

STUFFED GRAPE LEAVES



A very popular dish served throughout the Middle East. Fresh grape leaves are of course best to use, but you can also find jarred grape leaves in Mediterranean markets and specialty stores.

INGREDIENTS

100 fresh grape leaves or jarred grape leaves, stems removed

1 ½ lb. ground sirloin or lamb

1 cup rice

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon black pepper

2 lemons juiced (to taste)

3 tbsp unsalted butter, optional

Meat Bones, chunks of beef, or sliced potatoes (*to line bottom of pot*)

INSTRUCTIONS

Line bottom of pot with meat or potatoes (see above).

In a large bowl, combine ground meat, rice, salt and pepper.

One grape leaf at a time, place the leaf flat on a plate and add approximately 1 tablespoon of meat and rice mixture near stem. Form meat into long cigar shape then roll the grape leaf starting at the stem. Fold in sides, then finish rolling leaf. Roll leaf somewhat loosely to allow room for rice to expand.

Line rolls in pot, alternating direction with each layer until the pot is filled $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way or you've used all your leaves.

Sprinkle a little salt over top layer of leaves and add butter. Add water to cover the top layer of grape leaves. Cover grapes leaves with a small plate turned upside down to keep them from moving and to weigh them down.

Cover the pot with a lid and bring to a boil on high. Reduce heat to low and simmer for about 30-45 minutes, testing for doneness of rice and meat after first 30 minutes. Most if not all liquid should be absorbed. Add lemon the last five minutes of cook time.

Serve with plain yogurt for dipping.