

## GUASTELLO'S VILLAGE MARKET

# Stuffed Grape Leaves (Dolmas)

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Yield: Up to 60 grape leaves

### Ingredients

1 16-oz jar grape leaves in brine (about 60 to 70 leaves)  
1 ½ cup short grain rice, soaked in plenty of water for 15 minutes, then drained  
Extra virgin olive oil  
1 large yellow onion, finely chopped  
12 oz lean ground beef  
Kosher salt  
Black pepper  
1 tsp allspice  
½ tsp cumin  
½ cup EACH chopped fresh parsley, fresh dill, and fresh mint  
1 to 2 tomatoes sliced into rounds  
About 4 cups or more low-sodium chicken broth or water  
Juice of 2 lemons

### Instructions:

#### Prepare the Grape Leaves

If using jarred grape leaves as I am here, remove them from the jar and discard the brine. Rinse the grape leaves well and place them in a colander to drain. (Later in the process, you'll remove the stems before stuffing.)

#### Prepare the Stuffing

Soak the rice in plenty of water for about 15 to 20 minutes or until you are able to break one grain of rice easily. Drain well.

While the rice is soaking, cook the meat. Heat 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil in a large skillet. Add onions and cook briefly, about 2 minutes or so, tossing until translucent. Add the meat and cook till fully browned, tossing occasionally. Drain any excess fat, then season the meat with kosher salt, pepper, and spices. Toss to combine. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.

In a mixing bowl, combine the meat, drained rice, and fresh herbs. Season lightly with kosher salt. Add a generous drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and mix so that everything is well-incorporated.

#### Stuff Grape Leaves, Assemble, and Cook

Prepare a heavy cooking pot and lightly brush the bottom with extra virgin olive oil. Arrange a few grape leaves in the bottom (I used the leaves that didn't look too great here and made three layers to protect the stuffed leaves from scorching later.) Top with sliced tomatoes.

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To stuff the grape leaves, you will work one leaf at a time. Place one grape leaf on a cutting board the textured/rough side facing you. Take 1 heaping teaspoon of the filling and place in the center of the leaf, then fold the sides over the filling and roll (think about this like rolling spring rolls or cigars.) Repeat with the remaining grape leaves or until you're out of stuffing.

Neatly arrange the grape leaves in row, seam side down, in your prepared pot, covering the circumference of the pot. Then place a small plate inverted on top. Boil the broth or water and pour over the grape leaves, arriving at the top layer and somewhat covering (about 4 cups liquid, maybe a little more.)

Now cover the pot with the lid and cook over medium heat for 30 minutes until the liquid has been absorbed. Uncover and remove the plate, then pour juice of 2 lemons. Cover again with the lid (no need for the plate at this point), cook on low heat for 30 to 45 more minutes or until fully cooked.

To Serve

Remove grape leaves from heat. Allow to rest uncovered for 20 to 30 minutes before serving. Add a generous drizzle of quality extra virgin olive oil, and transfer to a serving platter.

Serve with a side of Greek Tzatziki sauce or plain yogurt and wedges of lemon.

***Credit: [themediterraneandish.com](http://themediterraneandish.com)***