

# Health Benefits of Figs



Figs are a soft, bell-shaped fruit with succulent flesh from the ficus tree, which is part of the mulberry plant family. They have a unique, sweet taste, and chewy texture. It is known to be a good source of carbohydrate, fiber, minerals, and vitamins. They also contain antioxidants and phytochemicals that are beneficial for disease prevention.

## WHAT MAKES FIGS GREAT?

### **Nutrition**

1 small fresh fig has 30 Calories, 0.3gm protein 1.2 gm fiber, no fat, no cholesterol.

1/3 cup dried fig has 133 Calories, 2 gm protein, 5gm fiber, no fat, no cholesterol.

### **Vitamins**

The main vitamins found in figs are vitamin A or beta carotenes that can help to maintain healthy vision, skin, and immune system. Vitamin K, abundant in figs, helps with the clotting factor in blood.

**Warning:** Vitamin K can interfere with the effectiveness of prescribed blood-thinners or anticoagulant medication. Consistent intake of vitamin-K rich food should be monitored by health professionals.

### **Minerals**

Dried figs are an excellent source of calcium, potassium, and phosphorus essential for maintaining healthy bones. Strontium, a lesser-known mineral, can also aid in bone health and is often used in osteoporosis medication for postmenopausal women. Figs also contain iron, which is important in the formation of red blood cells in our body, and copper, which help to maintain brain function and the immune system.

### **Fiber**

Both fresh and dried figs have high amounts of fiber. Soluble fiber acts as a sponge to absorb cholesterol in blood, lowering risk of progressive heart disease. Figs also have a low glycemic index and the soluble fiber again helps to slow

the absorption of sugar into the blood, making them a good fruit for those with diabetes. Insoluble fiber acts as laxative to help with constipation.

### **Phytonutrients** (plant compounds)

The main phytochemicals found in both fresh and dried figs are phenolic acids and flavonoids. The concentration of the compound varies depending on the color, fruit part, ripeness, and drying process of the fruit. Phenolic acids and flavonoids have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that help to protect cells from free radicals that may lead to aging, and chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer.

## BUYING & USING FIGS

Fig trees mainly thrive in the tropic and subtropics areas, with mostly warm weather and mild winter. Unless you have a tree in your backyard, it is difficult to catch a fig at peak ripeness. They range from green (early ripeness) to purple and brown (fully ripened).

Fresh figs are delicate and very perishable, lasting only five to seven days after they are picked. Refrigeration can prolong the shelf life up to two weeks. This is one reason why dried figs are more commonly found in the supermarkets and grocery stores.

You can find both fresh and dried figs in your local farmers' market or grocery store depending on your region and time of the year. They make a great snack or sweet ingredient in oatmeal, smoothies, salads or savory dishes.



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**Fig Chutney**Adapted from [Yummly.com](https://www.yummly.com)**Ingredients:**

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|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 Tbsp oil                      | 1 lemon, 4 Tbsp zest, skinned, chopped    |
| 1 red onion, chopped            | 1/2 cup raisins                           |
| 3/4" slice fresh ginger, grated | 1/2 cup walnuts, chopped                  |
| 1/2 cup brown sugar             | 1 cinnamon stick                          |
| 1/2 cup cider vinegar           | 1/4 tsp salt                              |
|                                 | 3 cups fresh figs, stems removed, chopped |

**Directions:**

1. Heat oil in pan. Add onion and cook until translucent, about 3-4 minutes. Add all remaining ingredients except figs and lemons. Cover and cook 20 min over low heat.
2. Add figs to pan and cook covered 5-10 min, or until figs are tender.
3. Remove cover, add lemon and zest and cook on low heat until mixture thickens and resembles jam. Stir often. Remove from heat and discard cinnamon stick.
4. Serve hot or cooled with crackers, veggies, sandwiches or cheese charcuterie. Cool before storing in sterilized jars in the refrigerator.

**No Bake Fig Bars  
Grain Free**The [nutritiouskitchen.com](https://www.thenutritiouskitchen.com)**Ingredients:**

- 3/4 cup cashew butter
- 3 Tbsp. coconut oil, melted
- 1/4 cup date syrup (or maple syrup)
- 1 cup fresh figs, sliced in halves and quarters
- Sea salt + cinnamon to taste

**Instructions:**

1. Line loaf pan with parchment paper.
2. Blend all ingredients except figs in a high powered blender until dough forms.
3. Scoop down the sides in between blends if needed. Mix in the figs & optional seeds.
4. Press mixture evenly in loaf pan. Top with extra chopped or sliced figs .
5. Freeze at least an hour before slicing into squares.

**No-Bake Fig Snowballs**Food [confidence.com](https://www.foodconfidence.com)

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|---------------------|--|---------------|--|
| <b>Ingredients:</b> | 1 1/2 cup dried figs soaked in water 20 min, drained | <b>Crust:</b> | 1 cup rolled oats<br>1/4 tsp vanilla<br>1 Tbsp orange zest<br>3 Tbsp almond flour<br>1/4 cup raw almonds |
|---------------------|--|---------------|--|

**Instructions:**

1. In a food processor, add the ingredients for the crust and process into a flour-like consistency. Set aside in a bowl.
2. Add the soaked figs and the vanilla powder. Process until the figs are broken down. Add 1 Tbsp of water, if needed. Then add 1/2 cup of the powder crust into the processor with the figs and pulse until well-combined. The texture should be soft, but don't over-process. Adjust the texture as needed with the powder crust and water.
3. Roll the fig mixture into balls and place on a baking sheet lined with wax paper. Place balls into the freezer for about 10 minutes. Remove from the freezer and one by one roll the balls into the powder crust.
4. Store leftovers in the fridge or freezer.

Watch a short video on figs [here](#):**REFERENCES**[https://ods.od.nih.gov/fact\\_sheets](https://ods.od.nih.gov/fact_sheets)<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodres.2019.01.055><https://www.heart.org/en/news/2021/08/05/are-figs-good-for-you-get-the-whole-sweet-story>[https://www.phytojournal.com/vol3Issue2/Issue\\_jul\\_2014/3-3-1.1.pdf](https://www.phytojournal.com/vol3Issue2/Issue_jul_2014/3-3-1.1.pdf)<https://fdc.nal.usda.gov>