

DISCOVER CALIFORNIA FIGS

Recipes from Cook's Country from
America's Test Kitchen and Valley Fig Growers



Cook's Country



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At *Cook's Country from America's Test Kitchen*, discoveries are at the heart of our mission to empower the home cook. From cooking tips to secret ingredients that make your dishes shine, we love them all. That's why we're excited to share these recipes featuring Blue Ribbon® Orchard Choice® and Sun-Maid® California Dried Figs from our kitchen to yours.

California Dried Figs from Valley Fig Growers suit any occasion, from a quick weekday meal to a weekend baking project. Valley Fig Growers and *Cook's Country from America's Test Kitchen* have partnered to bring you these recipes that allow the subtle sweetness of California Dried Figs to shine through. We know this new collection of recipes will inspire your next dinner party and encourage you to discover the joys of California Dried Figs. The recipes include pomegranate braised short ribs, beer-braised brisket, a moroccan chicken salad, roasted chicken thighs, and chickpea tagine.

As you discover how versatile California Dried Figs are in these recipes, we hope you take inspiration for future dishes you make. As always, you can count on California Dried Figs to take recipes from ordinary to extraordinary. Look for Blue Ribbon® Orchard Choice® and Sun-Maid® California Dried Figs. You'll find more delicious recipes from *Cook's Country from America's Test Kitchen* to share with friends and family at ValleyFig.com. Join the conversation with Valley Fig Growers online: Get pinspirated on Pinterest at pinterest.com/valleyfig. Discover new ideas for how to use figs on Facebook at facebook.com/valleyfig.

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CALIFORNIA FIGS ARE MORE THAN
JUST A TASTY FRUIT. FIGS ARE:

- Gluten-free
- High in fiber
- Cholesterol-free
- Sodium-free
- Non-GMO
- Vegetarian
- Nut & allergen-free
- Kosher

Pomegranate-Braised Beef Short Ribs with Figs and Sesame

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: Braised short ribs frequently appear on restaurant menus but can often be daunting to attempt at home. Our Mediterranean-inspired take on classic, red wine-braised ribs boasts meltingly tender beef and a deeply flavorful sweet but tart sauce made with pomegranate juice and figs. Roasting the short ribs in the oven enabled us to render and discard a significant amount of fat. After braising, we defatted the cooking liquid, then blended it with the vegetables and part of the figs to create a velvety sauce.

SERVES 6 TO 8

- 4 pounds bone-in English-style short ribs, trimmed**
- Table salt and pepper**
- 4 cups unsweetened pomegranate juice**
- 1 cup water**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 onion, chopped fine**
- 1 carrot, peeled and chopped fine**
- 2 tablespoons ras el hanout**
- 4 garlic cloves, minced**
- 1 ½ cups (9 ounces) Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Figs, stemmed and halved**
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar**
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro**

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Pat short ribs dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Arrange ribs bone side down in single layer in large roasting pan and roast until meat begins to brown, about 45 minutes.

WHAT IS RAS EL HANOUT

Ras El Hanout is a North African spice blend that delivers complex flavor from a mix of warm spices. Spice mixture can include paprika, coriander, cumin, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, cayenne, brown sugar, and salt.



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

2. Discard any accumulated fat and juices in pan and continue to roast until meat is well browned, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer ribs to bowl and tent loosely with aluminum foil; set aside. Stir pomegranate juice and water into pan, scraping up any browned bits; set aside.

3. Reduce oven temperature to 300 degrees. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium heat until shimmering. Add onion, carrot, and ¼ teaspoon salt and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in ras el hanout and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.

4. Stir in pomegranate mixture from roasting pan and ½ cup figs and bring to simmer. Nestle short ribs bone side up into pot and bring to simmer. Cover, transfer pot to oven, and cook until ribs are tender and fork slips easily in and out of meat, about 2½ hours.

5. Transfer short ribs to bowl, discard any loose bones, and tent loosely with aluminum foil. Strain braising liquid through fine-mesh strainer into fat separator; transfer solids to blender. Let braising liquid settle for 5 minutes, then pour defatted liquid into blender with solids and process until smooth, about 1 minute.

6. Transfer sauce to now-empty pot and stir in vinegar and remaining 1 cup figs. Return short ribs and any accumulated juices to pot, bring to gentle simmer over medium heat, and cook, spooning sauce over ribs occasionally, until heated through, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer short ribs to serving platter, spoon 1 cup sauce over top, and sprinkle with sesame seeds and cilantro. Serve, passing remaining sauce separately.

