

Your Just Desserts

Chocolate Pudding Goes Upscale With Amaretto Figs

(NAPSA)—Chocolate lovers rejoice! Here's an easy yet elegant recipe for rich, dark chocolate pudding that features California dried figs. Sitting atop silky, smooth chocolate pudding are sweet, luscious amaretto-infused figs. Succulent, dark purple Mission figs and amber-colored, slightly nutty-flavored Golden figs are sliced and steeped in almond-flavored liqueur and spooned on top or layered in the middle of the chocolate pudding. Reminiscent of desserts of the past, this modern-day pudding could easily grace the tables of America's top restaurants.

Not only is this pudding sinfully rich, it's also nutritionally packed with calcium, fiber, protein, antioxidants and more. Thanks to the nutrition prowess of figs and the antioxidant contribution of dark chocolate, a serving of Chocolate Pudding with Amaretto Figs contributes health-promoting antioxidants and an amazing 10 grams protein, 314 milligrams calcium and 6 grams dietary fiber—quite a nutritional accomplishment for such a delicious dessert. One taste and you'll think twice before buying another box of pudding mix.

Fig and chocolate lovers will find more delicious recipes, such as Chunky Chocolate and Fig Sugar Cookies, Chocolate Fig Bon Bons and Figgy-Fudgey Pudding Cake, on Valley Fig Growers' Web site at www.valleyfig.com. Along with recipes, the Web site features a quarterly newsletter and a wealth of fig information.



Chocolate Pudding, not just for kids anymore.

Chocolate Pudding With Amaretto Figs

Amaretto Figs:

- 1 cup stemmed and sliced Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 to 2 tablespoons amaretto or ¼ teaspoon pure almond extract

Bittersweet Chocolate Pudding:

- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 large egg
- 1 can (12-ounce) evaporated skimmed milk, divided use
- 2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

To serve (optional):

- ¼ cup sliced almonds, lightly toasted
- Whipped topping

To make figs:

In small saucepan, combine figs, water and sugar. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until liquid is reduced to about 2 tablespoons, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in amaretto or almond extract. Cool. Chill until serving time.

To make pudding:

In medium bowl, whisk sugar, cocoa, cornstarch, egg and ¼ cup milk until smooth. Heat remaining milk in small saucepan over medium heat until steaming. Slowly whisk hot milk into sugar mixture. Return mixture to saucepan and cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until thickened, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and add chocolate. Stir until melted and smooth. Stir in vanilla. Cool to room temperature, stirring occasionally. Chill until serving time.

To serve:

Spoon pudding into 4 small dessert dishes, dividing evenly. Top with figs. Sprinkle with almonds. Or, layer pudding and figs (pudding, figs, pudding) in 4 small glass parfait dishes. Garnish with dollop of whipped cream, if desired, and a sprinkle of almonds.

Makes 4 servings.