

# DISCOVER CALIFORNIA FIGS

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



*Cook's Country*



## DISCOVER CALIFORNIA FIGS

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 Turkish Pinto Bean Salad with Tomatoes, Eggs, and Parsley, Rice and Lentils with Crispy Onions and Dried Figs, Stuffed Zucchini with Spiced Lamb, Dried Figs, and Pine Nuts, Roasted Apples with Dried Figs and Walnuts, Cauliflower Salad with Chermoula, Figs and Carrots, and Whole-Wheat Pizza with Feta, Figs, and Honey.

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

# Turkish Pinto Bean Salad with Tomatoes, Eggs, and Parsley

**WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** Fasulye piyazi is a traditional Turkish bean salad that is often served with kofte, or Turkish meatballs. Frequently made with small white beans, this hearty salad usually contains tomatoes, parsley, hard-cooked eggs, and more. For our version, we started with the beans. To give our salad a more robust flavor, we opted for pinto beans instead of white beans. To further elevate flavor, we infused the beans with aromatics by warming them briefly in a toasted garlic broth. The traditional dressing of olive oil and lemon juice proved underwhelming when paired with the stronger-flavored pinto beans, so we decided to incorporate another staple eastern Mediterranean ingredient: tahini. A generous amount of Aleppo pepper, with its sweet, gently spicy, and mildly smoky undertones, complemented the tart acidity of the dressing. Tossing the beans with the dressing while they were still warm allowed for better flavor absorption. Keeping with tradition, we added cherry tomatoes, onion, and parsley, which contributed to our salad's bright, fresh flavor. A handful of dried figs added a burst of sweetness and their slightly chewy texture complimented the creamy pinto beans. A sprinkle of sesame seeds provided textural contrast and emphasized the tahini nicely. Last, the traditional addition of hard-cooked eggs provided extra protein, giving the dish enough substance to act as an entrée as well as a complexly flavored side.

## SERVES 4 TO 6

*If you can't find Aleppo pepper, you can substitute  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon of paprika and  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon of finely chopped red pepper flakes.*

- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 3 garlic cloves, lightly crushed and peeled**
- 2 (15-ounce) cans pinto beans, rinsed**
- Salt and pepper**
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup tahini**
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice**
- 1 tablespoon ground dried Aleppo pepper, plus extra for serving**
- 8 ounces cherry tomatoes, halved**



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- 1 cup (6 ounces) [Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice](#) or [Sun-Maid California Figs](#), stemmed and halved**
- $\frac{1}{4}$  red onion, sliced thin**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fresh parsley leaves**
- 2 hard-cooked large eggs, quartered**
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds**

**1.** Cook 1 tablespoon oil and garlic in medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring often, until garlic turns golden but not brown, about 3 minutes. Add beans, 2 cups water, and 1 teaspoon salt and bring to simmer. Remove from heat, cover, and let sit for 20 minutes.

**2.** Drain beans and discard garlic. Whisk remaining 3 tablespoons oil, tahini, lemon juice, Aleppo, 1 tablespoon water, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt together in large bowl. Add beans, tomatoes, figs, onion, and parsley and gently toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to serving platter and arrange eggs on top. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and extra Aleppo and serve.

# Rice and Lentils with Crispy Onions and Dried Figs (*Mujaddara*)

**WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** Essentially the “rice and beans” of the Middle East, this might be the most spectacular example of how a few humble ingredients can add up to a dish that’s satisfying, complex, and deeply savory. Though every household and restaurant differs in its approach to this dish, it’s simple to throw together. Basically: Boil basmati rice and lentils together until each component is tender but intact, then work in warm spices such as coriander, cumin, cinnamon, allspice, and pepper, as well as a good measure of minced garlic. But the real showpiece of the dish is the onions—either fried or caramelized—which get stirred into and sprinkled over the pilaf just before serving. Their flavor is as deep as their mahogany color suggests, and they break up the starchy components. The addition of Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Dried Figs underscores the mix of sweet spices. Finished with a bracing garlicky yogurt sauce, this pilaf is comfort food at its best.

