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Why Figs Are Good for Your Health

An old fruit

The common fig (*Ficus carica*) is one of the oldest trees cultivated by humans and mentioned even in the Bible. It is a rather small tree, up to 10 m (33 ft) tall and ramified from its base. The crown is large and with relatively few branches. The green hairy buds contain milky and sticky latex. The leaves are large, with toothed edges, and 3-5 deeply crested lobes, hairy on the lower side. The flowers are small and numerous. The fruit is pear-shaped, fleshy, solitary, very sweet and produced by the thickening of the receptacle (thus, it is a fake fruit). The tree stands a Mediterranean clime or one with Mediterranean influences. Its preferred soils are those made of clay or sand-clay, fertile, permeable and warm. The fruits are rich in water, carbohydrates, proteins, fats, cellulose, potassium, iron, manganese, calcium, bromine, vitamin A, organic acids and the enzyme called protease (which eases the digestion of meat). Unripe fruits contain an irritant chemical. 100 grams of fresh figs contain 25 calories, and 100 grams of dry figs contains 100 calories. Figs are nutritious and digestible, laxative, diuretic, emollient and refreshing. They are recommended to children (as juice or made in small pieces) and pregnant women. They are also good in cases of nervous and physical asthenia, gastro-intestinal irritations, constipation, acute febrile states, pulmonary or urinary inflammations. Externally, the fruits are used in cases of angina and mouth inflammations (gingivitis, stomatitis, abscess, furuncles, atone plagues). Infusions made of 40-120 grams of figs at one liter of water are used against chronic bronchitis, prolonged cold, febrile states, laryngitis and tracheitis. Figs represent an excellent medicine for persons suffering of dyspepsia (due to their protease content) or constipation, under the next form: six washed figs are put in slightly heated water and let to soften for 8-12 hours. The operation starts in the evening. In the morning, the figs can be consumed on an empty stomach.