

CALIFORNIA FIGS *make it special*

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



Cook'sCountry
FROM AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN



At *Cook's Country from America's Test Kitchen*, we love ingredients that take recipes from ordinary to extraordinary! California Dried Figs from Valley Fig Growers are one of those ingredients. Versatile and nutritious, California Figs add something special to your home-cooked meals. And because they are available year-round, you can enjoy them whenever you please.

To brighten up your favorite dishes with natural sweetness, choose dark purple Mission and amber-colored Golden California Dried Figs. From breakfast, lunch, and dinner to snacks throughout the day, California Figs make it easy to savor the moments that make each day special. Valley Fig Growers and *Cook's Country from America's Test Kitchen* partnered to create these six recipes packed with style and wholesome flavor. Featuring California Dried Figs, the recipes include cinnamon Danish, skillet-roasted curried cauliflower, naturally sweetened almond muffins, and slow-cooked mashed sweet potatoes.

Like Valley Fig Growers' California Dried Figs, Orchard Choice California Fig Spreads—California Orange, Organic Mission, Port Wine, and Balsamic Pepper—add an elegant, flavorful touch to almost any dish. The flavor pairings with California Fig Spreads are endless. Whether as an accompaniment to a cheese plate or a garnish to your favorite snack, these spreads make your everyday a little bit special. Here, Orchard Choice Organic Mission California Fig Spread turns a cinnamon Danish into a figtastic pastry for breakfast or dessert.

No matter what the occasion, you can count on California Dried Figs to make your recipes stand out. Look for Blue Ribbon® Orchard Choice® and Sun-Maid® California Dried Figs and Orchard Choice® California Fig Spreads. 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 pinspired on Pinterest at pinterest.com/valleyfig. Discover new ideas for how to use figs on Facebook at facebook.com/valleyfig.



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RECIPES

Skillet-Roasted Cauliflower with Curry,
California Golden Figs, and Almonds **1**

Spicy Bread Salad with California Figs and Feta . . . **2**

Naturally Sweet California Fig-Almond Muffins **3**

Slow-Cooker Mashed Sweet Potatoes with
California Figs, Garam Masala, and Ginger **4**

Slow-Cooked Whole Carrots with Green Olive and
California Fig Relish. **5**

Naturally Sweet California Fig-Cinnamon Danish **6**

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

Skillet-Roasted Cauliflower with Curry, California Golden Figs, and Almonds

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: Cutting the cauliflower into planks and then into flat-sided florets maximizes its surface area for plenty of flavorful browning. We start the cauliflower in a cold pan and allow it to steam in its own moisture before removing the lid and letting it brown. These techniques deliver roasted results in less than half the time required for oven roasting.

SERVES 4 TO 6

We prefer to make this recipe with California Golden Figs, but dark purple California Mission Figs can be substituted. For the first 5 minutes of cooking, the cauliflower steams in its own released moisture, so it is important not to lift the lid from the skillet during this time.

- 1 head cauliflower (2 pounds)**
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
Salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger**
- ¾ teaspoon curry powder**
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper**
- ¾ cup Sun-Maid Calimyrna California Figs, stemmed and cut into ¼-inch pieces**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro**
- ¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted and chopped fine**

FASCINATING FIG FACTS

When chopping figs, run your knife under hot water periodically to reduce sticking. Alternatively, lightly spray the knife with nonstick cooking spray.



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

1. Trim outer leaves of cauliflower and cut stem flush with bottom of head. Turn head so stem is facing down and cut head into ¾-inch-thick slices. Cut around core to remove florets; discard core. Cut large florets into 1½-inch pieces. Transfer florets to bowl, including any small pieces that may have been created during trimming, and set aside.

2. Combine 2 tablespoons oil and cauliflower florets in 12-inch nonstick skillet and sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Cover skillet and cook over medium-high heat until florets start to brown and edges just start to become translucent (do not lift lid), about 5 minutes.

3. Remove lid and continue to cook, stirring every 2 minutes, until florets turn golden brown in many spots, about 12 minutes.

