



# MIX IT UP

*with*

# CALIFORNIA FIGS



*Cook'sCountry*





We love to mix it up with delicious ingredients like California Dried Figs. Sweet, versatile, and available year-round, figs are equally at home as a main ingredient or a complementary addition to a wide range of dishes—desserts, side dishes, breads, entrées, and appetizers.

Valley Fig Growers and Cook's Country are mixing it up in this recipe booklet by starting off with a dessert recipe: Fig and Coconut Lime Dream Bites—three layers of heavenly perfection. Figs shine in desserts, so we couldn't resist also sharing our recipe for Chocolate Fig Bars with Hazelnuts. Figs, chocolate, and hazelnuts—need we say more?

New to Valley Fig Growers and Mix It Up are recipes featuring Orchard Choice California Fig Spreads. These four delicious spreads—California Orange, Organic Mission, Port Wine, and Balsamic Pepper—are featured in the Juicy Pub-Style Burgers with Crispy Shallots and Blue Cheese and the Sweet and Saucy Grilled Salmon with Lime-Fig Glaze. The possibilities for enjoying California Fig Spreads are endless. Short on time? Simply open one of the spreads and spoon it over a warm wedge of Brie cheese to add a gourmet touch in an instant. From soft to hard, mild to robust, cheeses are the perfect partners for Orchard Choice Fig Spreads.

Create memorable fig moments with our Mix It Up recipes featuring Blue Ribbon® Orchard Choice® and Sun-Maid® California Dried Figs and our Orchard Choice® California Fig Spreads. Look for more fig recipes from Cook's Country to share with friends and family at [ValleyFig.com](http://ValleyFig.com). Join the conversation with Valley Fig Growers online: Get pinspired on pinterest at [pinterest.com/valleyfig](http://pinterest.com/valleyfig). Discover new ideas for how to use figs on Facebook at [facebook.com/valleyfig](http://facebook.com/valleyfig).

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[valleyfig.com](http://valleyfig.com)



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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

# Fig and Coconut-Lime Dream Bites

## MAKES 15 BARS

To ensure a smooth glaze, sift the confectioners' sugar before mixing it with the lime juice.

### CRUST

- 1½ cups (6⅔ ounces) cake flour, sifted**
- ¼ cup (1¾ ounces) granulated sugar**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- 11 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces and chilled**

### FILLING

- 1 cup packed (7 ounces) light brown sugar**
- 4 large eggs**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder**
- 1 cup Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Figs, stemmed and chopped fine**
- ½ cup sweetened shredded coconut**
- ½ cup walnuts, toasted and chopped**

### GLAZE

- 4 teaspoons grated lime zest plus ¼ cup juice (2 limes)**
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar**
- 2 cups (8 ounces) confectioners' sugar, sifted**
- ½ cup sweetened shredded coconut, toasted**

### FASCINATING FIG FACTS

Golden (Calimyrna) figs are amber colored and best known for their sweet, slightly nutty flavor. The seeds in the Calimyrna tend to be a little more robust and the skin a little chewier.



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**1. FOR THE CRUST:** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Make foil sling for 13 by 9-inch baking pan by folding 2 long sheets of aluminum foil; first sheet should be 13 inches wide and second sheet should be 9 inches wide. Lay sheets of foil in pan perpendicular to each other, with extra foil hanging over edges of pan. Push foil into corners and up sides of pan, smoothing foil flush to pan. Process flour, sugar, and salt in food processor until combined, about 30 seconds. Add butter and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal, about 10 pulses. Transfer mixture to prepared pan and press into even layer. Bake until edges are lightly browned, about 15 minutes. Let crust cool in pan for 5 minutes.

**2. FOR THE FILLING:** Whisk sugar, eggs, vanilla, salt, and baking powder together. Stir in figs, coconut, and walnuts. Pour filling over warm crust and bake until filling is set, about 25 minutes. Let bars cool in pan for 5 minutes.

**3. FOR THE GLAZE:** Combine lime zest and granulated sugar in bowl; set aside. Whisk confectioners' sugar and lime juice together in second bowl until smooth. Pour glaze over warm bars and spread into even layer. Sprinkle with lime sugar and coconut. Let bars cool completely in pan on wire rack, about 2 hours. Using foil overhang, lift bars from pan and cut into 15 pieces. Serve. (Store bars at room temperature for up to 2 days.)

# Braised Brussels Sprouts

## with Figs, Bacon, and Pecans

### SERVES 8 TO 10

When buying Brussels sprouts, choose those with small, tight heads, no more than 1½ inches in diameter, for the best flavor.

- 8 slices bacon, chopped**
- 2 large shallots, chopped fine**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- 2 pounds Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved through stem ends**
- 1 cup chicken broth**
- 1 cup Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Figs, stemmed and quartered**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 4 teaspoons sherry vinegar**
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme**
- Salt and pepper**
- ½ cup pecans, toasted and chopped**



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**1.** Fry bacon in skillet over medium heat until crisp, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer to paper towel-lined plate. Pour off excess grease but do not wipe skillet clean.

