

## **YALENCI DOLMATHES (Stuffed Grape leaves)**

### **Preparation of the grape leaves:**

Boil 6 cups water in a saucepan, add 40 fresh, medium sized grape leaves, 10 at a time and simmer 2 minutes until they are limp. Carefully remove leaves separating and draining them around the edge of colander. Cut off stems without cutting into the base of the leaf. Save stems and tendrils to line the bottom of a fry pan that has tight lid for steaming.

### **Rice Stuffing**

Mix together in a big bowl:

2 large onions finely chopped  
1 cup brown basmati rice (not minute rice), cooked as described below, in 1 1/2 cups of water  
3 T black currants (or more)  
2 T pine nuts (or more)  
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint leaves  
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley  
1/4 cup chopped fresh dill weed  
2 tsp lemon juice  
1/2 to 2/3 cup olive oil  
1 tsp sugar  
1 T ground allspice  
1 T ground cinnamon  
1/4 cup tomato paste  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/8 tsp black pepper

### **Dipping Sauce**

Mix together 1 cup plain yoghurt, 1/2 tsp salt, 1 clove garlic minced and 1 T lemon juice

### **Preparation of Dolmas:**

Cook rice, by bringing it to a boil, covering with a lid, and simmering for about 15 minutes. Add cooled rice to the rest of the stuffing ingredients and mix well. Place each boiled leaf, shiny side down on a cutting board. Put 1 1/2 to 2 T stuffing mixture at the base of the leaf. Fold each leaf side over the stuffing and roll tightly to the leaf tip end. You will have a cigar shaped dolma. Place it on cut lemon slices and the stems in the fry pan, tightly packing the dolmas in rows so they will not open when steamed. Make two layers of rows if necessary. Add enough water to cover the bottom layer of dolmas to 1/2 their diameter. Cover the pan tightly and bring to a boil, immediately lowering the heat to simmering. Simmer 30 minutes until most of the water is absorbed by the semi cooked rice.

Add water if the pan is getting dry. Remove dolmas one at a time and cool on a plate. Refrigerate so they are cold at serving. Arrange on a plate with parsley and cherry tomatoes. Dip in sauce and enjoy!

Serves 8 with 5 dolmas each. This recipe takes time but it is always enjoyed!