

DOLMADESA (STUFFED VINE/GRAPE LEAVES)

Serving 8

INGREDIENTS:

500 g jarred vine/grape leaves
500 g rice
2 big white onions
5-6 spring onions
1 cup chopped dill
½ cup chopped peppermint
1 cup chopped parsley
1 medium tomato
3 lemons juiced
salt
pepper
1 cup olive oil

PREPARATIONS:

1. *Check the saltiness of the canned/jarred vine leaves. If they are too salty for your taste place them in a basin with cold water. Change the water frequently until you reach the desired saltiness.*
2. *Remove the stems and leave them in a colander to drain.*
3. *Prepare the filling by rinsing the rice 5-6 times or until the running water comes out clear. Strain well and place in a large bowl.*
4. *Finely chop the dill, parsley, peppermint and spring onions including their green part.*
5. *Grate or finely chop the white onions and grate the tomato.*
6. *Mix all the chopped and grated ingredients with the rice.*
7. *Add salt and pepper, the juice of 1 lemon and ½ cup of the olive oil.*
8. *Taste to check if you prefer more seasoning and/or oil.*
9. *Drizzle some olive oil on a large pot and layer the bottom with some vine leaves (use the ones that are torn or very big).*
10. *Take one vine leaf; spread it in your left palm (if you are right handed) its base facing your wrist and its smooth/shiny side facing down.*
11. *Add 1 full teaspoon of rice mixture on the base, if the leaf is small use a bit less.*
12. *Fold the lower section of the leaf over the filling towards the centre; bring the two sides in towards the centre and roll them up firmly but not very tight as they need some space to expand during cooking.*
13. *Place the stuffed vine leaves (fold side down) on the bottom of the pot in circular layers.*
14. *Once you are done with the first row layer the next one on top. Be careful not to leave any gaps between the dolmades to prevent them from cracking open when cooking. It is better to store remaining leaves and filling if they are not enough to make a whole layer. The recipe makes 2-3 layers and approximately 60 dolmades.*

- 15. Drizzle the stuffed vine leaves with the rest of the olive oil and lemon juice.*
- 16. Place an inverted plate on top of them to hold them down and add hot water until the rim of the plate. The bottom of the plate needs to remain uncovered.*
- 17. Set heat to medium until the water starts boiling. Then reduce to heat to low and slowly boil dolmades for 45 minutes until rice is juicy and tender.*
- 18. At 30 minutes carefully remove the plate and check for additional seasoning and/or hot water. Once ready turn off the oven and let them sit undisturbed for another 10-15 minutes with pot lid on.*
- 19. Carefully remove the dolmades and place them on a plate.*
- 20. Can be served hot or cold with plain yogurt as an appetizer, side dish or even main dish.*