4. Push cauliflower to edges of skillet. Add remaining 2 tablespoons oil, ginger, curry powder, and cayenne to center and cook, stirring with rubber spatula, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir ginger mixture into cauliflower and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until cauliflower is tender but still firm, about 3 minutes longer.

5. Remove skillet from heat and stir in figs and cilantro. Transfer cauliflower to serving platter, sprinkle with almonds, and serve.

Spicy Bread Salad with California Figs and Feta

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: To add a spicy pop to our Bread Salad (Panzanella), we replaced some of the vinegar with brine from jarred pepperoncini and a spoonful of mustard. To flavor the pita and head off a soggy situation, we tossed the torn pieces with olive oil, garlic, and oregano and toasted them in the oven. We soon discovered that the salad became more flavorful as it sat. Tasters preferred a 30-minute marinade before serving; any longer and the vegetables became mushy.

SERVES 4 TO 6

The toasted pita can be made ahead and stored at room temperature in airtight container for up to 2 days.

- ¼ cup chopped jarred pepperoncini, plus 1½ tablespoons pepperoncini brine**
- 1½ tablespoons red wine vinegar**
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano**
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard**
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved**
- 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed**
- 1 cup Sun-Maid Calimyrna California Figs, stemmed and sliced ¼-inch thick**
- 4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled (1 cup)**
- 1 cucumber, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, and sliced thin**
- ¾ cup pitted kalamata olives, halved**
- ½ small red onion, halved and sliced thin**
- 2 (10-inch) pita breads, torn into 1-inch pieces**
- 1 garlic clove, minced**
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley**
- Salt and pepper**

FASCINATING FIG FACTS

The Spaniards brought figs to the Americas in the early 1500's. Figs made their way to California through the missionary fathers who planted them from San Diego to Sonoma. The "Mission Fig" takes its name from this history.



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

1. Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Combine pepperoncini brine, vinegar, ½ teaspoon oregano, and mustard in medium bowl. Slowly whisk 5 tablespoons oil into vinegar mixture. Add tomatoes, chickpeas, figs, feta, cucumber, olives, onion, and pepperoncini and toss to combine. Let sit for 30 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, toss pita, garlic, remaining 1 tablespoon oil, and remaining ½ teaspoon oregano together in medium bowl. Bake pita on rimmed baking sheet until golden brown, about 10 minutes, stirring halfway through baking. Stir toasted pita and parsley into salad. Let stand for 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

Naturally Sweet California Fig-Almond Muffins

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: Almonds, with their natural sweetness and refined flavor, seemed like a perfect starting point for a no-sugar-added muffin. To ensure that our muffins were chock-full of almond flavor, we started by stirring 1¼ cups of sliced almonds into the batter. Although the almonds added pleasant nuttiness, the lack of sugar meant that the muffins were a little tough and dense. Grinding some of the almonds and whisking them into the flour gave the muffins a more open crumb and slightly lighter, more tender texture. Even though we didn't want to add sugar, the muffins needed to be sweeter. To avoid muddying the almonds' delicate flavor, we decided to use no-sugar-added white grape juice, which provided sweetness without imparting a distinct flavor of its own. The muffins were improving, but tasters still wanted a bit more sweetness. California dried figs fit the bill, and chopping them ensured that they were evenly distributed, giving us bursts of sweetness in every bite. Finally, we employed a couple of ultraflavorful ingredients that helped trick the tongue's perception of sweetness: five-spice powder and almond extract.

MAKES 12 MUFFINS

Do not use light white grape juice, as it contains an artificial sweetener, called sucralose, that can negatively affect the flavor of the muffins.

- 1¼ cups sliced almonds, toasted**
- 2⅓ cups (11½ ounces) all-purpose flour**
- 1¾ teaspoons baking powder**
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda**
- 1½ teaspoons five-spice powder**
- ¾ teaspoon salt**
- 1½ cups white grape juice**
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled**
- 2 large eggs**
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract**
- ½ teaspoon almond extract**
- 1 cup Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Calimyrna California Figs, stemmed and cut into ¼-inch pieces**



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Grease 12-cup muffin tin. Pulse ½ cup almonds in food processor until finely ground, about 10 pulses; transfer to large bowl. Whisk in flour, baking powder, baking soda, five-spice powder, and salt.

