

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 a warm baked Brie, tender pulled pork tacos, a refreshing citrus salad, and pistachio coconut triangles and fig phyllo cookies for a sweet finish.

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 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](https://www.valleyfig.com). Join the conversation with Valley Fig Growers online: Get pinspired on Pinterest at [pinterest.com/valleyfig](https://www.pinterest.com/valleyfig). Discover new ideas for how to use figs on Facebook at [facebook.com/valleyfig](https://www.facebook.com/valleyfig).

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[valleyfig.com](https://www.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

Baked Brie with California Figs, Walnuts, and Herbs

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: For an elegant take on the classic baked Brie, we decided to pair the Brie with earthy California Dried Figs and toasted chopped walnuts. For sweet and creamy flavor in every bite, we first trimmed off the rind (which doesn't melt that well) and cut the cheese into cubes. Slicing the California Figs in half allowed for better distribution of fruit without the pieces getting lost in the cheese. The addition of thyme provided a little earthiness that complemented both the cheese and the fruit. The result? Our fig-herb mixture was evenly distributed throughout the dish, not just spooned on top. A drizzle of honey and some minced chives before serving reinforced the sweet-savory flavor profile while toasted walnuts added a subtle smoky crunch. Be sure to use a firm, fairly unripe Brie for this recipe. Serve with crusty bread, crackers, and/or crostini. We prefer to make this recipe with California Mission Figs, though California Goldens can be substituted.

SERVES 8 TO 10

- 1½ pounds firm Brie cheese, rind removed, cut into 1-inch pieces**
- 1 cup [Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice](#) or [Sun-Maid California Figs](#), stemmed and halved**
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme**
- ¼ teaspoon pepper**
- 2 tablespoons honey**
- ¼ cup walnuts, toasted and chopped**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh chives**

CALIFORNIA FIG FACTS

Valley Fig Growers keep a watchful eye over their orchards all year round. They are continually working the soil, monitoring the irrigation, and pruning the trees to ensure that consumers have the best quality California Figs.



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

- 1.** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 300 degrees.
- 2.** Lightly coat 1½-quart soufflé dish with vegetable oil spray. Combine Brie, figs, thyme, and pepper in prepared dish. Cover dish with aluminum foil. Bake until Brie is heated through and begins to soften around edges, 45 minutes to 1 hour.
- 3.** Transfer dish to heatproof plate or serving platter; discard foil. Drizzle Brie with honey and sprinkle with walnuts and chives. Serve.

Mexican-Style Pulled Pork Tacos with California Figs

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: Pulled pork, cooked in a Mexican mole, on a weeknight? In a bold move, we developed a dish that shattered cooking assumptions: first, that heftier meat cuts, such as pork butt, aren't for weeknight meals; second, that a rich mole requires a laundry list of ingredients. Employing a slow cooker to tenderize tough but richly flavored pork butt over the course of a day gave us succulent meat in time for dinner. To give our pulled pork an equally rich sauce, we created a complex mole quickly by deploying just the right pantry staples: chili powder, cumin, chipotle chiles, canned tomato sauce for acidity, and—for just the right sweetness—California Figs. Once the pork was cooked through, we removed it and blended the sauce to give it the perfect consistency. A little lime juice and cilantro at the end balanced the flavors and completed the dish. Pork butt roast is often labeled Boston butt in the supermarket. Serve with guacamole, sour cream, chopped onion, chopped cilantro, thinly sliced radishes, and lime wedges. We prefer to make this recipe with California Mission Figs, though California Golden's can be substituted.

SERVES 4

- 1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce**
- 1 cup [Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice](#) or [Sun-Maid California Figs](#), stemmed**
- 2 tablespoons chili powder**
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin**
- 1 tablespoon minced canned chipotle chile in adobo sauce**
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled**
- 1 (3-pound) boneless pork butt roast, trimmed**
Salt and pepper
- ½ cup minced fresh cilantro**
- 3 tablespoons lime juice (2 limes)**
- 12 (6-inch) corn tortillas, warmed**

CALIFORNIA FIG FACTS

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



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

1. Combine tomato sauce, figs, chili powder, cumin, chipotle, and garlic in 5½- to 7-quart slow cooker. Slice pork crosswise into 4 equal pieces, trim excess fat, and season with salt and pepper. Nestle pork into slow cooker, cover, and cook until pork is tender, 9 to 10 hours on low or 6 to 7 hours on high.