**2.** Cook shallots in now-empty skillet over medium heat until soft, about 10 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.

**3.** Toss Brussels sprouts in shallot-garlic mixture; add broth and figs. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook, tossing once or twice, until paring knife can be inserted into sprouts without resistance, 13 to 18 minutes.

**4.** Stir in butter, vinegar, thyme, and reserved bacon and season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to serving bowl. Sprinkle pecans on top. Serve immediately.

### FASCINATING FIG FACTS

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





# Chocolate-Fig Bar Cookies *with* Hazelnuts

## MAKES ABOUT 50 COOKIES

If you cannot find superfine sugar, you can obtain a close approximation by processing regular granulated sugar in a food processor for about 20 seconds.

- 2½ cups (12½ ounces) all-purpose flour**
- 1 cup Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Figs, stemmed and chopped into ¼-inch pieces**
- ¾ cup (5¼ ounces) superfine sugar**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- 16 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 16 pieces, softened**
- 2 tablespoons cream cheese, softened**
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract**
- 1½ cups (9 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips**
- 1½ cups hazelnuts, toasted, skinned, and chopped**



PHOTO CREDIT: Daniel J. van Ackere

### 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.



**1.** Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and pre-heat oven to 375 degrees. Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, mix flour, figs, sugar, and salt on low speed until combined, about 5 seconds. Add butter, 1 piece at a time, and continue to mix until mixture looks crumbly and slightly wet, about 1 minute longer. Add cream cheese and vanilla and continue to mix until dough just begins to form large clumps, about 30 seconds.

**2.** Line 17½ by 12-inch baking sheet with parchment paper and press dough into sheet in even layer. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes.

**3.** Immediately after removing sheet from oven, sprinkle evenly with chocolate chips; let stand to melt, about 3 minutes.

**4.** Using offset icing spatula, spread chocolate into even layer, then sprinkle evenly with chopped hazelnuts. Let cool on wire rack until just warm, 15 to 20 minutes.

**5.** Using pizza wheel, cut into 1½-inch diamonds. Transfer cookies to wire rack and let cool completely.

# Juicy Pub-Style Burgers

## with Crispy Shallots, Blue Cheese, and Orchard Choice California Fig Spread

### SERVES 4

Sirloin steak tips are also sold as flap meat. When stirring the butter and pepper into the ground meat and shaping the patties, take care not to overwork the meat or the burgers will become dense.

- 2 pounds sirloin steak tips, trimmed and cut into ½-inch chunks**
- ½ cup plus 1 teaspoon vegetable oil**
- 3 shallots, sliced thin**  
**Salt and pepper**
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly**
- 4 ounces blue cheese, crumbled (1 cup)**
- ¼ cup Orchard Choice Organic California Mission Fig Spread or Orchard Choice Port Wine California Fig Spread**
- 4 hamburger buns, toasted and buttered**

**1.** Place beef chunks on baking sheet in single layer. Freeze meat until very firm and starting to harden around edges but still pliable, about 35 minutes. Meanwhile, heat ½ cup oil and shallots in medium saucepan over high heat; cook, stirring frequently, until shallots are golden, about 8 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer shallots to paper towel-lined plate, season with salt, and set aside.

**2.** Place one-quarter of meat in food processor and pulse until finely ground into 1/16-inch pieces, about 35 pulses, stopping and redistributing meat around bowl as necessary to ensure meat is evenly ground. Transfer meat to second baking sheet. Repeat grinding with remaining meat in 3 batches. Spread meat over sheet and inspect



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carefully, discarding any long strands of gristle or large chunks of hard meat or fat.

**3.** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 300 degrees. Drizzle melted butter over ground meat and add 1 teaspoon pepper. Gently toss with fork to combine. Divide meat into 4 lightly packed balls. Gently flatten into patties ¾ inch thick and about 4½ inches in diameter. Refrigerate patties until ready to cook. (Patties can be refrigerated, covered, for up to 1 day.)

**4.** Season 1 side of patties liberally with salt and pepper. Using spatula, flip patties and season other side. Heat 1 teaspoon oil in 12-inch skillet over high heat until just smoking. Using spatula, transfer patties to skillet and cook, without moving them, for 2 minutes. Using spatula, flip patties and cook 2 minutes longer. Transfer burgers to rimmed baking sheet, top each with ¼ cup blue cheese, and bake until burgers register 125 degrees for medium-rare or 130 degrees for medium, 3 to 6 minutes.

**5.** Transfer burgers to plate and let rest for 5 minutes. Spread 1 tablespoon fig spread on each bun top. Transfer burgers to bun bottoms, top burgers with crispy shallots and bun tops, and serve.

### FASCINATING FIG FACTS

Fig trees have no blossoms on their branches. The blossom is inside the fruit! Many tiny flowers produce the crunchy little edible seeds that give figs their unique texture.



