
- **Dessert:** Serve quartered figs with fresh raspberries, mint leaves, and a light sprinkling of orange-flower water; drizzle with crème fraîche.

Because flavor differences are subtle, these fig varieties—ones commonly seen at farmers' markets—can be used interchangeably in recipes.

Photograph by [Nikolay Petkov/shutterstock.com](#)

Black Mission: Small to medium in size, with purplish-black skin and amber-colored flesh.



Photograph by [istockphoto.com/Kelly Cline](#)

Kadota: Small in size, with greenish skin and amber-pink flesh.



Photograph by [Fotosearch](#)

Brown Turkey: Medium to large in size, with deep-brown or violet skin and pale-red flesh.



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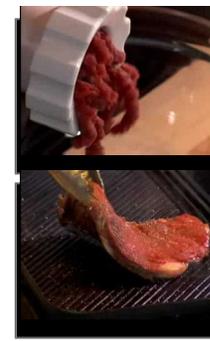
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My Mom & Grandmother made Fig Preserves they are great with biscuits in the morning. I was just up there to visit and my Mom still had a jar. Does anyone else remember Fig Preserves?

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