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Beer-Braised Brisket with Figs and Ginger

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: For braised brisket that would be both tender and moist, we started by salting the meat (halved lengthwise for quicker cooking and easier slicing and poked all over with a paring knife to allow the salt to penetrate). We then let it sit for at least 16 hours, which helped it retain moisture as it cooked; the salt also seasoned it. From there, we brought the meat to 180 degrees—the sweet spot for the collagen breakdown that is necessary for the meat to turn tender—relatively quickly in a 325-degree oven. We then lowered the oven temperature to 250 degrees so that the brisket finished cooking gently and retained as much moisture as possible. Instead of searing the meat (a messy, unwieldy step), we removed it and then reduced the braising liquid (chicken broth, beer, lots of onions and garlic, anchovies, tomato paste, herbs, and spices) in the pan to achieve rich flavor. Reducing the sauce also built body, which we enhanced with flour and gelatin for a velvety consistency and figs for earthy sweetness.

SERVES 6 TO 8

- 1 (4- to 5-pound) beef brisket, flat cut, fat trimmed to ¼ inch**
- Kosher salt and pepper**
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- 2 large onions, chopped**
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda**
- 6 garlic cloves, minced**
- 4 anchovy fillets, rinsed, patted dry, and minced to paste**
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste**
- 1 teaspoon five-spice powder**
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne**
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour**
- 2 cups chicken broth**
- 1½ cups beer (Light-bodied American lagers, such as Budweiser, work best in this recipe)**
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard**
- 1 (3-inch) piece ginger, peeled and sliced thin**
- 3 bay leaves**
- 2 tablespoons unflavored gelatin**
- 1½ cups (9 ounces) [Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice](#) or [Sun-Maid California Figs](#), stemmed**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley**



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

1. Place brisket, fat side down, on cutting board and cut in half lengthwise with grain. Using paring knife or metal skewer, poke each roast 20 times, pushing all the way through roast. Flip roasts and repeat on second side.

2. Sprinkle each roast evenly on all sides with 2 1/2 teaspoons salt (5 teaspoons salt total). Wrap each roast in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 16 hours or up to 48 hours.

3. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Heat oil in large roasting pan over medium heat until shimmering. Add onions and baking soda and cook, stirring frequently, until onions have started to soften and break down, 4 to 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in anchovies, tomato paste, five-spice powder, cayenne, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, until onions are evenly coated and flour begins to stick to pan, about 2 minutes. Stir in broth, beer, mustard, ginger, and bay leaves, scraping up any browned bits. Stir in gelatin. Increase heat to medium-high and bring to boil.

4. Unwrap roasts and place in pan. Cover pan tightly with aluminum foil, transfer to oven, and cook until meat registers 180 to 185 degrees at center, about 1 1/2 hours. Reduce oven temperature to 250 degrees and continue to cook until fork slips easily in and out of meat, 2 to 2½ hours

longer. Transfer roasts to baking sheet and wrap sheet tightly in foil.

5. Strain braising liquid through fine-mesh strainer set over large bowl, pressing on solids to extract as much liquid as possible; discard solids. Let liquid settle for 10 minutes. Using wide, shallow spoon, skim fat from surface and discard. Wipe roasting pan clean with paper towels, return defatted liquid to pan, and stir in figs.

6. Increase oven temperature to 400 degrees. Return pan to oven and cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is reduced by about one-third, 30 to 40 minutes. Remove pan from oven and use wooden spoon to draw liquid up sides of pan and scrape browned bits around edges of pan into liquid.

7. Transfer roasts to carving board and slice against grain 1/4 inch thick; transfer to wide serving platter. Season sauce with salt and pepper and pour over brisket. Tent platter with foil and let stand for 5 to 10 minutes to warm brisket through. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

TO MAKE AHEAD: Follow recipe through step 6 and let sauce and brisket cool completely. Cover and refrigerate sauce and roasts separately for up to 2 days. To serve, slice each roast against grain 1/4 inch thick and transfer to 13 by 9-inch baking dish. Heat sauce in small saucepan over medium heat until just simmering. Pour sauce over brisket, cover dish with aluminum foil, and cook in 325-degree oven until meat is heated through, about 20 minutes.

