

Preserve the Harvest



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Figs

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Did you know?

- The history of figs dates back over 2000 years to when the Greeks considered the fig to be “more precious than gold.”
- Fig trees have no blossoms on their branches. The blossom is inside the fruit. Many tiny flowers make the crunchy seeds that make figs unique.
- A fig matures and partially dries before the perfectly ripe fruit falls from the tree.
- A 1/2 cup of figs is equal to the same amount of calcium in a 1/2 cup of milk.
- Figs have been used to treat boils, stomach aches, skin disease and have been helpful to those wishing to stop smoking.

Popular varieties of figs include:

- Black Mission, a purple-black fig with a pinkish pulp
- Brown Turkey, a copper colored fig with a light pink pulp
- Kadota, a thick skinned, amber colored, seedless fig
- Calimyrna, a golden skin fig with a “nutty” taste



SELECTION AND PREPARATION OF FIGS

For top quality, allow figs to ripen fully on the tree. They must be picked as they ripen or spoilage from the fruit beetle can occur. Select uncracked figs and avoid over ripe figs with very soft flesh. Figs have a low acid value, so you will need **to acidify** when canning.

Stem and wash fruit, peel if desired. Use caution in picking fruit as the “milky” substance can irritate the skin due to the enzyme ficin that breaks down proteins.

Syrups for Figs:

- Heavy - 2 3/4 cups sugar per quart of water
 - Light - 1 cup sugar per quart of water
- *In general, half of the sugar may be substituted with honey.



FREEZING

Prepare figs as desired.

Dry Pack - To prevent darkening of light colored figs, dissolve ascorbic acid (3/4 tsp) in 3 tablespoons water and sprinkle over fruit. Figs may be frozen on a tray first and then packaging in containers, or frozen directly in the container leaving 1/2 inch headspace.

Syrup Pack - Use 40% syrup. Add 3/4 tsp. ascorbic acid or 1/2 cup lemon juice to each quart of syrup. Pack figs into containers and cover with cold syrup. Leaving headspace, seal and freeze.

Sugar Pack - Use 1 part sugar to 4 parts figs. Leave figs whole or cut in half. Pack in freezing containers.

CANNING

Select fruit and prepare. Water bath processing is recommended for fig canning.

Hot Pack - Prepare light syrup. Wash and drain figs. Do not peel or remove stems. Cover figs with water and boil for 2 minutes. Drain. Gently boil figs in syrup for 5 minutes. **Add 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice to each quart jar, or 1/2 tsp citric acid.** Fill jars with hot figs and cooking syrup leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Wipe rims. Adjust lids and process.

Processing times at different altitudes for Figs in a BOILING WATER canner				
Altitude	0-1,000 ft	1,001-3,000 ft	3,001-6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Pints	45 min	50 min	55 min	60 min
Quarts	50 min	55 min	60 min	65 min

JAMS, JELLY, PRESERVES

Fig Jam

5 pounds figs (2 quarts chopped figs)

6 cups sugar

3/4 cup water

1/4 cup lemon juice

Prepare figs: Cover figs with boiling water and let stand 10 minutes. Drain, stem and chop figs.

Prepare Jam: Combine figs, sugar, and water. Bring to a boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Cook until thick. Stir frequently to prevent sticking. Add lemon juice and cook 1 minute longer. Remove from heat and skim foam if necessary. Pour hot jam in hot jars*, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

Processing times at different altitudes for Fig Jam in a BOILING WATER canner		
Altitude	0-6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Pints	10 min	15 min

Fig Preserves

Yield: About 5 pint jars

3 quarts figs

1 1/2 quarts water

3 quarts boiling water

4 cups sugar

2 lemons, thinly sliced

Pour 3 quarts boiling water over figs. Let stand 15 minutes. Drain and discard liquid. Rinse figs in cold water and drain.

Prepare syrup: Mix sugar, 1 1/2 quarts water and lemon. Boil rapidly for 10 minutes. Skim syrup and discard lemon slices.

Drop figs into syrup, a few at a time. Cook rapidly until figs are transparent. Remove figs and place in shallow pan. Boil syrup until thick, pour over figs and let stand 6-8 hours. Sterilize jars. Reheat figs and syrup to boiling. Pour hot preserves into hot jars*, leaving 1/4 inch headspace.

Processing times at different altitudes for Fig Jam in a BOILING WATER canner		
Altitude	0-6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Pints	10 min	15 min

Fig Conserve

6 lbs figs

4-5 oranges

4 1/2 lbs sugar

1 1/2 c. pecans

1 1/2 lbs raisins

Cut figs and oranges into small pieces. Combine figs, oranges, sugar and raisins. Cook over low heat until thick and transparent. This will take about one hour. Stir periodically. Add nuts five minutes before removing from heat. Transfer to jars and process in boiling water canner using the times given above for fig preserves.

DRYING

Figs are excellent for drying. Select ripe fruit. Immature fruit may sour before drying. If needed, wipe fruit with cloth. Leave small fruit whole, otherwise cut in half.

Pretreatment

- Dip in boiling water 30 seconds to check skins. Plunge into ice water to stop further cooking. Drain on paper towels.
- If drying in dehydrator, no pretreatment is needed. Sun drying needs 1 hour sulfur treatment to discourage insects.

- Light colored figs should be steam blanched for 20 minutes for optimum color.

Drying time is 6-20 hours in *dehydrator*, 3-5 days in *sun* and 9-12 hours in the *oven*. Over exposure to sun or heat will harden skin.

PICKLING

Fig Pickles

Yield: About 8 pints
 4 quarts firm-ripe figs
 3 cups sugar
 2 quarts water
 2 cups sugar

2 sticks of cinnamon
 1 tablespoon whole allspice
 1 tablespoon whole cloves
 3 cups vinegar

Peel figs (if unpeeled is preferred: pour boiling water over figs and let stand until cool; drain). Add 3 cups sugar to 2 quarts water and cook until sugar dissolves. Add figs and cook slowly for 30 minutes. Add 2 cups sugar and vinegar. Tie spices in cheesecloth bag and add to figs. Cook gently until figs are transparent. Remove from heat, cover and let stand 12-24 hours in refrigerator.

Remove spice bag. Heat to simmering; pack hot into hot jars. Leave 1/2 inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

Processing Times at different altitudes for Fig Pickles in a BOILING WATER canner				
Altitude	0-1,000 ft	1,001-3,000 ft	3,001-6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Pints	15 min	20 min	20 min	20 min

STORAGE

Store fresh figs in the refrigerator for up to 2-3 days. Frozen figs that are packaged appropriately and held at 0°F or below are good for a year. Storage temperature has a major effect on canned figs: at 40°F hold for up to 48 months, at 70°F hold up to 24 months and if at 90°F don't hold more than 12 months

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Figs add iron, calcium, potassium and fiber to your diet. They contain no fat, cholesterol or sodium.

	Calories	Fiber g	Iron mg	Potassium mg	Vit. C mg	Vit. A IU	Calcium mg
Raw figs, 2	80	2.9	.37	232	2	142	35
Canned in light syrup, 2	39	1	.16	57	0.6	21	15
Dried, 2	175	1.6	.34	114	0.2	2	27

Savor the Season All Year Long!

REFERENCES

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