

Mediterranean Burgundy Rice Pudding with Fresh Figs

Catherine Brown, Plant-based Chef & Culinary Nutritionist at [A Seat at My Table](#)



Fresh figs are here! These jewels only last for about a week after harvest, so when I see them at my local market, I'm overjoyed. Not eating them before I make it back home is the tricky part. Deep purple Mission figs are sweet, thin-skinned and not too juicy to eat while on the go. Figs are a good source of dietary fiber and several essential minerals, including calcium, copper, potassium, manganese and

magnesium. Late June through early fall is when you can start watching for Black Mission figs, and Green Kadota figs have an even shorter season of July through September. In my house, fresh figs are reserved for special occasions. This dessert gives them the spotlight they deserve and it couldn't be easier to make yourself!

I never liked figs as a child, even though we had a large fig tree in our backyard. They were just too strange for my (then) unsophisticated palate. I felt the same way about the avocados that grew in our front yard ~ and now I live where neither will readily grow. Fortunately, there are more cold-hardy dwarf varieties I have my eye on for a future conservatory. #Goals.

Lightly grilling fresh figs intensifies both their heady aroma and their sweetness. Purple Opal and Thai basil pair nicely with fresh figs, as does mint.

This is one of those desserts that incorporates complex flavors, looks stunning and couldn't be easier to throw together. For best results, it should be made a day in advance, so plan ahead; it's worth the time. Let me show you how to pull this off yourself.

Total Time: 60 minutes (excluding set/chill time) Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 50 minutes Set/Chill time: 8 hrs or overnight

I don't like desserts that are too sweet or heavy. If I wouldn't feel good after eating it for breakfast, it's too sweet. I don't use as much sweetener here as typically found in commercial puddings. If necessary, you can adjust accordingly. I also prefer a rice pudding that is creamier and less thick with rice. If you like more rice than creamy pudding, you can add up to 1/3 cup more rice.

For 10 servings, you'll need:

1 cup of Burgundy Red rice (or rice of your choice)
2/3 cup plus 1 Tbsp pure maple syrup, grade A, pomegranate molasses, or sweetener of choice

6 cups nut milk (I used cashew milk)
1 can coconut milk, 13.5oz.
zest from 1 large lemon, reserve a few strands for garnish (wrap the strands for garnishing in wax paper and refrigerate)
1/2 tsp sea salt
1/2 tsp ground cardamom
1 vanilla bean, split (see note below)
8 fresh figs
1/2 cup raw pistachios, toasted
1-2 Tbsp fresh basil, baby leaves or chiffonade (not sure how to do that? Watch [here](#))
4 tsp Espresso Balsamic Vinegar (can purchase [here](#)) (optional)

Note: I soak vanilla beans in organic vodka to make my own vanilla extract. Once the beans have soaked 4-6 weeks, they can be used in many other applications. The insides become plump and soft, making them easy to scrape the seeds away or grind the entire pod. In this recipe, I split and scraped one soaked pod, put the scraped seeds into the rice mixture along with the pod. Alternatively, you can use one unsoaked split vanilla bean and scrape the seeds into the pot of rice, or add 2 tsp vanilla extract at the end of the 45 min. cooking time.

Procedure:

1. Brings four cups of water to a boil in a large saucepan. Add the rice and 1 Tbsp maple syrup. Reduce heat, cook for five minutes, stirring occasionally. Drain, rinse and drain again. (See additional note below)
2. Return rice to saucepan. Add next 6 ingredients (nut milk through vanilla bean). Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to simmer. Cook 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. While rice is simmering, toast pistachios in a dry skillet over medium-low heat for 8-10 minutes until fragrant and slightly darker in color. Remove from heat, set aside to cool.
4. Heat a cast iron grill or charcoal grill until hot. Wash and dry figs. Slice in half. Place on hot grill, cut side down for 2-3 minutes until slightly charred. Use a metal spatula to remove from grill, scraping underneath each one to remove - they have a tendency to stick. Allow to cool, slice each half into thirds and refrigerate.
5. After 45 minutes the rice mixture should be thicker. Remove from heat and allow to set for one hour.
6. Coarsely chop the toasted pistachios.
7. After one hour, remove the vanilla bean from the pudding, rinse and refrigerate for another application or discard. Give the rice pudding a stir and then line the pudding

Nutrition Facts	
Servings: 10	
Amount per serving	
Calories	243
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 11.9g	15%
Saturated Fat 7.9g	39%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 214mg	9%
Total Carbohydrate 32.7g	12%
Dietary Fiber 3.5g	12%
Total Sugars 12.9g	
Protein 3.4g	
Vitamin D 1mcg	4%
Calcium 314mg	24%
Iron 2mg	9%
Potassium 307mg	7%

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a food serving contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calorie a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Recipe analyzed by [verywell](#)

with parchment paper (preferably) or plastic wrap, ensuring the surface touches the top of the pudding all the way around. Refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight.

8. To assemble, remove the pudding from the refrigerator and stir gently. Distribute evenly among 8 serving dishes. Top with wedges of grilled figs, toasted pistachios, basil, mint leaves and lemon zest. Drizzle each dish with 1/2 tsp Espresso Balsamic Vinegar or pomegranate molasses.

9. Serve, and watch the smiles of delight!

Note: the purpose of boiling the rice first is because this softens the rice and removes ~60% of the arsenic contained in rice. (arsenic contained in whole grain/brown rice is less bioavailable than white rice, meaning we can't absorb it as well, so more of it passes through the digestive tract unabsorbed), making it a better choice. Additionally, white rice is enriched with vitamins and minerals that are sprayed

onto the rice after processing. The process of rinsing and boiling to remove arsenic also strips away the added nutrients. Other whole grains can be used here too such as spelt berries, oat groats, kamut, whole einkorn wheat berries, etc.

Alternatives: If you missed the window for fresh figs, this pudding is delicious with a number of other fresh fruit toppings as well: sweet cherries, apricots, plums, or peaches.

When you make this, let me know how it turned out. Be sure to take a photo too and tag me #chefcatherinebrown. I love seeing what you make!