Moroccan Chicken Salad with Figs and Almonds

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: For a creative chicken salad, we were inspired by the flavors of Morocco. To give our dressing complex flavor, we reached for garam masala, a traditional spice blend of coriander, cumin, ginger, cinnamon, and black pepper. We also added a little more coriander, honey, and smoked paprika for depth. Blooming the spices in the microwave deepened their flavors for an even bolder dressing. Chickpeas further echoed the Moroccan theme and lent heartiness, and crisp romaine combined with slightly bitter watercress made the perfect bed of greens for our toppings. Reserving a bit of the dressing to drizzle on just before serving made the flavors pop.

SERVES 4 TO 6

- 1½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed**
- Salt and pepper**
- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 teaspoon garam masala**
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander**
- Pinch smoked paprika**
- ¼ cup lemon juice (2 lemons)**
- 1 tablespoon honey**
- 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, rinsed**
- 1 cup (6 ounces) [Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice](#) or [Sun-Maid California Figs](#), stemmed and halved**
- 1 shallot, sliced thin**
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley**
- 2 romaine lettuce hearts (12 ounces total), cut into 1-inch pieces**
- 4 ounces (4 cups) watercress**
- ½ cup whole almonds, toasted and chopped coarse**

1. Pat chicken dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Brown chicken well on first side, 6 to 8 minutes. Flip chicken, add ½ cup water, and cover. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue to cook until chicken registers 160 degrees, 5 to 7 minutes.



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

Transfer chicken to cutting board, let cool slightly, then slice ½ inch thick on bias. Let cool to room temperature, about 15 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, microwave 1 tablespoon oil, garam masala, coriander, and paprika in medium bowl until oil is hot and fragrant, about 30 seconds. Whisk 3 tablespoons lemon juice, honey, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper into spice mixture. Whisking constantly, drizzle in remaining oil to complete the dressing.

3. In large bowl, combine cooled chicken, chickpeas, figs, shallot, parsley, and half of dressing and toss to coat. Let mixture sit for 15 to 30 minutes. Whisk remaining 1 tablespoon lemon juice into remaining dressing.

4. Toss romaine, watercress, and almonds together in serving bowl, drizzle remaining dressing over top, and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Top with chicken mixture and serve.

Bitter Greens, Carrot, and Chickpea Salad with Warm Lemon Dressing

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: Using a preheated Dutch oven provided just the right amount of heat to wilt hearty bitter greens without actually cooking them. We started by sautéing vegetables in the pot and then pulled the pot off the heat to let it cool slightly. When we added the greens, the warm vegetables slightly softened the greens and helped the entire salad retain heat longer. Finally, carefully choosing mix-ins that delivered a wide range of flavors and textures made these salads truly satisfying entrées.

SERVES 4

VINAIGRETTE

- 2** tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1** tablespoon grated lemon zest plus **6** tablespoons juice (2 lemons)
- 1** tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1** tablespoon minced shallot
- 1/2** teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2** teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/4** teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4** teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4** teaspoon salt
- 1/4** teaspoon pepper

SALAD

- 1** (15-ounce) can chickpeas, rinsed
- Salt and pepper**
- 1** tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 3** carrots, peeled and shredded
- 1** cup (6 ounces) **Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice** or **Sun-Maid California Figs**, stemmed and halved
- 1/2** cup slivered almonds
- 12** ounces (10–12 cups) bitter greens, such as escarole, chicory, and/or frisée, torn into bite-size pieces
- 1/3** cup mint leaf, chopped
- 1 1/2** ounces feta cheese, crumbled (1/3 cup)



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

1. FOR THE VINAIGRETTE: Whisk all ingredients in bowl until emulsified.

2. FOR THE SALAD: Toss chickpeas with 1 tablespoon vinaigrette and pinch salt in bowl; set aside. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium heat until shimmering. Add carrots, figs, and almonds and cook, stirring frequently, until carrots are wilted, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove pot from heat and let cool for 5 minutes.

3. Add half of remaining vinaigrette to pot, then add half of greens and toss for 1 minute to warm and wilt. Add remaining greens and mint followed by remaining vinaigrette and continue to toss until greens are evenly coated and warmed through, about 2 minutes longer. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer greens to serving platter, top with chickpeas and feta, and serve.

CALIFORNIA FIG FACTS

California Figs are a natural humectant that will extend moisture and freshness in baked goods.



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Roasted Chicken Thighs with Potatoes, Fennel, and Figs

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: Roasting the vegetables on the lowest oven rack and not stirring them as they roast creates flavorful browning.

