Fig and Olive Tapenade

Make-ahead · Serves a crowd · Holiday · Serves 10–12

Ken's note: TBD

Sweet dried figs, briny olives, and balsamic, spooned over a block of cream cheese and sprinkled with toasted walnuts. It needs 4 hours in the refrigerator, so make it ahead. Goat cheese works in place of the cream cheese, and a few chopped green olives and a little more balsamic are good additions.

Ingredients

- 1 cup chopped dried figs
- ½ cup water
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- ¼ tsp cayenne
- ⅔ cup chopped Kalamata olives
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Black pepper
- ⅓ cup walnuts, toasted and chopped
- 1 (8-oz) block cream cheese (or a log of goat cheese)
- French bread slices or crackers, to serve

Method

1. Simmer the figs and water in a saucepan until the figs are tender and the water has mostly cooked off. Off the heat, stir in the oil, vinegar, rosemary, thyme, and cayenne, then the olives and garlic. Season with pepper and taste for salt; the olives usually supply enough. Cover and refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight.
2. Set the cream cheese on a platter, spoon the tapenade over it, and scatter the walnuts on top. Serve with sliced baguette or crackers.