

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF FIGS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR PROCESSING

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Abstract: Figs are subtropical fruits that are consumed both fresh and in processed forms. This article provides information about the medicinal properties of figs and emphasizes the importance of their processing.

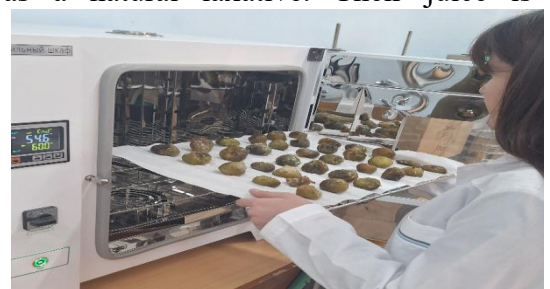
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Figs (*Ficus carica* L.) are subtropical fruits from the mulberry family. They contain 20–24% sugar, 0.5–4.2% pectin substances, 3–7.4% fiber, and up to 0.1% organic acids, as well as various micro- and macroelements such as carotene, calcium, iron, and phosphorus. In terms of potassium, sodium, and protein content, figs can compete with walnuts and apricots. Their satiety level is comparable to that of meat. Fig trees can live for 150–200 years, and up to 50 kg of fruit can be harvested from a single bush. Fig leaves are traditionally used as an alkali in drying grapes and other fruits, while fig latex (“milk”) is used to treat skin diseases such as warts and ringworm, as well as scorpion and bee stings.

Figs have been used in traditional medicine since ancient times. Boiled in water or milk, fig fruits are effective in treating coughs and sore throats. The seeds are known to reduce body temperature and promote sweating. Black figs are used in the treatment of gout. When boiled with goat's milk and consumed, they help cleanse the body of toxins and strengthen the immune system. This delicious fruit is also considered beneficial for diseases such as pulmonary tuberculosis and muscle weakness. Figs contain more iron than apples, making them especially suitable for people with anemia.



They are also useful for conditions such as heart palpitations, bronchial asthma, chest pain, and pleurisy. Dried figs act as a natural laxative. Their juice is considered highly beneficial for children, stimulating appetite and aiding digestion. Fig juice is also used in the treatment of rheumatism, skin diseases, kidney and bladder stones, and liver enlargement and pain. The enzyme ficin, found in figs, dissolves fibrin—a protein formed during blood clotting—making figs suitable for patients with thrombophlebitis and those prone to blood clots. Figs are also beneficial for heart



health due to their potassium content.

Dried figs retain their sweetness and can be stored for several months. There are several drying methods: natural sun drying, oven drying, and drying using a dehydrator.

Natural Drying. This method works best in hot, dry weather. Figs should not be placed in the shade, as they may spoil before drying completely. To protect them from dew, bring them indoors every evening. Turn them each morning so they dry evenly. Figs are ready when the skin is firm and no juice comes out when pressed. The ideal final moisture content is 18–20%. Dried figs can be stored in Ziploc bags in the refrigerator for several months or in the freezer for up to 3 years (see Table 1).



Oven Drying. In this method, figs are dried at an oven temperature of 60°C (not 600°C, as incorrectly stated). Cut figs lengthwise using a vegetable peeler. Large figs may be quartered. Place them on a ventilated rack, cut side up, to allow even drying from both sides. Do not use a regular baking sheet, as it may cause uneven drying. Leave the oven door slightly open to allow moisture to escape and to prevent cooking instead of drying. The process takes about 36 hours (see Table 1).

Dehydrator Drying. Set the dehydrator to 135°F (57°C). Wash and quarter the figs, then arrange them on the dehydrator trays, leaving space for airflow. Drying takes 6–8 hours, depending on the size of the figs and local humidity. The figs are done when they are dry to the touch but still soft and pliable. Store in airtight or polyethylene bags at temperatures below +5°C for up to 3 years (see Table 1).

Table 1

Fig drying methods

Drying method	Drying time	Drying temperature
Natural drying	5-6 days	Sunlight
Oven drying	36 hours	60 ⁰ C
Dehydrator drying	6-8 hours	57 ⁰ C

Conclusion: Figs are among the most valuable subtropical fruits, consumed both fresh and dried. Drying is one of the most effective ways to preserve their medicinal properties and extend shelf life. Dried figs retain natural sugars, vitamins, and minerals, making them both nutritious and flavorful. Reducing moisture content during drying inhibits microbial growth and ensures long-term preservation. Modern drying technologies help retain the quality, taste, and health benefits of figs. Therefore, drying figs not only provides a healthy product but also supports large-scale commercial production

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