

Stuffed Vegetables with Olive Oil

Traditional Turkish stuffed vegetables with olive oil (Dolma) - healthy vegetarian dish with rice filling. Easy recipe for stuffed peppers, zucchini & eggplant.

25 min

PREP

40 min

COOK

1h 5min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 2.2 lb bell pepper
- 3 onion
- 1 cup rice
- 2 tsp tomato paste
- 2 tsp pepper paste
- 3 green pepper
- 3 clove garlic
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp black pepper
- 1 lemon
- 2 tsp chili flakes
- 2 tomato

Instructions

1 Prepare the vegetables

Carefully hollow out 2.20 pounds of mixed vegetables (peppers, zucchini, or eggplant), leaving walls about 1/2 inch thick. Reserve any scooped pulp and chop finely. Lightly salt the inside of the hollowed vegetables and set aside for 15 minutes.

2 **Make the rice filling**

Heat 1/4 cup olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat (160°C/325°F). Add the 3 finely chopped onions and cook until soft and translucent, about 5-7 minutes.

3 Add any reserved chopped vegetable pulp and 3 minced garlic cloves to the pan. Cook for 2-3 minutes until fragrant.

4 Stir in 1 tablespoon tomato paste and cook for 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly until the paste darkens slightly and becomes fragrant.

5 Add 1 cup rice, 1 teaspoon salt, 2 teaspoons black pepper, 2 teaspoons paprika, and 2 teaspoons sugar. Stir to coat the rice with the oil and spices for 2-3 minutes.

6 Pour in 1 cup hot water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 10-12 minutes until rice is just tender but still has a slight bite.

7 Remove from heat and stir in juice from 1 lemon and 2 teaspoons olive oil. Let the filling cool for 10 minutes. Taste and adjust salt as needed.

8 **Stuff and arrange**

Pat the salted vegetables dry with paper towels. Fill each vegetable with the rice mixture, leaving 1/2 inch space at the top. Cap each with a slice from the 2 tomatoes.

9 Arrange stuffed vegetables upright in a heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven. Mix 2 teaspoons olive oil with enough water to come halfway up the sides of the vegetables, about 1-2 cups.

10 **Cook the vegetables**

Pour the water mixture around (not over) the vegetables. Place a plate directly on top of the vegetables to keep them from floating.

11 Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to low heat and cover. Simmer for 25-30 minutes until vegetables are tender when pierced with a knife and rice is fully cooked.

12 **Rest and serve**

Remove from heat and let rest uncovered for 30 minutes to allow flavors to meld. Serve at room temperature, drizzled with olive oil and lemon juice if desired.

Tips

Use short-grain rice for the best texture - it holds together better and absorbs flavors more effectively than long-grain varieties.

Don't overfill the vegetables; leave about 1/2 inch of space at the top to allow the rice to expand during cooking.

Place a plate or weight on top of the vegetables while cooking to prevent them from floating and ensure even cooking.

Taste your filling before stuffing - it should be well-seasoned as the vegetables will dilute the flavors slightly.

Save the vegetable pulp you remove during hollowing - it can be added to soups, stews, or used in other dishes.

Cook the rice filling until just barely tender, as it will continue cooking inside the vegetables.

Let the dish rest for at least 30 minutes after cooking to allow the flavors to meld and the temperature to equalize.

Drizzle with fresh olive oil and a squeeze of lemon juice just before serving for the best flavor.