## SERVES 4 TO 6

*Do not substitute smaller French lentils for the green or brown lentils. When preparing the Crispy Onions, be sure to reserve 3 tablespoons of the onion cooking oil for cooking the rice and lentils.*

### YOGURT SAUCE

- 1 cup plain whole-milk yogurt
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic
- ½ teaspoon salt

### RICE AND LENTILS

- 8½ ounces (1¼ cups) green or brown lentils, picked over and rinsed
- Salt and pepper
- 1¼ cups basmati rice
- 1 recipe Crispy Onions (recipe follows), plus 3 tablespoons reserved oil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground allspice
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon sugar



PHOTO CREDIT: Daniel Van Ackere

- 1 cup (6 ounces) **Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice** or **Sun-Maid California Figs**, stemmed and quartered
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro

**1. FOR THE YOGURT SAUCE:** Whisk all ingredients together in bowl. Refrigerate while preparing rice and lentils.

**2. FOR THE RICE AND LENTILS:** Bring lentils, 4 cups water, and 1 teaspoon salt to boil in medium saucepan over high heat. Reduce heat to low and cook until lentils are tender, 15 to 17 minutes. Drain and set aside. While lentils cook, place rice in medium bowl and cover by 2 inches with hot tap water; let stand for 15 minutes.

**3.** Using your hands, gently swish rice grains to release excess starch. Carefully pour off water, leaving rice in bowl. Add cold tap water to rice and pour off water. Repeat adding and pouring off cold tap water 4 or 5 times, until water runs almost clear. Drain rice in fine-mesh strainer.

**4.** Heat reserved onion oil, garlic, coriander, cumin, cinnamon, allspice, cayenne, and ¼ teaspoon pepper in Dutch oven over medium heat until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add rice and cook, stirring occasionally, until edges of rice begin to turn translucent, about 3 minutes. Add 2¼ cups water, sugar, and 1 teaspoon salt and bring to boil. Stir

in lentils and figs, reduce heat to low, cover, and cook until all liquid is absorbed, about 12 minutes.

**5.** Off heat, remove lid, fold dish towel in half, and place over pot; replace lid. Let stand for 10 minutes. Fluff rice and lentils with fork and stir in cilantro and half of crispy onions. Transfer to serving platter, top with remaining crispy onions, and serve, passing yogurt sauce separately.

## Crispy Onions

### **MAKES 1½ CUPS**

*It is crucial to thoroughly dry the microwaved onions after rinsing. Be sure to reserve enough oil to use in Mujaddara or Koshari. Remaining oil may be stored in an airtight container and refrigerated for up to 4 weeks; it tastes great in salad dressings, sautéed vegetables, eggs, and pasta sauces.*

**2 pounds onions, halved and sliced  
crosswise into ¼-inch-thick pieces**

**2 teaspoons salt**

**1½ cups vegetable oil**

**1.** Toss onions and salt together in large bowl. Microwave for 5 minutes. Rinse thoroughly, transfer to paper towel-lined baking sheet, and dry well.

**2.** Heat onions and oil in Dutch oven over high heat, stirring frequently, until onions are golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Drain onions in colander set in large bowl. Transfer onions to paper towel-lined baking sheet to drain. Serve.

# Stuffed Zucchini with Spiced Lamb, Dried Figs, and Pine Nuts

**WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** We wanted a recipe for perfectly cooked zucchini boats filled with a rich, gently spiced lamb stuffing. To balance the distinct flavor of the lamb, we chose a trio of contrasting elements: sweet dried Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Dried Figs, buttery pine nuts, and aromatic ras el hanout, the North African spice blend that includes coriander, cardamom, cinnamon, and more. After browning the lamb, we poured off all but a small amount of the fat to keep our filling from tasting too greasy; to offset the filling's meaty texture and add a mild, wheaty chew, we incorporated a small amount of bulgur. We took several steps to avoid overcooked and flavorless zucchini: We scooped out the seeds to reduce moisture; we roasted the unstuffed zucchini cut side down to achieve a flavorful sear and give the vegetable a head start on cooking; and we returned the zucchini to the hot oven—packed with our robust filling—for a final burst of heat before serving.

