

Growing and Using Figs

Fresh and warm, right off the plant, is our favorite way to eat figs, but when you have a surplus, it is good to have a few other ways to enjoy this delicious and easy to grow fruit.

1. Include on a charcuterie board. Figs pair especially well with walnuts, pepitos, blue cheese, manchego or Iberian cheeses, goat cheese, and prosciutto or sopressata.
2. Without cutting all the way through the bottom of the fig, slice in quarters from the top. Fill the opened fig with ricotta or blue cheese, top with a toasted walnut, and drizzle with honey or a quality olive oil. Serve on a charcuterie board or as an appetizer.
3. Serve atop a bed of arugula with shaved parmesan and a simple dressing made of your favorite balsamic vinegar and good olive oil.
4. Fig and Walnut Jam: Thank you Kathy Waldo, for sharing this recipe with me years ago. It is wonderful. Works equally well with frozen figs if you don't have time to make jam at the time of harvest, or if you are only harvesting enough for a few extras at a time.
<https://pallensmith.com/recipes/recipe/fig-jam-2/>
5. Goat cheese panna cotta with roasted figs <http://www.morselsandsauces.com/2015/08/goat-cheese-panna-cotta-with-roasted.html> It is lovely without the pistachios, as well.
6. Ina Garten's Ricotta and Fig Pancakes: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ina-garten/lemon-ricotta-pancakes-with-figs-8653945>
7. Chocolate fig pecan bars! Admission: this is a recipe I only just found. I was trying to find a link to a recipe that I've made many times, and came across this one. Oh. My. Goodness. There is no way this won't be good. This link has tons of other recipes, too. Of course, you can purchase dried figs easily, but making your own is easy too and is a good way to use a bumper crop, which we do occasionally have here in the mountain region of East Tennessee.
<https://valleyfig.com/dried-fig-recipes/chocolate-california-fig-pecan-bars/>
8. The recipe I was looking for in the previous entry is in a book that you should probably have if you have lots of figs to play with. The Fig Leaf, by Sherri Lee, is a wonderful collection of recipes. Her various fig sauces are each divine. She includes appetizers, sides, main dishes, cocktails, and desserts, and she meticulously tested and honed each recipe in the book. The book is beautiful, and was independently published by this author, who lived in Knoxville at the time. Available online. Includes growing, harvesting, and preservation tips as well.

To successfully grow figs in our region, it is critical to select hardy cultivars. We have tried all the recommended types in our 30 years of gardening here, including all the ones listed in the links below. Our favorites are Brown Turkey and Galosi. They out-perform all other varieties in our climate, every year. Galosi is a local legend. We should all be forever grateful to the late Phil Ramey for introducing this variety to commerce. Culture is simple, but here are two good links on growing figs.

<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/documents/SP307-l.pdf>

<https://www.southernliving.com/home-garden/gardens/how-to-grow-fig-trees>



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