**DOLMADAKIA**

Dolmakadia means stuffed grape leaves in Greek.

60-70 fresh grape leaves or one 16-oz jar, drained grape leaves, stems removed

3⁄4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided, plus more for serving

1 large white onion, diced (2 cups)

4 large spring onions or 8 scallions, green parts only, thinly sliced (1 ½ cups)

1 1⁄3 cups finely chopped fresh dill (3 oz.)

1 2⁄3 cups finely chopped flat-leaf parsley (3 oz.)

1 cup finely chopped fresh mint (2 oz.)

1 3⁄4 cups (12 ¼ oz.) short grain rice, soaked in cool water for 10 minutes, then drained)

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice, plus a few lemon wedges for serving

Plain Greek yogurt, for serving (optional)

### **Instructions**

Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Fill a large bowl 2⁄3 of the way with ice water. Add the grape leaves to the boiling water and cook until tenderized, 2 minutes. Remove the leaves using a slotted spoon or small strainer and transfer to the ice water. Once cooled, strain the leaves, and pat dry using a clean towel. Set aside.

Set a large skillet over medium heat and add ¼ cup of the oil. Once hot, add the white onion and cook, stirring occasionally until softened, 5 minutes. Add the spring onions, dill, parsley, and mint and continue cooking until the onion is completely soft and somewhat translucent, 3-4 minutes more. Add the rice and 1 teaspoon kosher salt and cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Add 1 cup water and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and season with salt and pepper. Set aside until fully cooled.

Line the bottom of a large pot or Dutch oven with 3 layers of grape leaves (these will prevent the dolmakadia from scorching later).

Working one at a time, place the remaining leaves, bottom-sides up with the points facing you. Place a generous tablespoon of filling in the center of each leaf, then fold the left and right sides over the filling. Fold the tip of the leaf over the filling, then roll tightly to make a roughly 2-inch by 1⁄2–inch cigar shape. Place the roll, seam side down, in the lined pot. Continue with the remaining leaves and filling, placing them tightly together in the pot and continuing onto a second layer as necessary.

Place the pot on the stove and add 1 1⁄3 cups boiling water, the lemon juice, and the remaining ½ cup of oil. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, then lower the heat to medium-low and cover the pan; cook until the rice is tender and the leaves are very tender, about 45 minutes.

Remove the pot and let cool. Serve the dolmakadia at room temperature or chilled, drizzled with olive oil and alongside lemon wedges for squeezing and Greek yogurt for dipping or topping.

# Spanakopita: Greek Spinach Pie with Feta Cheese

Spanakopita is made with flaky phyllo sheets layered with a savory spinach and feta cheese filling.

### **Ingredients**

1/3 cup olive oil

2 lbs spinach, frozen (or fresh, washed and drained)

1 bunch green onions, chopped

¼ cup chopped parsley

Salt and pepper to taste

1 lb feta cheese, crumbled

3 eggs, lightly beaten

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, melted

1 lb (package) filo pastry sheets

### **Directions**

Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large sauté pan, add half of the spinach and sauté until spinach wilts, tossing with tongs, about 2 minutes. Remove spinach and squeeze out excess liquid, then chop roughly. Repeat with remaining spinach, using 1 more tablespoon of olive oil. Pour off any liquid from the pan, and add remaining olive oil. Add scallions and sauté until soft, about 2 to 3 minutes. Add the spinach to the scallions, along with the parsley, salt and pepper. Cook over low heat for 1 to 2 minutes, then remove from heat to cool.

Stir the feta and the beaten egg to moisten the cooled spinach mixture.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Brush a baking sheet with some of the melted butter.

Unroll the filo dough on a flat surface and keep it covered with waxed paper and a damp towel so it doesn't dry out and become brittle. Use a pastry brush to brush a filo with melted butter; repeat with half the sheets of filo. Spoon the spinach over the pastry. Fold the ends over the filling to form a case for the filing. Then place each one of the remaining filo over the filing, brushing each one with butter.

Brush the top filo lightly with butter. Score the top sheets with a sharp knife. Bake for 40 minutes, or until golden. Let stand for 15 minutes. Cut into squares and serve warm.

**Tzatziki Dip**

**Ingredients**

1/2 a large European cucumber, peeled

1 1/2 cups plain full-fat Greek yogurt (it is less watery than American yogurt)

2 large garlic cloves, finely minced

2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 Tablespoon white vinegar

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 Tablespoon minced fresh dill

**Instructions**

1. Grate the cucumber and drain through a fine mesh sieve overnight in the fridge.
2. Combine the yogurt, garlic, oil, vinegar, and salt in a large bowl. Cover and

refrigerate overnight.

1. Transfer the grated cucumber and fresh dill to the yogurt mixture and stir to

combine. Serve chilled with pita bread for dipping.