

Healthy, Wealthy And Wise To Choose Figs

(NAPSA)—Lentils and figs make a wonderfully warm and hearty dish that's quick to prepare and nutrient dense. Herbed Lentils with Figs and Sausage provides 12 grams of dietary fiber, 25 percent daily value for iron and 10 percent daily value for calcium, yet contains only 22 percent calories from fat.

Sweet, chewy, dried California figs, lean Italian sausage (chicken or turkey), onions, carrots, rosemary, garlic and tomatoes give this dish a real Mediterranean flair. Common "supermarket" lentils are brown or green. They are cooked separately in this recipe, as the acid in the wine and tomatoes can inhibit softening. Serve in large bowls with crusty whole grain bread and a spinach salad. Finish off with homemade applesauce topped with cinnamon-spiced figs.

Dried figs, whether Mission Figlets or larger Golden's, offer a wealth of nutritional value and taste. Interchangeable in most recipes, Missions have tinier seeds and a bit of a sweeter flavor, while Golden's have a slightly nutty flavor and seeds that are a bit more developed. Golden figs are great for stuffing with cheese and nuts; whereas, Missions are great chopped or sliced in cookies, fruit tarts and cobblers.

Look for more recipes and nutrition tips at the Valley Fig Growers' Web site, www.valleyfig.com.

Herbed Lentils With Figs And Sausage

- 1 cup Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs
- 1 cup lentils, picked over and rinsed
- 3 cups water



Lentils and figs make a wonderful, warm, hearty dish.

- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 bay leaf (optional)
- 4 teaspoons olive oil
- ½ to 1 pound lean Italian chicken or turkey sausage links (raw or precooked)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and chopped
- 4 teaspoons finely chopped fresh rosemary (1½ teaspoons dried)
- 1 to 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped or pressed
- 1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes
- ¾ cup dry red wine
- Chopped Italian parsley

Remove stems from figs and slice in half; reserve. In large saucepan, combine lentils, water, 1 teaspoon salt and bay leaf. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer 15 to 20 minutes or until lentils are tender but still hold their shape. Drain lentils, remove and discard bay leaf and set aside. While lentils cook,

heat 2 teaspoons olive oil in large skillet over low to medium heat. Add sausage and cook, turning occasionally, until browned (and cooked through if using raw sausage). Remove to cutting board, cool slightly and cut into slices; reserve. Add remaining 2 teaspoons oil to skillet along with onion, carrot, rosemary and garlic. Cook over low to medium heat, stirring occasionally, until onion is translucent, 8 to 10 minutes. Add figs, tomatoes and wine. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring often, 3 to 5 minutes. Add sliced sausage and lentils. Cook and stir until hot, 2 to 3 minutes. Season to taste with additional salt and pepper, if desired. Sprinkle with parsley. Serve warm. Makes 4 to 6 servings (about 8 cups).

Nutrients per serving (6): Calories 345 (22% calories from fat); Protein 16 g; Total Fat 8g (Saturated Fat 2 g; Trans Fat 0 g); Carbohydrate 47g; Cholesterol 23 mg; Dietary Fiber 12 g; Sodium 576 mg.