## SERVES 4

Serve plain or with Yogurt-Herb Sauce (recipe follows), if desired. We prefer medium-grind bulgur for this recipe. If the package is not labeled with a size, look for grains that are about the size of sesame seeds or kosher salt. Do not substitute cracked wheat, which is not par-cooked.

- 4 zucchini (10 ounces each), halved lengthwise and seeded**
- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil**
- Salt and pepper**
- 8 ounces ground lamb**
- 1 onion, chopped fine**
- 4 garlic cloves, minced**
- 2 teaspoons ras el hanout**
- ¾ cup chicken broth**
- ½ cup medium-grind bulgur, rinsed**
- 1 cup (6 ounces) Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Figs, stemmed and cut into ¼-inch pieces**
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted**
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley**

1. Adjust oven racks to upper-middle and lowest positions, place rimmed baking sheet on lower rack, and heat oven to 400 degrees.

2. Brush cut sides of zucchini with 2 tablespoons oil and season with salt and pepper. Lay zucchini cut side down



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in hot sheet and roast until slightly softened and skins are wrinkled, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove zucchini from oven and flip cut side up on sheet; set aside.

3. Meanwhile, heat remaining 1 teaspoon oil in large saucepan over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add lamb, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper and cook, breaking up meat with wooden spoon, until browned, 3 to 5 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer lamb to paper towel-lined plate.

4. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon fat from saucepan. Add onion to fat left in saucepan and cook over medium heat until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic and ras el hanout and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in broth, bulgur, and figs and bring to simmer. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer gently until bulgur is tender, 18 to 20 minutes.

5. Off heat, lay clean dish towel underneath lid and let pilaf sit for 10 minutes. Add pine nuts and parsley to pilaf and gently fluff with fork to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

6. Pack each zucchini half with bulgur mixture, about ½ cup per zucchini half, mounding excess. Place baking sheet on upper rack and bake zucchini until heated through, about 6 minutes. Serve.

# Cucumber-Yogurt Sauce

**MAKES ABOUT 2½ CUPS**

*Cilantro, mint, parsley, or tarragon can be substituted for the dill if desired.*

- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh dill**
- 1 garlic clove, minced**
- 1 cucumber, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, and shredded**
- Salt and pepper**

Whisk yogurt, oil, dill, and garlic together in medium bowl until combined. Stir in cucumber and season with salt and pepper to taste. (Sauce can be refrigerated for up to 1 day.)



# Whole-Wheat Pizza with Feta, Figs, and Honey

**WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** We thought that a nutty, flavorful whole-wheat pizza crust would be a perfect backdrop for bold-flavored Mediterranean toppings. But using whole-wheat flour alone would give us a dense crust, so we incorporated just enough structure-building white bread flour. Increasing the amount of water in the dough made it easier to stretch and gave the crust better chew. But because our dough was so wet, simply preheating the pizza stone in a 500-degree oven wasn't enough; we found we needed to heat the stone under the broiler's high heat so that the crust would brown before the toppings overcooked. After perfecting our thin, crisp, earthy-tasting crust, we realized that the sweet-tart flavors of traditional sauce and cheese clashed with it. Instead, we topped our crust with garlic-infused olive oil, sweet Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Dried Figs, verdant basil, and briny feta cheese. A drizzle of honey completed our unique Mediterranean flavor profile.

