



Western Fresh Marketing

Figs

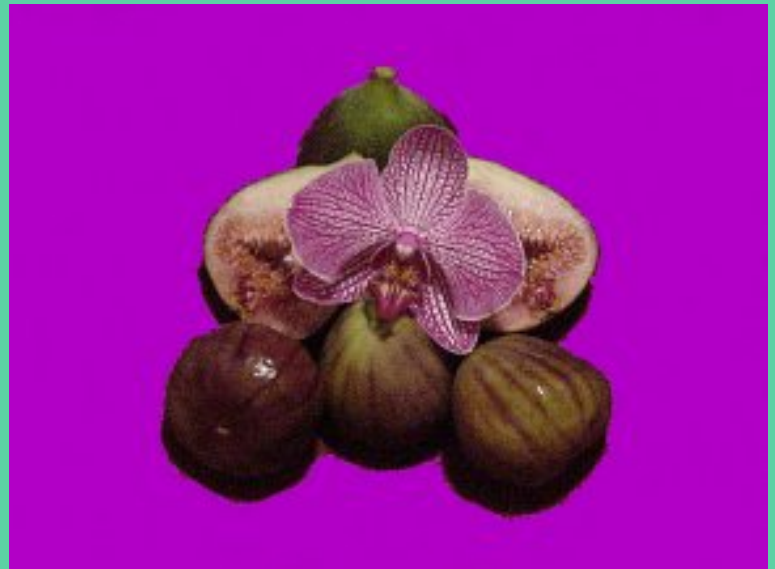
Source & Availability

Available all year.

Fig History

Figs were probably one of the first fruits to be dried and stored by man. There was a fig tree in the Garden of Eden, and in fact, the fig is the most discussed fruit in the Bible. A fig tree provided the first clothing, "...the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

Figs were mentioned in a Babylonian hymn book about 2000 BC. It is said that the Greek goddess, Demeter, first revealed to mortals the fruit of autumn, which



SERVING SIZE 40g
AMOUNT PER SERVING
CALORIES 112.7
CALORIES from fat 1.9
% DAILY VALUE *
Total Fat .21g 0%
Saturated Fat 0g 0%
Cholesterol 0g 0%
Sodium 4.99g 4%
Total Carbohydrate 26.46g 10%
Dietary Fiber 4.88g 20%
Vitamin A 3.91%
Vitamin C .27%
Calcium 6%

they called the fig. The fig tree was held sacred in all countries of Southwestern Asia, and in Egypt, Greece, and Italy.

Iron 6%

Potassium 7%

* PERCENT DAILY VALUES ARE BASED ON A 2,000 CALORIE DIET.

The ancient city of Attica was famous for its figs. Figs soon became a necessity for the citizens. Solon, the ruler of Attica (639-559 BC), made it illegal to export figs from Greece, reserving them solely for his citizens.

The Persian King, Xerxes, after his defeat by the Greeks at Salamis in 480 BC, had figs from Attica served to him at each meal, to remind him that he did not possess the land where this fruit grew.

Every inhabitant of Athens, including Plato, was a "philosykos"--literally translated, "a friend of the fig." Mithridates, the Greek King of Pontus, heralded figs as an antidote for all ailments. He instructed his physicians to use them medicinally, and he ordered his citizens to consume figs daily. As a token of honor, figs were used as a training food by the early Olympic athletes, and figs were presented as laurels to the winners as the first Olympic "medals."

The Romans regarded Bacchus as the god who introduced the fig to mankind. This made the tree sacred, and images of Bacchus were often crowned with fig leaves. The first figs of the season were offered to Bacchus, and at festivals in his honor, devout females wore garlands of dried figs.

Pliny, the Roman author (52-113 AD) said, "Figs are restorative. They increase the strength of young people, preserve the elderly in better health and make them look younger with fewer wrinkles."

It is said that the prophet Mohammed once exclaimed, "If I should wish a fruit brought to Paradise it would certainly be the fig."

Figs are mentioned in Homer's "Iliad," as well as "The Odyssey"; by Aristophanes, Herodotus and Cato; and the fig is reported to have been

the favorite fruit of Cleopatra, with the asp that ended her life being brought to her in a basket of figs.

Figs were brought to California by the Spanish missionary fathers, who first planted them at the San Diego Mission in 1759. Fig trees were then planted at each mission, going north through California. The Mission fig, California's leading black fig, takes its name from this history. The popular Calimyrna fig, golden brown in color, is the Smyrna variety that was brought to California's San Joaquin Valley from Turkey in 1882. It was renamed Calimyrna in honor of its new homeland.

Captain Bligh is credited with planting the first fig tree in Tasmania in 1792.

Fig Facts

There are literally hundreds of fig varieties, but only about a half dozen are grown commercially in California.

The Calimyrna Fig - Noted for its delicious nut-like flavor and tender, golden skin, the Calimyrna fig is the popular favorite for eating out of hand. As the name implies, the Calimyrna is the California version of the Smyrna fig, which was imported into California by a San Joaquin Valley grower.

The Mission Fig - Named for the mission fathers who planted the fruit as they traveled north along the California coast, the Mission fig is famous for its distinctive flavor. The fresh fruit exhibits a deep purple shade which darkens to a rich black when dried--making this fig an esthetic, as well as an edible, delight in all recipes.

The Kadota Fig - The Kadota fig, the American version of the original Italian Dattato, is thick-skinned and possesses a beautiful creamy amber color when ripe. Practically seedless, this fig is a favorite for canning and preserving as well as drying.

The Adriatic Fig - Transplanted from the Mediterranean, the Adriatic fig is the most prolific of all the varieties. The high sugar content, retained as the fruit dries to a golden shade, makes this fig the prime choice for fig bars and pastes.

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