

Marie Saba

from my kitchen to yours

Stuffed Grape Leaves

Ingredients:

- 1 jar (1 lb.) grape leaves in brine
- 1 lb. ground beef or lamb
- 1 cup Royal basmati rice
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Juice of ½ lemon

Instructions:

- 1** Set out a cutting board with two layers of paper towels on top. This will be your workspace for rolling the grape leaves. Remove grape leaves from jar, squeezing gently to remove any excess brine, and lay flat on the paper towels. Separate one grape leaf from the stack at a time.
- 2** In a medium bowl, add ground beef, rice, allspice, salt and lemon juice. Mix together with your hands until well-combined.
- 3** Using your hands, pinch off a portion of the meat mixture (about the size and shape of a lipstick tube) and place it in the bottom third of a grape leaf. To roll the grape leaf, fold the bottom edge up over the meat and roll it once, tightly. Then fold the sides of the grape leaf into the center and roll again. Continue rolling forward, and tucking in the sides if needed, until the grape leaf is rolled up into a small, tight cylinder. Place the grape leaf in the bottom of a pan (I use an All-Clad 3-qt. stainless sauté pan.)
- 4** Repeat process until the meat mixture is used up and the bottom of the pan is filled with the stuffed grape leaves. Now pour about 3 cups water over the grape leaves, just to cover. Using a lid that is smaller your pan, place the lid on top of the grape leaves – you'll leave it there while cooking to prevent the leaves from unrolling.
- 5** Place pan on stove over medium high heat. Bring to boil and then reduce to low heat. Simmer for 45 to 55 minutes. Remove pan from heat and let grape leaves rest for 10-15 minutes (this will allow some of the water to be absorbed into the grape leaves). Drain any remaining water to prevent leaves from getting soggy. Serve immediately.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Stuffed grape leaves keep well, covered, in the refrigerator for 2-3 days. Reheat on a plate in the microwave, or in a covered dish in the oven until just heated through.

