

Yalanji – stuffed grape leaves (also known as sarma)

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Ingredients

- ✓ Vine leaves (rinsed, stalks discarded)

Filling:

- ✓ 1/2 bunch flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped (3 tablespoons after chopping)
- ✓ 1/4 bunch mint, finely chopped (2 tablespoons after chopping) or
1 teaspoon dried mint
- ✓ 1 onion, finely chopped
- ✓ 2 cloves garlic minced
- ✓ 1 tomato, finely chopped
- ✓ 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice (any spice you like)
- ✓ 1/2 teaspoon salt
- ✓ 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ✓ 1 cup short grain rice, washed, soaked for 10 minutes and drained

For cooking:

- ✓ 4 tablespoons olive oil
- ✓ 1 lemon, juiced
- ✓ 1/2 teaspoon salt
- ✓ 1 potato, peeled and thinly sliced
- ✓ Water or stock

Number of servings

depends on how many leaves you make - ingredients are for 4 people

Prep time (approx.)

one hour

Cooking time (approx.)

45 minutes

Directions/Steps

1. In a pot over medium heat, heat olive oil and brown onions, garlic, tomatoes and rice.
2. Add the salt, ground allspice, mint, parsley and a bit of water and mix well for 2 minutes.
3. The filling is ready when all the liquid elements have been absorbed. Let cool.
4. Place a vine leaf (rough side up) on a work surface and place approx. 1 teaspoon filling in the center along the base of the leaf.
5. Fold the lower third of the leaf over the stuffing, then fold the right side of the leaf over, then the left side and then roll up to enclose filling. (repeat this more times)
6. When finished, line the bottom of a pot with sliced potatoes in order to avoid burning the bottom leaves and tightly pack stuffed vine leaves in the pot.
7. Pour enough water to just cover vine leaves, add oil and lemon juiced, cook for a few minutes on high heat until the sauce boils, cover the pot and let simmer and cook for about 35 minutes.
8. Once cooked let rest for about 1 hour to cool down.

Preparation tips / notes

While cooking, weigh down stuffed leaves, which lay in several layers forming a pyramid, with a large plate. (helps to prevent the leaves from unravelling)

Short personal statement about this recipe

There are two widely popular versions of stuffed grape leaves, a vegetarian recipe and one including ground beef in the stuffing and is cooked over lamb shanks. I shared with you the vegetarian one.



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