# Sautéed Chicken Cutlets

with Garlic-Lemon Spinach and Fig-Balsamic Sauce

**SERVES 4**

## SPINACH

- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced thin**
- 2 (10-ounce) bags flat-leaf spinach, stemmed**
- ½ teaspoon grated lemon zest, plus 2 teaspoons juice**
- Salt**
- Pinch red pepper flakes**

## CHICKEN

- 4 (6- to 8-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed, halved horizontally, and pounded ¼ inch thick**
- Salt and pepper**
- 4 teaspoons vegetable oil**

## SAUCE

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 1 cup Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Figs, stemmed, and cut into ¼-inch pieces**
- ¼ cup water**
- ¾ cup balsamic vinegar**
- ¼ teaspoon sugar**
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme**
- 2 bay leaves**
- Salt and pepper**

**1. FOR THE SPINACH:** Adjust oven rack to middle position; heat oven to 200 degrees. Heat 2 tablespoons oil and garlic in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat; cook, shaking pan back and forth, until garlic begins to sizzle and is light golden brown, about 3 minutes. Add spinach by handful, using tongs to stir and coat spinach with oil.

**2.** Once all spinach is added, sprinkle lemon zest, ¼ teaspoon salt, and pepper flakes over top and continue to stir with tongs until spinach is uniformly wilted and glossy green, about 2 minutes. Using tongs, transfer spinach to colander set in sink and gently squeeze spinach with tongs



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to release excess liquid. Return spinach to skillet, sprinkle with lemon juice, and stir to coat. Transfer spinach to large platter, drizzle with remaining 1 teaspoon oil, and season with salt to taste. Cover loosely with aluminum foil and transfer to oven to keep warm. Wipe out skillet with paper towels.

**3. FOR THE CHICKEN:** Season both sides of each cutlet with salt and pepper. Heat 2 teaspoons oil in now-empty skillet over medium-high heat until smoking; place 4 cutlets in skillet and cook, without moving them, until browned, about 2 minutes. Using spatula, flip cutlets and continue to cook until second sides are opaque, 15 to 20 seconds. Transfer cutlets to large plate. Repeat with remaining 4 cutlets and 2 teaspoons oil. Tent plate loosely with foil and transfer to oven to keep warm while making sauce.

**4. FOR THE SAUCE:** Return now-empty skillet to medium-high heat and add 1 tablespoon butter; when melted, add figs and cook, stirring occasionally, 2 minutes. Add water and any accumulated juices from chicken and cook until figs are plump and water has evaporated, about 1 minute. Add vinegar, sugar, thyme, and bay leaves and simmer, stirring occasionally, until vinegar is just barely covering bottom of pan, 7 to 8 minutes. Remove skillet from heat, discard bay leaves, and slowly whisk in remaining 2 tablespoons butter. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

**5.** Shingle chicken cutlets over spinach. Spoon sauce over chicken and serve.



# Sweet and Saucy Grilled Salmon *with* Lime-Fig Glaze

## SERVES 4

Use any brand of heavy-duty aluminum foil to make the grill trays, but be sure to spray the foil with vegetable oil spray. Alternatively, you can use Reynolds Release Nonstick Aluminum Foil and skip the spray.

- ½ cup Orchard Choice Organic California Mission Fig Spread
- ½ cup fresh cilantro
- 2 scallions, chopped coarse
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon grated lime zest plus 2 tablespoons juice
- ⅛ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 (6- to 8-ounce) skinless salmon fillets, 1¼ inches thick
- Salt and pepper

1. Process fig spread, cilantro, scallions, garlic, lime zest and juice, and pepper flakes in food processor or blender until smooth. Heat fig spread mixture in small saucepan over medium heat until just bubbling, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and transfer ¼ cup glaze to small bowl to cool slightly and reserve for brushing. Stir butter into glaze remaining in saucepan, cover, and set aside.

2. Cut out four 12 by 8-inch rectangles of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Crimp edges of foil to create four trays that measure 7 by 5 inches with ½-inch sides. Spray trays with vegetable oil spray. Season salmon with salt and pepper, brush each side of each fillet with 1½ teaspoons reserved glaze, and place, skinned side up, on trays.

3A. FOR CHARCOAL GRILL: Open bottom vent completely. Light large chimney starter filled with charcoal



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briquettes (6 quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour evenly over three-quarters of grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and open lid vent completely. Heat grill until hot, about 5 minutes.

3B. FOR GAS GRILL: Turn all burners to high, cover, and heat grill until hot, about 15 minutes. Leave primary burner on high and turn other burner(s) to medium.

4. Place trays with salmon on hotter side of grill and grill until glaze forms crust, 6 to 8 minutes. (Move fillets to cooler side of grill if they darken too soon.) Using tongs, flip salmon and cook for 1 minute. Spoon half of butter-glaze mixture over salmon and cook until center of each fillet is still just translucent, about 1 minute. Transfer salmon to platter and spoon remaining butter-glaze mixture over it. Serve.

## FASCINATING FIG FACTS

Eating ½ cup of figs provides as much calcium as drinking ½ cup of milk.

