

Cooking Corner

Elegantly Easy, Wickedly Delicious Dark Chocolate Bark With Figs And Nuts

(NAPSA)—Impress that special person in your life with a healthy taste of decadent Dark Chocolate Bark with Figs and Nuts. If you're new to bark, this chocolate candy ranks as one of the easiest and tastiest confectionary treats.

Simply melt chocolate in the microwave, stir in some chopped golden Calimyrna or dark purple Mission Figs and some chopped nuts, and spread the mixture on a foil-lined sheet. Chill and break into pieces. So easy, it's hard to believe. Variations abound—drizzling white chocolate over the top, sprinkling with toasted almonds or, for fig lovers, sprinkling additional chopped figs on top—all the variations are delicious. Wrap in festive cellophane with a decorative ribbon for a celebration or keep in an airtight container for everyday enjoyment.

The news keeps getting better. Dark chocolate is loaded with health-promoting antioxidants. Add to this the fact that California dried figs and nuts are great sources of dietary fiber and other essential nutrients and you have a treat that shows you care about healthy eating and know how to make it taste good. Indulge your sweet tooth, but remember that a little piece goes a long way. Share the recipe with friends and family and let everyone in on the treats that treat you well.



Chocolate Lovers Delight in Decadent Dark Chocolate Bark with Figs and Nuts.

Valley Growers' Store is a great place to order figs throughout the year, and the Web site is a wealth of kitchen-tested recipes. Visit www.valleyfig.com.

Dark Chocolate Bark with Figs and Nuts

- 8 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) chocolate baking bar, broken into small pieces**
- ½ cup stemmed and chopped (½ inch) Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs**
- ½ cup chopped (½ inch) salted or lightly salted mixed nuts***
- 2 ounces white chocolate, broken into small pieces**

Melt bittersweet chocolate as package directs. Stir figs and nuts into melted chocolate. Spread on foil-lined baking sheet to thickness of about ¼-inch. Chill until firm, about 30 minutes. For white chocolate drizzle, melt white chocolate as package directs. Scrape into small plastic bag; seal bag. Snip tiny hole in corner of bag. Squeeze bag to drizzle chocolate over bark. (Or dip teaspoon in chocolate and drizzle over bark.) Chill 30 minutes or until firm. Peel bark off foil and break into irregular 1½- to 2-inch pieces. Store in airtight container at room temperature. **Makes 24 to 28 pieces.**

*Or chopped, toasted almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, cashews, walnuts or a combination.

Fig Almond Bark Variation:

Omit mixed nuts and white chocolate. Increase chopped figs to 1 cup. Melt bittersweet chocolate as directed above and stir in figs. Spread on foil as directed. Immediately sprinkle ½ cup toasted sliced almonds over chocolate. Press almonds into warm chocolate with back of spoon to secure. Chill and break into pieces as directed.