



Triple Fig Chicken & Wild Rice

For those not already in the know, figs are not just found in that little cookie on grocery store shelves. Here in Phoenix, figs are found in many of our backyards. They are also foraged throughout the valley by savvy harvesters, and brought to our local farmers markets during the heart of the summer. But, did you know the leaves are edible? The fresh leaves impart a flavor reminiscent of coconut, and will be the 3rd fig ingredient in this dish (fresh & dried figs lead in the #1 and 2 spots!), summer harvests of apricots and rosemary compliment.

1 ½ lbs. of boneless/skinless chicken thighs
2 Cups wild rice
1 QT. vegetable/chicken Stock
1 whole garlic head
3 small fresh **fig** leaves chopped
Olive Oil
Fairy Fig Dust Vinaigrette or Balsamic Vinegar
2 TBSP ginger powder
2 TBSP cinnamon

6 to 8 **fresh** Mission **figs**, finely chopped
4 to 6 **dried** Mission **figs**, sliced in half
2 fresh **apricots**, finely chopped
9 to 10 large fresh whole **fig** leaves
1 sprig of **rosemary**
¼ cup red wine vinegar
¼ cup raw pistachio pieces (de-shelled)
2 TBSP red chili flakes
salt & pepper

Begin by cutting off the top of your whole garlic head, place in aluminum foil and drizzle a generous amount of olive oil, salt and pepper. Seal into a loose package and roast in oven on 425° for 30 minutes. When done, let cool, squeeze cloves into a dish and set aside.

Next bring a small pot of water to a boil, add a generous amount of salt, stir and turn off. Drop your fresh fig leaves into the water to blanche. Take out of water; lay flat on a dish and set aside.

Now, cut chicken into 2" strips, and season with 1 TBSP each of ginger, cinnamon, chili flakes, salt & pepper. Heat a 12" braising or sauté pan, (*make sure you have a lid for it for later,*) to medium-high heat. Drizzle olive oil into pan. Once hot, add chicken and cook until brown on both sides. Remove from pan onto plate (*we'll finish cooking later.*) Reserve fond. (*Fond = brown bits left in pan, this is flavor!*)

Bring the pan with fond back up to to medium heat; add wild rice, and stir to ensure all is evenly coated. (*Add extra oil if needed.*) Allow rice to absorb oils and then add, roasted garlic, rosemary, apricots, finely chopped fresh figs, 3 finely chopped small fig leaves, 1 TBSP each of ginger, cinnamon, chili flakes, a pinch of salt and pepper and stir. Next, add red wine vinegar and ½ of the stock of choice. Increase heat to medium-high heat and continue to stir until part of the liquid is absorbed. Once it begins to dry out, add the rest of the stock and stir. Lower heat back to medium and keep an eye on it while you turn back to your chicken.



Triple Fig Chicken & Wild Rice (cont....)

Now we'll wrap the browned chicken in the fig leaves. Place one leave with lighter vein side up and stem end down towards you flat on board. (*Be sure to trim any long stem leaving only the leaf.*) Place chicken in center of leaf and start with bottom end over chicken, then fold sides in over chicken, then roll towards top. Continue until all chicken pieces are rolled into fig leaves.

Turn back to rice, give it another stir and then nestle fig leaf wrapped chicken into center of pan into rice. (*You should still see the top of the bundles*). Add the dried fig halves around the fig leaf chicken, cover and turn down to low for about 30 to 40 minutes or until rice is done. It will be creamy, with a bit of texture from the wild rice.

Garnish with pistachios and our own Fairy Fig Dust Vinaigrette. In a pinch, a full-bodied balsamic vinegar or reduction will work as well, to provide a needed tang to this sweet and spicy dish.

