WARAK DAWALI SYAMI BIL ZEIT

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ingredients

- 475 g grape leaves (fresh or brined)

Filling:

- 2 cups medium-grain white rice
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 red bell pepper, finely diced
- 1 green bell pepper, finely diced
- 3 tomatoes, seeded, finely diced
- 1 Serrano pepper, finely diced
- 4 large cloves garlic, crushed
- 1½ tsp salt
- ¾ tsp ground black pepper
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups finely chopped parsley

- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh mint leaves

Assembly:

- 1 potato, thinly sliced
- 1 tomato, thinly sliced
- 1 Serrano pepper, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- Boiling water, to cover
- ¾ cup lemon juice
- ¼ cup olive oil

Garnish:

- Olive oil, to taste
- ¼ cup finely chopped parsley
- ¼ cup pomegranate seeds

instructions

1. Soak the rice in boiling water for 30 minutes. Drain.
2. Add the fresh grape leaves to pot of boiling water, and then turn off the heat. Let stand for 5 minutes, drain and pat dry. If using brined leaves, leave them in hot water for 15 minutes more.
3. In a skillet over medium heat, heat olive oil until it shimmers. Add the onion, then green and red peppers, tomatoes, and Serrano pepper. Cook, stirring frequently for 5 minutes, until the vegetables have softened. Add the garlic, rice, salt and pepper and cook for 5 minutes. Add lemon juice and more olive oil, then add the parsley and mint and cook for 3 minutes, stirring frequently to allow the rice to soak up the flavours. Set aside and let cool.
4. Use a knife to remove the stem from the bottom of each grape leaf, being careful not to tear the rest of the leaf. Discard leaves that tear.
5. Lay one grape leaf flat on a surface with cut stem toward you. Add 2 tsp of the stuffing to the centre, and then fold up the stem end to cover. Carefully fold in the sides and roll. Repeat.
6. In a large pot, add some olive oil to the bottom of the pot, then layer the potato, tomato and Serrano. Arrange the stuffed grape leaves in layers, ensuring that they fit snugly. Use a plate to weight them down and keep them in place while cooking. Add salt and pour in enough boiling water to cover everything by an inch. Cook over high heat for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and cook until the rolls are fork-tender, and the water has substantially evaporated, about 1 hour.

7. Drizzle lemon juice and olive oil and allow to rest for 15 minutes. Transfer to a serving bowl, garnish with parsley and pomegranate seeds and a drizzle of olive oil. Serve at room temperature.
8. People usually fight over the slightly burnt bits so make sure not to discard, scrap off the pot and savor.