2. Transfer pork to bowl and let cool slightly. Using 2 forks, shred into bite-size pieces, discarding excess fat. Using large spoon, skim excess fat from surface of mole sauce.

3. Process sauce in blender until smooth, about 1 minute. Stir in cilantro and lime juice and season with salt and pepper to taste. (Adjust sauce consistency with hot water as needed.) Stir 2 cups sauce into shredded pork. Serve with warm tortillas and remaining sauce.

Citrus Salad with Watercress, California Figs, and Pecans

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: Savory salads made with oranges and grapefruits are an impressive way to showcase colorful winter fruit—but only if you can work with the grapefruits' bitterness and prevent the fruit's ample juice from drowning the other components. We started by treating the fruit with salt to counter its bitter notes (a technique we've used in the past with coffee and eggplant), but the salt pulled even more juice out of the fruit and onto our platter. Draining the seasoned fruit enabled us to preemptively remove the excess juice, some of which we used in the dressing for the salad greens. Salted nuts added richness that contrasted nicely with the fruit and the assertively flavored greens, and dried fruit added texture and sweetness. You may substitute tangelos or Cara Caras for the navel oranges. Valencia or blood oranges can also be used, but because they are smaller, increase the number of these fruits to four. We prefer to make this recipe with California Golden Figs, though California Missions can be substituted.

SERVES 4 TO 6

- 2 red grapefruits**
- 3 navel oranges**
- 1 teaspoon sugar**
- Salt and pepper**
- 1 teaspoon unsalted butter**
- ½ cup pecans, chopped coarse**
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 small shallot, minced**
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**
- 4 ounces (4 cups) watercress, torn into bite-size pieces**
- 1 cup [Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice](#) or [Sun-Maid California Figs](#), stemmed and cut into ¼-inch pieces**

1. Cut away peel and pith from grapefruits and oranges. Cut each fruit in half lengthwise, then slice crosswise into ¼-inch-thick pieces. Transfer fruit to bowl and toss with sugar and ½ teaspoon salt. Set aside for 15 minutes.

2. Melt butter in 8-inch skillet over medium heat. Add pecans and ½ teaspoon salt and cook, stirring often, until lightly browned and fragrant, 2 to 4 minutes. Transfer pecans to paper towel-lined plate and set aside.



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

3. Drain fruit in colander set over bowl, reserving 2 tablespoons juices. Transfer fruit to platter, arrange in even layer, and drizzle with oil. Whisk shallot, mustard, and reserved juices together in medium bowl. Add watercress, ½ cup figs, and ¼ cup pecans and toss to combine.

4. Arrange watercress mixture over fruit, leaving 1-inch border around edges. Sprinkle with remaining ½ cup figs and remaining ¼ cup pecans. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

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.



California Fig-Pistachio Coconut Triangles

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: As it turns out, you really can have it all—at least in the cookie world. This moist bar cookie features a mélange of flavors and textures that complement one another, and its triangular shape makes it a looker. The base is a layer of buttery shortbread, just thick enough to support the topping. Next comes a chewy, almost candy-like layer that's chock-full of coconut, California Dried Figs, and sweet, earthy toasted pistachios, all formed into a cohesive topping with the help of an egg and a little maple syrup. Vanilla extract gives the topping a warm, round flavor and a pleasing aroma. To keep the cookies from being cloying, we mixed ½ teaspoon of salt into the topping. And we couldn't resist a crowning touch: We dunked each cookie in complementary white chocolate, which also contributed visual appeal. We prefer white bar chocolate for the purest flavor and smoothest texture. We prefer to make this recipe with California Mission Figs, though California Goldens can be substituted.

MAKES 18 COOKIES

- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons (5½ ounces) all-purpose flour**
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons packed (7¾ ounces) light brown sugar**
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 5 pieces and chilled**
- 1 cup pistachios, toasted**
- 1 cup [Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice](#) or [Sun-Maid California Figs](#), stemmed and cut into ¼-inch pieces**
- ¾ cup (2 ¼ ounces) sweetened shredded coconut**
- 1 large egg**
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup**
- ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 4 ounces white chocolate, chopped**

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Make foil sling for 8-inch square baking pan by folding 2 long sheets of aluminum foil so each is 8 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. Grease foil.