## MAKES TWO 13-INCH PIZZAS, SERVING 4 TO 6

*It is important to use ice water in the dough to prevent it from overheating in the food processor. Shape the second dough ball while the first pizza bakes, but don't top the pizza until right before you bake it. Some baking stones can crack under the intense heat of the broiler; be sure to check the manufacturer's website.*

### DOUGH

- 1½ cups (8¼ ounces) whole-wheat flour
- 1 cup (5½ ounces) bread flour
- 2 teaspoons honey
- ¾ teaspoon instant or rapid-rise yeast
- 1¼ cups ice water
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1¾ teaspoons salt

### GARLIC OIL AND TOPPINGS

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (6 ounces) [Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice](#) or [Sun-Maid California Figs](#), stemmed and quartered
- 1 cup water



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- 1 cup fresh basil leaves
- 4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled (1 cup)
- 2 tablespoons honey

**1. FOR THE DOUGH:** Pulse whole-wheat flour, bread flour, honey, and yeast in food processor until combined, about 5 pulses. With processor running, slowly add ice water and process until dough is just combined and no dry flour remains, about 10 seconds. Let dough rest for 10 minutes.

**2.** Add oil and salt to dough and process until dough forms satiny, sticky ball that clears sides of bowl, 45 to 60 seconds. Transfer dough to lightly oiled counter and knead by hand to form smooth, round ball, about 30 seconds. Place dough seam side down in lightly greased large bowl or container, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 18 hours or up to 2 days.

### CALIFORNIA FIG FACTS

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



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**3. FOR THE GARLIC OIL AND TOPPINGS:** Heat oil in 8-inch skillet over medium-low heat until shimmering. Add garlic, pepper, thyme, and salt and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Transfer to bowl and let cool completely before using.

**4.** Combine figs and water in bowl. Cover and microwave until steaming, 1 to 2 minutes. Let figs stand, covered, until softened and plump, about 5 minutes. Strain figs; discard water.

**5.** One hour before baking, adjust oven rack 4 inches from broiler element, set baking stone on rack, and heat oven to 500 degrees. Press down on dough to deflate. Transfer dough to clean counter, divide in half, and cover loosely with greased plastic. Pat 1 piece of dough (keep remaining piece covered) into 4-inch round. Working around circumference of dough, fold edges toward center until ball forms. Flip dough ball seam side down and, using your cupped hands, drag in small circles on counter until dough feels taut and round and all seams are secured on underside. (If dough sticks to your hands, lightly dust top of dough with flour.) Repeat with remaining piece of dough. Space dough balls 3 inches apart, cover loosely with greased plastic, and let rest for 1 hour.

**6.** Heat broiler for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, generously coat 1 dough ball with flour and place on well-floured counter. Using your fingertips, gently flatten into 8-inch round, leaving 1 inch of outer edge slightly thicker than center. Using your hands, gently stretch dough into 12-inch round, working along edge and giving disk quarter turns.

**7.** Transfer dough to well-floured pizza peel and stretch into 13-inch round. Using back of spoon, spread half of garlic oil in even layer on surface of dough, leaving ¼-inch border around edge. Layer ½ cup basil leaves over garlic oil. Sprinkle with ½ cup feta, followed by half of the figs.

**8.** Slide pizza carefully onto baking stone and return oven to 500 degrees. Bake until crust is well browned and cheese is partially browned, 8 to 10 minutes, rotating pizza halfway through baking. Transfer pizza to wire rack and drizzle 1 tablespoon honey over surface. Let cool for 5 minutes before slicing and serving. Heat broiler for 10 minutes. Repeat with remaining dough, garlic oil, and toppings, returning oven to 500 degrees when pizza is placed on stone.

# Roasted Apples with Dried Figs and Walnuts

**WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** Roasted fruit can easily become colorless and mushy or burned and crunchy without a correct method. By starting our fruit over direct heat we were able to evaporate some of the juices released by the fruit that would otherwise get in the way of proper caramelization. Finishing the fruit in the oven allows the ambient heat to cook through the fruit while the fruit continues to darken in color. Pairing the fruit with Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Dried Figs, boosted the apple's sweetness and a sprinkle of walnuts added richness and texture.

