

TRADITIONAL IRAQI DOLMAS



INGREDIENTS:

- 12 oz prepared grape leaves (IndoEuropean brand is good)
- 2 medium onions, chopped coarsely
- 1 ½ cup olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ to ½ cup pine nuts
- Seasonings: Cinnamon, black pepper, medium hot ground red pepper, dried mint, salt
- 1 ½ cup basmati rice
- 3 pureed roma tomatoes, mixed with 1 ½ oz tomato paste
- 2 Seville (sour) oranges

PREPARATION:

1. Heat 1 cup olive oil in heavy pot – be careful not to let burn. Add chopped onions and sauté gently until translucent and light brown – approximately 30 minutes.
2. Add garlic and pine nuts. Sauté 5 minutes until brown.
3. Add spices – 1 ½ heaping tsp cinnamon, 1 heaping tsp dried mint, ¼ tsp black pepper, 1/6 tsp red pepper, 1 tsp salt. Sauté 2-3 minutes until mixture is brown-reddish in color.
4. Rinse rice in cool water and add to onion spice mixture. Add ½ cup water and juice of ½ Seville orange. Add tomato puree and paste. Stir thoroughly. Cook gently for 5-10 minutes until water is absorbed, stirring gently.
5. Let cool.
6. Drain grape leaves and remove stem ends.
7. Place one grape leaf, veins facing upwards and rounded, stem end closest to you, on a plate or cutting board. Take one teaspoon of rice mixture, place in middle of rounded, indented, stem end of grape leaf. Wrap end of grape leaf over rice, fold sides to center and roll very tightly, pressing slightly down to secure the wrap. Repeat.
8. Stack dolmas in a heavy pot, with largest ones at the bottom. Cover with mixture of ½ cup olive oil, juice of one Seville orange and water to one inch above top row of dolmas. Simmer one hour or until grape leaves and rice are tender. Serve hot or room temperature.

MAKES 40 MEDIUM DOLMAS

