



Figure (French), higo (Spanish),
无花果 (wú huā guǒ Mandarin),
अंजीर (anjeer, Hindi), ફિગ (phiga,
Gujarati), Matunda ya Mtini (Swahili),
تيين (teen, Arabic)

Fig

a taste of the Bible on the Floridian table

The fruit of the fig tree has been a significant source of food in the Middle East and Mediterranean region since prehistoric times. Archaeological evidence suggests it is among the first plants cultivated more than 10,000 years ago. It was prized by the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the fig is mentioned numerous times in both Hebrew and Christian religious texts. Fig cultivation spread throughout Europe with the Roman Empire, and it remained an important food source during the medieval period. Spanish missionaries introduced figs to California in the 18th century, and they were popularized in the 'Fig Newton' cookie a century later. Fig trees are grown throughout Florida gardens and edible landscapes today because they do well in poor soil and tolerate hot climate and seasonal drought.

To learn more about Florida's
culinary history, visit
floridaheritagefoods.com

Young boy buying figs at the
Italian farmer's market in Piombino



LEMON RICE FIG CUSTARD

50
MINUTES
TOTAL

3
TOTAL
SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons butter	1 cup cooked brown rice
1/4 cup honey	1 cup chopped fresh figs
3 eggs, beaten	2 tablespoons lemon rind
2 cups milk	1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
3 tablespoons lemon juice	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

1. Melt butter in small saucepan.
2. Add honey, stirring until dissolved.
3. Beat eggs, and blend together with milk and lemon juice.
4. Mix in butter and honey until well blended.
5. Combine rice, figs, and lemon rind with 1 cup of custard mixture. Pour into a buttered 2-quart round pan. Pour in the rest of the custard. Sprinkle with nutmeg and cinnamon.
6. Bake at 325 degrees F over a pan of water for about 45 minutes or until firm.

Recipe adapted from Morrison, Sally. 2011. Cross Creek Kitchens: Seasonal Recipes and Reflections. p.133



FACTS

Figs are mentioned numerous times in both the Hebrew Tanakh and in all four Christian Gospels. In the Book of Genesis, for example, Adam and Eve cover themselves in fig leaves. In Deuteronomy, the Promised Land is described as "a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees..." In the Gospels, the fig tree is often represented as a symbol of Israel and most notably as a barren fig tree cursed by Jesus. Today, the 'Mission' fig, introduced by Spanish missionaries remains among the most popular varieties in the U.S.

Figs are rich in fiber, vitamins A and B6, calcium, potassium, iron, phosphorus, and copper.

For more Florida heritage recipes, visit floridaheritagefoods.com

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