2. In separate bowl, whisk together grape juice, melted butter, eggs, vanilla, and almond extract. Using rubber spatula, stir grape juice mixture into flour mixture until combined. Fold in figs and ½ cup almonds.

3. Divide batter evenly among prepared muffin cups and sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup almonds. Bake until golden brown and toothpick inserted in center of muffin comes out with few moist crumbs attached, 18 to 20 minutes, rotating muffin tin halfway through baking.

4. Let muffins cool in muffin tin for 10 minutes, then transfer to wire rack and let cool for 20 minutes before serving.

FASCINATING FIG FACTS

California Dried 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 5 grams of dietary fiber.



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Slow-Cooker Mashed Sweet Potatoes with California Figs, Garam Masala, and Ginger

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: With their deep natural sweetness and vibrant orange flesh, sweet potatoes can round out many a meal—from rich, spicy stews to smoky grilled meats. We wanted a recipe for mashed sweet potatoes that would allow these humble tubers to shine. Using a slow cooker trapped moisture, allowing us to use just enough water to steam the potatoes without watering down the mash. We sliced the potatoes thin and pressed a piece of parchment paper on top of them so that the moisture would be evenly distributed. To keep the recipe simple and streamlined, we mashed the sweet potatoes by hand right in the slow cooker. Finally, we added richness and a slight nutty flavor by folding in a bit of ghee.

SERVES 6

Melted unsalted butter can be used in place of the ghee. This dish can be held on the warm setting for up to 2 hours; loosen with hot water as needed before serving. You will need a 5½- to 7-quart slow cooker for this recipe.

- 3 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced ¼-inch thick**
- ½ cup water, plus extra as needed**
- 2 teaspoons garam masala**
Kosher salt and pepper
- 3 tablespoons ghee, melted**
- ¾ cup Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Calimyrna California Figs, stemmed and chopped fine**
- ¼ cup toasted sliced almonds**
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger**



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

- 1.** Combine potatoes, water, garam masala, and 1 teaspoon salt in slow cooker. Grease 16 by 12-inch sheet of parchment paper and press firmly onto potatoes, folding down edges as needed. Cover and cook until potatoes are tender, 5 to 6 hours on low or 3 to 4 hours on high.
- 2.** Discard parchment. Mash potatoes with potato masher until smooth. Fold in melted ghee, figs, almonds, and ginger and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

FASCINATING FIG FACTS

Golden and Mission California Figs can be used interchangeably in most recipes. Size, texture, and color are characteristics to consider when choosing your figs.



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Slow-Cooked Whole Carrots with Green Olive and California Fig Relish

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: For sweet, tender carrots that would be impressive enough for company, we wanted to cook them whole—without the carrots becoming mushy or waterlogged. We first tried simmering them in water, but the tapered shape of the carrots made them cook unevenly, so the thinner ends overcooked by the time the thick ends were tender. Our science editor told us that cooking the carrots at a low temperature first would help them stay consistently firm through the rest of cooking by causing an enzymatic reaction that makes the carrots resistant to breaking down. With this in mind, we let the carrots “steep” off the heat for the first 20 minutes of cooking. We also topped the carrots with a circle of parchment paper during cooking to ensure that the moisture in the pan was evenly distributed. We finished cooking the carrots at a gentle simmer to evaporate the liquid and concentrate the carrots’ flavor so that they tasted great when served on their own or with a flavorful relish.

SERVES 4 TO 6

We prefer to make this recipe with California Golden Figs, but dark purple California Mission Figs can be substituted. Use carrots that measure $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches across at the thicker end.

CARROTS

- 3 cups water**
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- 12 carrots (1½ to 1¾ pounds), peeled**

RELISH

- ½ cup Sun-Maid Calimyrna California Figs, stemmed and chopped fine**
- 1 tablespoon water**
- ½ cup chopped green olives**
- 1 minced shallot**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley**
- ½ teaspoon ground fennel**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt**



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

1. FOR THE CARROTS: Cut 11-inch circle of parchment paper, then cut 1-inch hole in center, folding paper as needed.

2. Bring water, oil, and salt to simmer in 12-inch skillet over high heat. Off heat, add carrots, top with parchment, cover skillet, and let sit for 20 minutes.