## SERVES 4 TO 6

We recommend Gala apples for this recipe, but Fuji will also work. A low-tannin wine such as Pinot Noir works well. You will need a 12-inch oven-safe skillet for this recipe. The fruit can be served as is or with vanilla ice cream or plain Greek yogurt.

- 2½ tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 4 Gala apples (6 to 7 ounces each), peeled, halved, and cored**
- 1¼ cups red wine**
- ½ cup (3 ounces) Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Figs, stemmed and halved**
- ½ cup (2½ ounces) sugar**
- ¾ teaspoon pepper**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice**
- ½ cup walnuts, toasted and chopped**

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Melt 1½ tablespoons butter in 12-inch oven-safe skillet over medium-high heat. Place apple halves, cut side down, in skillet. Cook, without moving, until apples are just beginning to brown, 3 to 5 minutes.

2. Transfer skillet to oven and roast for 15 minutes. Flip apples and continue to roast until fork easily pierces fruit, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove skillet from oven (skillet handle will be hot).

3. Transfer apples to serving dish. Being careful of hot skillet handle, return skillet to medium-high heat and add wine, figs, sugar, pepper, salt, and remaining 1 tablespoon butter. Bring to vigorous simmer, whisking to scrape up any browned bits. Cook until sauce is reduced and has



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consistency of maple syrup, 7 to 10 minutes. Off heat, stir in lemon juice. Pour sauce over apples, sprinkle with walnuts, and serve.

## CALIFORNIA FIG FACTS

Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice and Sun-Maid California Dried Golden and Mission Figs are great additions to plant-based (vegetarian and vegan) 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.



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# Cauliflower Salad with Chermoula, Figs and Carrots

**WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** Chermoula is a traditional Moroccan marinade made with hefty amounts of cilantro, lemon, and garlic that packs a big flavor punch. While this dressing is traditionally used as a marinade for meat and fish, we decided to make it the flavor base for a zippy cauliflower salad in an effort to dress up a vegetable that can be bland and boring. We focused first on the cooking method of the starring vegetable. Roasting was the best choice to add deep flavor to the cauliflower and balance the bright chermoula. To keep the cauliflower from overbrowning before the interior was cooked, we started it covered and let it steam until barely tender. Then we removed the foil, added sliced onion, and returned the pan to the oven to let both the onion and the cauliflower caramelize. Adding the onion to the pan once the cauliflower was uncovered ensured that they would finish cooking at the same time. Finally, to highlight the natural sweetness of the cooked vegetables, we added shredded carrot and Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Dried Figs.

## SERVES 4 TO 6

Use the large holes of a box grater to shred the carrot.

### SALAD

- 1 head cauliflower (2 pounds), cored and cut into 2-inch florets**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**  
**Salt and pepper**
- ½ red onion, sliced ¼ inch thick**
- 1 cup shredded carrot**
- 1 cup (6 ounces) [Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice](#) or [Sun-Maid California Figs](#), stemmed and cut into ¼-inch pieces**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro**
- 2 tablespoons sliced toasted almonds**

### CHERMOULA

- ¾ cup fresh cilantro leaves**
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice**
- 4 garlic cloves, minced**
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin**
- ½ teaspoon paprika**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper**



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**1. FOR THE SALAD:** Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 475 degrees. Toss cauliflower with oil and season with ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Spread on parchment paper-lined rimmed baking sheet, cover tightly with aluminum foil, and roast until softened, 5 to 7 minutes.

**2.** Remove foil and scatter onion on sheet. Roast until vegetables are tender, cauliflower is deep golden, and onion slices are charred at edges, 10 to 15 minutes, stirring half-way through roasting. Let cool slightly, about 5 minutes.

**3. FOR THE CHERMOULA:** Process all ingredients in food processor until smooth, about 1 minute, scraping down sides of bowl as needed; transfer to large bowl.

**4.** Add cauliflower-onion mixture, carrot, and figs and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste, sprinkle with cilantro and almonds, and serve warm or at room temperature.

### CALIFORNIA FIG FACTS

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



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