



FIGS



Plant: Figs are delicious fruits to be enjoyed throughout the late summer. Figs grow on perennial trees that can be trained into small shrubs or grow up to 30 feet. This plant was one of the first to be cultivated by humans. There are hundreds of varieties but the “common fig” is the most common in the Lowcountry region.

Grow: Figs can thrive in many different types of soil, including containers, but prefer well-draining soil. Purchase a southeastern variety such as Alma, Brown Turkey, Celeste, Hunt, or Magnolia. Transplant trees in the fall or early winter. Dig a hole that is three times the size of the root structure; fill in with potting soil, and water to a depth of 2 to 3 feet to remove air pockets. After watering, mulch 3 to 4 inches with bark chips or shredded leaves. Make sure to give 4-6 inches of space away from the base of the tree. It must have a minimum of 8 hours of sunlight during the growing season. Water the tree with 1 inch of water per week throughout the summer and fertilize in late winter, early June, and mid-July.

Harvest: Most fig cultivars bear two crops a year - a light one in early summer and a second one in mid or late summer. Wait until ripe to harvest because they will not ripen after being picked. It is time to harvest when the fruit neck wilts and the fruits hang down. Some figs start green and stay green when ripe while others turn brown when ripe. Handle ripe fruit as little as possible to avoid bruising.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 medium fig	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 37	Calories from Fat 1
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 1mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 10g	3%
Dietary Fiber 1g	6%
Sugars 8g	
Protein 0g	
Vitamin A	1% • Vitamin C 2%
Calcium	2% • Iron 1%

Nutritional Information:

Figs are a good source of vitamins and essential minerals like calcium, and soluble fiber (which helps reduce blood cholesterol levels). Figs are a source of prebiotics, which support the good bacteria in the gut, improving digestion, in large doses, they have a laxative effect.

How to Prepare: It is best to eat, use, or freeze figs as soon as possible after harvest. Ripe fruit is sweet and delicious and a great stand-alone snack or addition to a salad, oatmeal or yogurt. Because of the natural sugar content, figs caramelize when heated; drizzle with olive oil and bake until browned. Or sautéed figs, cut side down, in a skillet with melted butter and a little honey just until blistered and slightly browned for a sophisticated dessert.



Barley Pilaf with Figs

Yields: 4 servings

Serving size: ½ cup

Ingredients

- 3½ cups vegetable stock
- ¼ cup fresh onions, peeled and chopped
- ⅔ cup raw barley
- ½ cup dried figs, diced (or substitute dried apricot)
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon chives, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Preparation

1. Heat skillet or saucepan over medium heat and apply cooking spray. Add onions, sautéing for about 4 minutes or until translucent.
2. Add vegetable stock and bring to a boil. Add barley, reducing the heat to low. Let simmer for about 20 minutes.
3. Add figs and stir to combine. Simmer for about 10 minutes or until barley is al dente and liquid is absorbed.
4. Add pepper, chives, and lemon juice, and mix well.

Nutrition Facts per Serving:

170 calories, 0.5 g fat, 39 g carbohydrates, 7 g fiber, 4 g protein