

Dolmathakia (Stuffed Grape Leaves With Rice and Herbs)

This classic Greek appetizer (or meze) called *dolmathakia* are grape leaves stuffed with rice, pine nuts, and fresh herbs. They may take a little bit of time to prepare, but they are worth the effort. Serve dolmathakia cold or at room temperature.

Ingredients

- 50 to 60 fresh grape leaves (or 1 (16-ounce) jar brined grape leaves)
- 1 cup olive oil (divided)
- 6 large onions (minced)
- 1 1/2 cups long-grain rice (uncooked)
- 1 cup fresh parsley (chopped)
- 1/2 cup fresh dill (chopped)
- 1/2 cup pine nuts
- 2 tablespoons dried mint
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 lemons (juiced)

Steps to Make It

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. If using brined grape leaves, rinse the leaves well to remove brine.
3. Place the leaves in boiling water and boil for 3 to 5 minutes to soften them and make them more pliable. Remove from water and set aside.
4. In a large skillet, over medium-high heat, heat 1/2 cup olive oil. Sauté the onions until translucent, about 5 minutes.

5. Stir in the rice, parsley, dill, pine nuts, mint, salt, and pepper.
6. Remove from heat and stir in the lemon juice. Allow the filling to cool.
7. Line the bottom of a heavy saucepan with 2 or 3 grape leaves (use the broken or torn ones for this).
8. Roll the dolmathakia by placing a leaf with the stem toward you on a flat surface. The underside of the leaf should be face up. (The veins of the leaf are raised on the underside.) Using the point of a sharp paring knife, cut out the stem of the leaf. Overlap the bottom two sections of the leaf toward the center.
9. Place a tablespoon of filling in the bottom center of the leaf, just above the stem.
10. Fold the bottom section up to cover the filling.
11. Fold the sides in toward the center.
12. Continue rolling the packet up toward the top point of the leaf.

13. Place the rolls in layers, seam-side down, in the saucepan.

14. Pour remaining 1/2 cup olive oil over the dolmathakia and enough water to cover them by about 1 inch.

15. Place an inverted heatproof plate on top of the rolls to keep them submerged in the water.

16. Cover the saucepan and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer over low heat for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until the leaves are tender and the rice filling is cooked through.

17. Serve and enjoy!