

This is a recipe that is not worth making without the perfect components. Use black or green figs, or a mixture, just as long as they are ripe, sweet, and heavy. Remember, figs are very illusive. Somehow, the better they look, the more tasteless they are. So see if you can sneak a taste before you buy.

The cheese we use is *pecorino caciotta etrusca fresca*, from Patricia Michelson of La Fromagerie. It is subtle and delicate but still has an unmistakable “sheepy” flavor. Its soft texture complements that of the figs. Prosciutto will also work here, either instead of the cheese or in addition to it.

Figs with young pecorino and honey

- 1 Whisk together the honey and olive oil and season with salt and pepper to taste. Cut the figs into quarters. Use your hands to tear the cheese into large chunks.
- 2 Arrange the arugula, basil, figs, and pecorino in layers on individual serving plates or a large platter. Drizzle over the honey dressing as you go along, and finish with some freshly ground black pepper.

serves 4 as a starter

2 tbsp good-quality honey
3 tbsp olive oil
1⅓ lb / 600 g ripe green or black figs
10½ oz / 300 g young pecorino or a similar cheese
3 oz / 80 g arugula, preferably wild
⅓ oz / 10 g basil leaves
coarse sea salt and freshly ground black pepper