2. Pulse 1 cup flour, 2 tablespoons sugar, and butter in food processor until mixture resembles wet sand, about 10



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

pulses. Transfer mixture to prepared pan and press firmly into even layer. Bake until light golden, about 15 minutes. Let cool completely in pan.

3. Place pistachios in zipper-lock bag and tap them with meat pounder until crushed. Toss figs, coconut, and pistachios together in bowl, breaking up any clumps. Whisk egg, maple syrup, vanilla, salt, remaining 2 tablespoons flour, and remaining 1 cup sugar together in large bowl. Fold in pistachio mixture, then spread evenly over cooled crust.

4. Bake bars until deep golden brown and set, 20 to 25 minutes. Let bars cool completely in pan on wire rack. Using foil overhang, lift bars out of pan. Cut into 9 squares and cut each square diagonally into 2 triangles.

4. Microwave chocolate in small bowl at 50 percent power, stirring occasionally, until melted, 30 to 60 seconds. Dip 1 corner of each triangle in melted chocolate and place on parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Refrigerate triangles until chocolate is set, about 30 minutes, before serving.

CALIFORNIA FIG FACTS

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



 valleyfig.com

California Fig Phyllo Cookies

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: For a delicate, pleasantly chewy cookie that would make a good light dessert or afternoon snack and would be equally welcome on any holiday table, we turned to Sicilian *cuccidati* for inspiration. Cuccidati are fig cookies traditionally made with buttery pastry dough and glazed with sugar; for a lighter version, we opted for phyllo instead of pastry dough and swapped the glaze for an aromatic syrup. Phyllo dough is also available in larger 18 by 14-inch sheets; if using, cut them in half to make 14 by 9-inch sheets. Do not thaw the phyllo in the microwave; let it sit in the refrigerator overnight or on the counter for 4 to 5 hours. While working with the phyllo, cover the sheets with plastic wrap and then a damp dish towel to prevent drying. We prefer to make this recipe with California Golden Figs, though California Mission Figs can be substituted.

MAKES ABOUT 24 COOKIES

SUGAR SYRUP

- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 (2-inch) strips orange zest plus 2 tablespoons juice

FIG FILLING

- 1½ cups (9 ounces) **Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice** or **Sun-Maid California Figs**, stemmed and halved
- ¾ cup water
- ½ cup (3½ ounces) granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- ½ teaspoon anise seeds
- ½ cup walnuts, toasted and chopped coarse
- 1 tablespoon dry sherry

PASTRY

- 6 (14 by 9-inch) phyllo sheets, thawed
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar

1. FOR THE SUGAR SYRUP: Bring all ingredients to boil in small saucepan over medium-high heat and cook, stirring occasionally, until sugar has dissolved, about 2 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until syrup is thickened and slightly reduced, about 3 minutes. Discard zest and transfer syrup to bowl; set aside.



PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Klise

2. FOR THE FIG FILLING: Bring figs, water, sugar, orange zest, and anise seeds to simmer in now-empty saucepan over medium heat and cook until thickened and syrupy, about 5 minutes. Let fig mixture cool to room temperature, about 1 hour.

3. Process fig mixture in food processor until paste forms, about 15 seconds. Scrape down sides of bowl, add walnuts and sherry, and pulse until walnuts are finely chopped, about 10 pulses. Transfer filling to zipper-lock bag and snip off 1 corner to create 1-inch opening.

4. FOR THE PASTRY: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Place 1 phyllo sheet on counter with long side parallel to counter edge, brush lightly with oil, then dust with 1 teaspoon sugar. Repeat with 2 more phyllo sheets, brushing each with oil and dusting with 1 teaspoon sugar (you should have total of 3 layers of phyllo).

5. Pipe half of filling along bottom edge of phyllo, leaving 1½-inch border along edge. Fold bottom edge of phyllo over filling, then continue rolling phyllo away from you into firm cylinder. With cylinder seam side down, use serrated knife to cut cylinder into 12 equal pieces. Arrange cookies on prepared sheet, spaced 1½ inches apart. Repeat with remaining 3 phyllo sheets, oil, sugar, and filling and arrange on sheet.

6. Bake cookies until light golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through baking. Drizzle warm cookies with syrup and let cool for 5 minutes. Transfer cookies to wire rack and let cool completely before serving. (Cookies can be stored at room temperature for up to 4 days.)