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The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen by Grace Young

## Dried Fig, Apple, and Almond Soup

*Mo Fa Guo Gawn Ping Guo Hung Yen Tong*

*Mo fa guo* is the Cantonese name for a variety of dried figs used in cooking. They are reputed to be good for moistening the lungs, and therefore recommended to combat coughs. These figs are different from the figs eaten in the West. They are ivory colored and are smaller, with more delicate seeds. If these figs are not available, regular dried or fresh figs can be substituted in this recipe. However, there is no substitute for the almond seeds; there are two different almond seeds called for here. For an explanation, see the introduction to Almond Soup.

I have tried this soup with Granny Smith apples, but I prefer the Red Delicious apples. This is the soup that helped cure a persistent cough I had after months of trying codeine cough syrups, throat-coat teas, and every lozenge on the market.

¼ cup peeled almond seeds (*nom hung*)  
4 to 5 peeled almond seeds (*buck hung*)  
3 medium Red Delicious apples, unpeeled  
8 ounces pork loin, well trimmed  
10 Chinese dried figs (*mo fa guo*), rinsed

**Rinse** all of the almonds in several changes of cold water, and soak them in ½ cup cold water overnight to soften.

**Core** the apples and cut into 1-inch-thick wedges.

**In** a 4-quart saucepan, bring 2 quarts water to a boil over high heat. Add the pork and return to a boil, skimming any scum that rises to the surface. Add the apple wedges, dried figs, and almonds with their soaking water. Return to a boil over high heat. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 3 hours. Serve piping hot (no more than 1½ cups per person).

**Makes 6 servings as a tonic.**