

The Art Of Cooking - Iraqi Dolma



Jom Semah 2021

Dolma is no doubt a classic middle eastern dish - yet every country has its own version.

It is basically stuffed vegetables with a filling of rice and meat mixture!

Although the Greek version might be the most recognized version - the Iraqi dolma has unique sweet and savoury flavours!

Ingredients:

Small paprikas any color

Small eggplants

2-3 Large hard tomatoes

Grape leaves

2 Large onions

A couple of potatoes

500 gram Basmati rice

300 gram Ground beef or lamb

A nice large can of tomato paste

4 cloves of Garlic

Olive oil

Fresh parsley

Pomegranate Molasses or Syrup

500 ml of vegetable or beef stock

Salt

Pepper
Cumin powder
Paprika powder
Coriander powder
1 Lemon

How to prepare the vegetables:

So first we are going to prepare the vegetables -to be stuffed later on.

First, cut the heads of the eggplants and remove the insides (Do not throw the insides away.)

Cut open the top of the tomatoes and scoop out the inside seeds (Do not throw the inside away.)

Peel the onions, cut open on one side, and separate all the layers, then boil some water and simmer the onion layers and the grape leaves for about 2 minutes and remove.

Cut the stems off the grape leaves and the softer edges to form the grape leaves into sheets.

How to make the stuffing of the vegetables:

Place the washed rice in a large bowl, the ground meat, the insides of the tomatoes, and the eggplants. Finely slice some garlic as well as parsley and add to the bowl!

Add half a cup of pomegranate molasses, squeeze some lemon juice, and a couple of tablespoons of olive oil into the bowl.

Continue adding a tablespoon of cumin, paprika, coriander powder, 2 tablespoons of salt, and some black pepper depending on preference.

Make sure to mix well and then your stuffing is ready!

Let's stuff the tomatoes, the eggplant, and the paprika - it should be an easy task - simply stuff the vegetables and close the top like a lid.

Next, the stuffing of the onions is a bit tricky. Place a bit of stuffing on 1 side of the onion layer and roll it to resemble a dumpling shape, if the onion layer is not big enough, you can always add another layer of onion over the first one.

Now the grape leaves, place them flat like a piece of paper or like a sushi roll, and make sure the veiny side is pointing up. Place some stuffing in the middle of the leave towards you, fold the sides onto the stuffing and roll it to close it tightly!

Cooking the dolma:

Cut the potatoes into large slices and place them in the bottom of a big pot (this

will prevent the vegetables from sticking, and by that to make them super tasty). Now, stack the stuffed vegetables, the stuffed grape leaves, and the stuffed onion on top of the potatoes in any way you like - if you have any leftover stuffing, you can make small meatballs and add them as well to the pot.

Add a bit of olive oil and cook on medium heat for 15 minutes with the lid on, while cooking you can prepare the juice to add.

In a bowl mix the stock with a large tablespoon of tomato paste, pomegranate molasses, some lemon juice, add some salt and pepper, and mix until dissolved.

When the 15 minutes are over, remove the lid and gently pour the liquid into the pot until covered and place the lid back on, and then turn the heat down low.

Cook for 40 minutes, and when done let it rest for 10 to 20 minutes.

Traditionally the food should be flipped onto a big plate; if you choose this way, make sure to do it with confidence!

This dolma dish is definitely the star of the show, for some serving tips I recommend eating it with fresh salad, and maybe bread, and some dipping sauces.

Enjoy!