

Pecorino Fig Apple Crostini

On a slice of a crisp (unpeeled) apple, place a substantive slice of Pecorino Romano (or Parmigiano Reggiano) then top with a beautiful half slice of fresh fig!

Sweet & Smokey Fig Bite

Top a round slice of fresh fig with a teaspoon of Blueberry Vanilla goat cheese (it comes already flavored in a 4-ounce package) then garnish the top with two smokehouse almonds. Repeat until all the goat cheese is used (at least 10-15 slices of figs).

Lemon Blue Cheese Fig Flowers

Makes 10 Fig Bites

Ingredients:

10 fresh figs

5 tablespoons blue cheese or gorgonzola

1 tablespoon lemon zest (finely chopped if using shredded zest)

5 tablespoons toasted chopped walnuts (or roasted chopped pistachios)

Directions:

1. Remove the tough tip of all the fresh figs then make two cuts at the top of each (but don't go all the way to the bottom) forming a cross then open the figs slightly from the top to fill the center of each fig with a rounded teaspoon of blue cheese (or gorgonzola).
2. Top the blue cheese with about 1/4 teaspoon lemon zest then place as much toasted chopped walnuts or pistachios as possible on top. They stick nicely to the blue cheese!
3. Cover and refrigerate until you are ready to serve!

Fig Baklava Bites

Makes 15 mini shells

Ingredients:

1.9-ounce box Signature SELECT Mini Phyllo Pastry Shells (or other brand)

1/3 cup chopped walnuts

2 tablespoons honey

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon vanilla paste (or vanilla extract)

7 dried figs, cut each in half then cut each half into 8 pieces (scant 1/2 cup chopped)

Directions:

1. Preheat toaster oven (or similar) to 350-degrees. Set shells on baking sheet and bake in the center of the oven until golden brown (about 5 minutes).
2. Meanwhile, toast the walnuts in a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat (give it a spray of cooking spray if desired), stirring frequently, until walnuts are golden (about 3-4 minutes); set aside.

3. In a small bowl, stir honey, cinnamon and vanilla together then stir in the chopped dried figs. Fill each of the phyllo pastry shells with about 1 teaspoon of the honey fig mixture then top with about 1 teaspoon of the toasted chopped walnuts and serve!

Fig Lollipops

The sweetness of the fig pairs beautifully with the bittersweet chocolate and smoky notes from the almonds and this appetizer also offers a variety of textures from soft to crunchy.

Makes 10 lollipops (if 1 dried fig per lollipop)

Ingredients:

1/2 cup bittersweet chocolate chunks or chips (semi-sweet chips can be substituted)

1/2 teaspoon canola oil (or vegetable oil of choice)

10 dried figs (large dried figs can be cut in half), with tough tips cut off

1/3 cup chopped Smokehouse-type almonds

Directions:

1. Add the chocolate and oil to a small microwave-safe dish (a 1-cup glass measure works great). Microwave on HIGH for 60 seconds and stir. If the chocolate isn't quite melted, microwave an additional 30 seconds, watching carefully.
2. Line 8 x 13-inch baking dish with parchment or waxed paper and set aside.
3. Stab each fig or fig half with a toothpick (or similar) starting at the tip of the fig (so the bottom of the fig is ready to be dipped). Place chopped almonds in a small shallow dish.
4. Place each fig partly in the melted chocolate and then place in the dish with the almonds to coat the chocolate and place on parchment or waxed paper. To harden the chocolate quickly, set baking dish in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes. Serve immediately or store in a covered dish in the refrigerator until ready to serve!