3. Uncover, leaving parchment in place, and bring to simmer over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook until most of water has evaporated and carrots are very tender, about 45 minutes.

4. Discard parchment, increase heat to medium-high, and cook carrots, shaking skillet often, until lightly glazed and no water remains in skillet, 2 to 4 minutes. Transfer carrots to serving platter.

5. FOR THE RELISH: Microwave figs and water in bowl until hot, about 1 minute; let sit for 5 minutes. Stir in olives, shallot, oil, vinegar, parsley, fennel, and salt. Spoon relish over carrots before serving.

FASCINATING FIG FACTS

Fig trees have tremendous longevity; some trees planted at the onset of California’s commercial fig production are still actively bearing fruit today, almost 100 years later.



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Naturally Sweet California Fig-Cinnamon Danish

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: Apple Danish are often no-holds-barred confections, with sticky-sweet fillings that barely resemble fruit. They're also a production to make; the flaky dough alone can take hours, not to mention the time required to make the filling. Luckily, store-bought puff pastry proved to be a perfect base for our Danish: It's easy to work with, takes no time to prep, and contains very little sugar. But that was only half the battle. We also wanted a simple, fruit-forward filling that wasn't laden with sugar but still tasted pleasantly sweet. We decided to brush a small amount of California Fig Spread onto the puff pastry to give the Danish a sweet tart base. A sprinkle of cinnamon sugar gave us the sweetness we craved without going overboard; tasters preferred coconut sugar over Sucanat, since its neutral sweetness allowed the fruit flavor to shine through. Sliced apples, tossed with ginger, lemon juice, and a bit more cinnamon, made a perfect filling. Rolling the puff pastry around the apple slices created rose-like Danishes that were as pretty as they were delicious. Parbaking the apple slices ensured that they were pliable enough to roll without breaking.

MAKES 6 DANISH

This recipe works equally well with dark purple California Mission or Golden Figs. To thaw frozen puff pastry, let it sit either in the refrigerator for 24 hours or on the counter for 30 minutes to 1 hour. An equal amount of granulated sugar or Sucanat can be substituted for the coconut sugar. For an especially pretty presentation, sprinkle with confectioners' sugar before serving.

- 2 apples (6 ounces each), cored, halved, and sliced thin**
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted and cooled**
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice**
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- 2 tablespoons coconut sugar**
- 1 (9½ by 9-inch) sheet puff pastry, thawed**
- 2 tablespoons Orchard Choice Organic Mission California Fig Spread**
- 1 cup Sun-Maid Calimyrna California Figs, stemmed and chopped fine**



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Toss apples with melted butter, lemon juice, ½ teaspoon cinnamon, ginger, and salt in bowl. Spread apples in single layer on parchment paper-lined baking sheet and bake until softened, about 10 minutes. Set aside until cool enough to handle, about 10 minutes.

2. Line clean baking sheet with parchment and spray with vegetable oil spray. Combine sugar with remaining ½ teaspoon cinnamon in bowl.

3. On floured counter, roll pastry into 12 by 10-inch rectangle, with long side parallel to counter edge. Spread fig spread evenly over top. Sprinkle figs over fig spread, pressing gently to ensure they stick to surface. Sprinkle cinnamon-sugar mixture evenly over surface. Using sharp knife or pizza wheel, cut pastry lengthwise into six 10 by 2-inch strips.

4. Working with 1 strip of dough at a time, shingle 12 apple slices, peel side out, down length of dough, leaving 1-inch border of dough along bottom. Fold bottom inch of dough over bottom of apple slices, leaving top of apple slices exposed. Roll up dough and apples into tight pinwheel and place, apple side up, on prepared sheet.

5. Bake until golden brown and crisp, 22 to 26 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through baking. Let Danish cool on sheet for 15 minutes before serving.

FASCINATING FIG FACTS

California Figs and Fig Spreads pair well with a wide variety of cheeses, including blue, Gorgonzola, Brie, Manchego, and goat.



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