



# Delightful Food Ideas



## Figs Add Sweet Inspiration To Mediterranean Stew

(NAPSA)—The Mediterranean diet, heralded as one of the healthiest diets on earth, emphasizes fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes, along with lean meats and fish. Mediterranean Beef Stew with Figs, Red Wine and Olives captures the flavors, aromas and healthfulness of the Mediterranean while making use of a slow cooker to ease kitchen time.

According to Lorelle Del Matto, registered dietitian and a mom, she was inspired to create this savory recipe after spending time in Italy. She chose ingredients and flavors reminiscent of the Mediterranean kitchen yet readily available in America. Then she added the convenience of a slow cooker. Toss the ingredients together in the morning and come home after a full day of work and children's activities to a delicious Mediterranean meal. Dark purple Mission or light Golden figs work equally well in the stew and contribute a significant amount of fiber. With less than 30 percent of calories from fat and 29 grams of protein, it's a recipe to enjoy throughout the year. For more recipes and healthful information on dried figs, visit [www.valleyfig.com](http://www.valleyfig.com).

### Mediterranean Beef Stew With Figs, Red Wine and Olives Slow Cooker Recipe

- 1 cup Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs**
- 2 to 2½ pounds beef round or lean stew meat, cut into 1½-inch cubes**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**



**A slow cooker makes Mediterranean stew easy.**

- 4 teaspoons olive or vegetable oil, divided use**
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped**
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped**
- ½ cup sodium-reduced beef broth**
- 1 cup full-bodied dry red wine**
- 1 can (14½-ounce) crushed tomatoes, undrained**
- 2 large carrots, cut into ¾-inch pieces**
- 2 bay leaves**
- 3 strips (¾- x 3-inch) lemon zest**
- ½ to ¾ cup quartered, pitted kalamata olives**
- Chopped fresh thyme or Italian parsley**

Remove stems from figs and cut in half; set aside. Sprinkle beef with salt and pepper. Heat 2 teaspoons oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add

beef and cook, turning occasionally, to brown all sides. Transfer beef to slow cooker. Reduce heat to medium and add 2 teaspoons oil to skillet along with onion and garlic. Stir and cook until onion softens. Add a tablespoon or two of water if onions brown too quickly. Add wine, undrained tomatoes and beef broth to skillet. Simmer 1 minute, scraping up brown bits from bottom of pan. Pour wine mixture over meat in slow cooker. Stir in figs, carrots, bay leaves and lemon zest. Cover and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours (or on high for 4 to 5 hours) or until meat is tender. To serve, remove bay leaves and lemon zest. Stir in olives and sprinkle with thyme or parsley. Serve with buttered noodles, polenta or steamed new potatoes, as desired. Makes 6 to 8 servings (about 8½ cups).

