



vine leaves stuffed with lamb and rice

Vine leaves are generally used for wrapping around fish or cheese, or for stuffing and rolling into logs. The best known stuffed vine leaves are the ones filled with aromatic rice and served cold. In Turkish, these are known as *yalancı yaprak dolması*, meaning false stuffed vine leaves, because they do not contain meat. The meat-filled version, *etli yaprak dolması*, is regarded as the real thing, and is usually served hot as a main course with a dollop of yogurt.



350g/12oz/1½ cups finely minced (ground) lean lamb or beef

2 onions, finely chopped

115g/4oz/generous ½ cup long grain rice, thoroughly rinsed and drained

1 bunch each of fresh dill, flat leaf parsley and mint, finely chopped

45–60ml/3–4 tbsp olive oil

25–30 fresh or preserved vine leaves

juice of 1 lemon

salt and ground black pepper

TO SERVE

60–90ml/4–6 tbsp thick and creamy natural (plain) yogurt

1 lemon, cut into wedges

SERVES 4–6

1 Put the lamb in a bowl and stir in the onions, rice and herbs. Season with salt and pepper, bind with 15ml/1 tbsp of the oil and knead with your hands.

2 Lay one of the vine leaves on a flat surface and spoon a little of the meat and rice mixture at the top of the leaf. Pull the top of the leaf over the filling, fold in the sides, then roll the leaf into a tight, stout-shaped log. Repeat with the remaining leaves and filling.



3 Arrange the stuffed vine leaves, seam side down, in a deep, wide, heavy pan. Pack them tightly together in circles, making more than one layer if they won't all fit on the bottom of the pan.

4 In a bowl, mix the remaining oil with the lemon juice and 150ml/¼ pint/⅓ cup water, then pour over the vine leaves. The liquid should come at least halfway up the top layer, so you may need to add extra liquid.

5 Put the pan over a medium heat. Once the liquid begins to bubble, place a plate over the leaves to stop them from unravelling, followed by a lid or foil. Lower the heat and leave the vine leaves to steam gently for 45 minutes, until the rice and meat are cooked. Serve hot, with the yogurt and lemon wedges.

per portion Energy 276kcal/1148kJ; Protein 14.6g; Carbohydrate 23.5g, of which sugars 6.6g; Fat 13.8g, of which saturates 4.4g; Cholesterol 45mg; Calcium 88mg; Fibre 2.8g; Sodium 51mg.