

Stuffed Grape Leaves **(Dolmas)**

adapted from *The New Book of Middle Eastern Food* by Claudia Roden

makes 25 dolmas

1 pint [Preserved Grape Leaves](#) (reserve the liquid for cooking!) or store-bought brined leaves (if using these be sure to rinse them thoroughly with cool water)

the filling

- 1 1/4 cup long grain white rice
- 1 cup peeled and chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced green onion
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped parsley
- 4 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint
- 3 tablespoons chopped raisins (I use golden)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Bring 2 cups water to a boil. Place rice in a heat tolerant bowl. Pour water over rice. Let sit for 30 seconds. Drain rice and rinse in cool water. Mix rice with remaining ingredients.

Lay a grape leaf on a cutting board, vein side up. Place a bit of rice mixture on the center of the leaf (1-2 teaspoons depending on the size of the leaf). Fold the bottom of the leaf up over the rice mixture. Fold the sides over. Roll the bundle up towards the tip of the leaf. *You want the bundle to be slightly loose to allow the rice to plump up without splitting the leaf.* Repeat with the remaining leaves until all the mixture is used.

to cook the dolmas

2 large chard leaves (or extra grape leaves)

4 cloves garlic, peeled

1 cup reserved lemon solution from [Preserved Grape Leaves](#) or 2/3 cup water and 1/3 cup lemon juice

2/3 cup olive oil

1 teaspoon sugar

Line a medium-sized pot with a large chard leaf or imperfect grape leaves. Tightly pack the dolmas into the bottom of the pot. Slide the garlic cloves randomly in between the dolmas. Mix the lemon solution, olive oil, and sugar. Pour over the dolmas. Cover in an additional chard leaf and a small plate (that fits inside the pot and rests on the dolmas preventing them from opening up). Cover the pot and bring to a boil, immediately reduce heat to low and cook 30 minutes or until the rice is tender. Remove pot from heat, uncover, and allow to cool. Once dolmas are cool, carefully remove from the pot to prevent the leaves from tearing (they will be very tender). Serve or refrigerate.