

# Dolmades | Stuffed Grape Leaves

*Swick*

Makes 50.0 dolmas | Active Time: 1 hour | Total Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

## Step 1: Making the Filling

- 1 medium onion, finely minced
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups long grain white rice
- 1 1/4 cup stock\*
- 1/2 cup pine nuts, toasted and roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh minced dill
- 1/4 cup fresh minced mint
- 1 tbsp lemon zest
- 2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice, divided
- sea salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste

To make the filling, heat a deep-sided fry pan or medium pot, over medium heat. Once hot, add the oil, followed by the onions. Let cook for approximately 8 to 10 minutes, or until soft and translucent.

Next, add the rice to the pan and stir to coat the rice in the oil and onions. Let cook for about a minute and then add the stock. \*Note: It is best to use a yellow, or light-colored stock for the dolmades as to not affect the color of the final dish. You can make your own quick stock using this Faux Chicken Bouillon Powder.

Bring to liquid to a quick boil and then lower the heat and let the rice simmer, uncovered, for about 10 to 15 minutes, or until the liquid has been absorbed and the rice is still a bit al dente/undercooked. DO NOT fully cook the rice, or it will be mushy once the dolmades are fully cooked. Less is more for rice. Once done, remove the pot from heat.

Lastly, add the pine nuts, dill, mint, lemon zest, and fresh lemon juice to the rice and stir to combine the ingredients. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Let the mixture cool to room temperature.

## Step 2: Assembling the Dolmades

- 50 + large grape leaves (fresh or jarred)

To start, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. As the water heats up, trim the grape leaves by cutting the stems off, so that they are flush with the leaves. Trim any large, hard veins from the leaves. Place the leaves in the boiling water and let cook and soften for 3-5 minutes, or until they are very pliable. Note that fresh leaves may take a bit longer to soften than jarred leaves.

Once done, drain the leaves and place them in an ice bath. Drain, rinse again and then pat the leaves dry.

To assemble the dolmades, place a grape leaf shiny or smooth side down —the bumpy or veiny side should be facing you — onto a flat surface or cutting board.

Next, place a tablespoon or so of the rice filling at the base of the grape leaf, near where the stem would have been. To roll the dolmades, fold the stem end up over the filling and then fold the outer edges of the leaf inward. Continue rolling the leaf until it forms a nice neat roll. Be sure you do not, roll the dolmades too tightly; the rice will expand a bit during cooking, so you do not want the dolmades to burst or unravel the leaves, by being rolled too tightly.

As you roll the dolmades, place them fold-side down into a deep-sided pan. Note: If you find any leaves that are damaged, place them on the bottom of the pan you are going to cook the dolmades in. This will create a nice bed for the dolmades.

Continue to roll the dolmades, until all of the filling has been used. Don't be afraid to pack the leaves snugly; this will help keep them intact as they cook. If needed, make a second layer on top of the first layer of dolmades.

## Step 3: Cooking the Dolmades

- 1 to 1 1/2 cups vegetable stock
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

To cook the dolmades, pour the stock, olive oil, and fresh lemon juice over-top of the grape leaves. Note that the liquid should come up at least 3/4's of the way up the dolmades.

Heat the pan over medium heat until it just begins to simmer. Do not let it boil; otherwise, the dolmades may start to fall apart.

Next, turn heat to low and place an inverted, heat-safe plate, on top of the dolmades to weigh them down.

Cover the pot. Let the grape leaves cook for 40 to 60 minutes. The dolmades are done when the rice is fully cooked and the grape leaves are nice and tender.

## Step 4: Serving the Dolmades

- lemon wedges, for garnish (optional)
- Dairy-Free Tzatziki (optional)
- Hummus (optional)

Dolmades are typically served warm, room temperature or cold, with either a squeeze of fresh lemon juice.

These dolmades go particularly well with many of these delicious plant-based Greek recipes: Hummus, Tzatziki, Greek Potatoes, and Lemon Pilaf.

Any leftover dolmades will keep for about a week in the refrigerator. If desired, pour a bit of olive oil and lemon juice over the dolmades to help keep them from drying out. For longer storage, they can even be frozen before cooking.