SERVES 4

- 1½ pounds small red potatoes, unpeeled, quartered**
- 2 fennel bulbs, stalks discarded, bulbs halved, cored, and cut into ½-inch-thick wedges**
- 4 slices bacon, cut crosswise into ½-inch pieces**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- Salt and pepper**
- 8 (5- to 7-ounce) bone-in chicken thighs**
- 1 shallot, minced**
- ½ teaspoon minced fresh rosemary**
- 1 cup (6 ounces) [Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice](#) or [Sun-Maid California Figs](#), stemmed and halved**
- ¼ cup Madeira Wine**

1. Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 475 degrees. Combine potatoes, fennel, bacon, oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper in large bowl. Spread mixture in rimmed baking sheet and roast for 10 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, pat chicken dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Place chicken, skin side down, in 12-inch nonstick skillet. Cook over high heat until skin is deep golden brown, about 10 minutes. Transfer chicken, skin side up, to sheet with vegetables and continue to roast until chicken registers at least 175 degrees and vegetables



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

are browned on bottoms, about 15 minutes longer.

3. Pour off all but 2 tablespoons fat from skillet and heat over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add shallot, rosemary, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper and cook until shallot is softened, about 1 minute. Add figs and Madeira and cook until mixture is slightly thickened, about 3 minutes. Serve chicken and vegetables with fig sauce.

CALIFORNIA FIG FACTS

Store California Figs in the refrigerator after opening. They also can be kept in the freezer for up to one year.



Chickpea Tagine

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: This Moroccan-style stew gets its complex flavor from a combination of simple but varied seasonings. We started with a base of paprika and garam masala, along with onions, garlic, and strips of lemon zest, all of which perfumed the sauce with warm, exotic aromas. Dried chickpeas turned rich and creamy during the long cooking and absorbed the sauce's flavors. Since many vegetables would be obliterated after hours in a slow cooker, we opted to stir in softened bell peppers and thawed frozen artichokes at the end, cooking them just to heat through. (Frozen artichokes are generally packaged already quartered; if yours are not, cut the artichoke hearts into quarters before using.) To continue the Moroccan flavor profile, we added kalamata olives and figs to introduce a salty-sweet counterpoint. But we weren't done: Our final additions of tangy yogurt, sweet honey, fresh cilantro, and aromatic grated lemon zest brought the balanced flavors of this stew into perfect alignment.

SERVES 6

- 2 onions, chopped fine**
- 8 garlic cloves, minced**
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for serving**
- 4 teaspoons paprika**
- 2 teaspoons garam masala**
- 6 cups chicken broth, plus extra as needed**
- 1 pound (2½ cups) dried chickpeas, picked over and rinsed**
- 4 (3-inch) strips lemon zest plus 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest**
- 2 red or yellow bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into matchsticks**
- 18 ounces frozen artichokes, thawed**

CALIFORNIA FIG FACTS

Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice and Sun-Maid Dried California Figs are great additions to plant-based diets. Naturally sweet, with a chewy texture, California Figs offer a unique and highly desirable nutrition profile that includes calcium, iron, vitamin B6, magnesium, potassium, and copper. Just 3 to 5 figs provide a whopping 5 grams of dietary fiber.



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

- ½ cup pitted kalamata olives, chopped coarse**
- 1 cup (6 ounces) [Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice](#) or [Sun-Maid California Figs](#), stemmed and halved**
- ½ cup whole Greek yogurt**
- ½ cup minced fresh cilantro**
- 2 tablespoons honey**
- Salt and pepper**

1. Combine onions, garlic, 2 tablespoons oil, paprika, and garam masala in bowl and microwave, stirring occasionally, until onions are softened, about 5 minutes; transfer to 5½- to 7-quart slow cooker.

2. Stir broth, chickpeas, and lemon zest strips into slow cooker. Cover and cook until chickpeas are tender, 8 to 10 hours on low or 5 to 6 hours on high.

3. Discard lemon zest strips. Combine bell peppers with remaining 1 tablespoon oil in bowl and microwave, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir softened bell peppers, artichokes, olives, and figs into stew, cover, and cook on high until heated through, about 10 minutes.

4. In bowl, combine ¼ cup hot stew liquid with yogurt (to temper), then stir mixture into stew. Stir in cilantro, honey, and grated lemon zest. (Adjust stew consistency with additional hot broth as needed.) Season with salt and pepper to taste and drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil. Serve with cous cous.

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