

ISLAND DOLMADES



Ingredients

THE DOLMADES

- 12 island cabbage leaves or outer spinach leaves.
- 2 cups of cooked rice
- 250gr of ground beef
- 1 large brown onion
- 2 sprigs of fresh dill
- Salt & pepper

THE TOMATO SAUCE

- 1 x 400gr can of whole tomatoes
- ¼ teaspoon of nutmeg
- 1½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 4 large garlic cloves crushed
- ½ cup of white wine
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

4 serves

This is my island version of the traditional Greek Dolmades. Our local village uses a lot of 'island cabbage' and those of you who have made this dish with me here, will remember going into the garden and gathering the leaves that replace the Greek vine leaves. This dish has a wonderful deep green colour, and is very healthy!

You can prepare everything the day before and cook them in the refrigerator until you are ready to cook.

METHOD

To make the rice filling: In a large bowl, use your hands to mix the cooked rice with the raw ground beef and herbs and finely diced onions. Season the rice filling with salt and ground white pepper. Set aside.

Prepare the leaves by removing the stems or any larger veins that will prevent from rolling the leaf easily. I blanch them in boiling water for about 15 seconds and then remove the stems.

On the bench lay the leaves out. In your hands roll up approximately 2 tablespoons of the rice filling (or divide it into the number of leaves you have) and roll it up in the leaf. Set them up on a plate and prepare the tomato sauce.

Using a potato masher, mash the tomatoes into a pulp. It can be as fine or coarse as you prefer. Add the crushed garlic, oregano and nutmeg and set aside. Best to do this an hour or so before cooking so that the flavours can develop.

In a heavy bottomed pan, add the oil and heat it up to take the chill from it. Pour in your tomato sauce and cook for 5 minutes, just enough to take the rawness from it. Add the wine and sugar and bring to the boil and cook until it forms a loose sauce. Approx 5-7 minutes.

Lay the dolmades in the sauce and spoon some sauce over them. Put the lid on and cook for 15 – 20 minutes. Check every 5 minutes to spoon more sauce. If it gets too thick add some water, or more wine!

Remember to taste as you go with this dish and adjust your seasoning as you require.

Serve up in the pan ... Allow 3 dolmades per serve. I like to give them a final sprinkle of olive oil to give them some shine.

Enjoy this with a chilled glass of pinot gris.