

Stuffed Chard Leaves Recipe Idea



Ground lamb, rice, and plenty of veggies make up the stuffing that is then wrapped in Swiss chard leaves and cooked in a simple tomato sauce. It's a twist on classically stuffed cabbage leaves, though much prettier, a bit more delicate in flavor, and wonderfully warming on a chilly night.

You'll need a total of about 12 large chard leaves—we find starting with 2 bunches and not needing all of it works best, but 1 large bunch would work, especially if you aren't too worried about the bundles looking perfect come serving time.

Note: We use short-grain rice in these for a nice chewy texture and slightly sweeter flavor, but medium- or long-grain rice works too.

Ingredients

2 bunches Swiss chard

2 small onions

3 garlic cloves

2 carrots or 1 carrot and 1 parsnip

2 tablespoons olive oil or vegetable oil

3/4 cup short-grain rice

Fine sea salt (1/2 teaspoon for stuffing, 1 Tablespoon for the blanching water, 1/2 teaspoon for the sauce, plus more to taste)

4 tablespoons butter

3/4 pound ground lamb (or vegan alternative)

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1-quart canned tomatoes or a 28-ounce can of whole peeled tomatoes

Recipe

1. a large pot of water on to boil.
2. While it comes to a boil, trim the Swiss chard: cut out the stem, but also cut out any of the larger white "ribs" so the leaf will be very flexible and easy to work with.
3. Finely chop the stems and set them aside.
4. Blanch the chard leaves, dipping them into the boiling water until they wilt, about 30 seconds, drain and rinse with cold water to plunge into a bowl of ice water to cool and set the green color.
5. Chop 1 of the onions, mince the garlic, and peel and finely chop carrots and/or parsnip. In a large saute pan, braising pan, or wide pot, heat the oil.
6. Add the onion and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt and saute, cooking and stirring frequently until the onion is soft and translucent about 3 minutes.
7. Add the garlic and stir to combine. Add the carrot(s) and/or parsnip and the chard stems to the onion mixture and cook, stirring frequently until the vegetables are tender about 10 minutes total.
8. Transfer the vegetables to a large mixing bowl.
9. Add the rice and combine, then add the lamb and black pepper and mix to combine. Set aside.
10. Wipe out the pan.
11. Add the tomatoes, butter, and 1/2 teaspoon salt.
12. Peel and halve the other onion and add it to the tomatoes.
13. Add the chillie flakes, if using. Simmer the tomatoes over medium-low heat, reducing the heat if needed to keep the tomatoes simmering very gently until the butter separates out from the tomatoes and the onion is very soft, about 30 minutes.
14. Taste and add more salt to taste, if you like.
15. While the sauce simmers, prepare the stuffed chard leaves. Working with 1 leaf at a time, squeeze any excess water from the leaf and lay it on a clean, flat work surface. Put 2 to 3 tablespoons of the stuffing at one end of the leaf. Bring the shorter end of the leaf over the stuffing, fold in the sides to encase the stuffing, and then roll up with the remaining leaf. If you know how to fold a burrito or spring roll, it's the same principle; if you don't, don't worry about it—any way you get the stuffing encased and folded into the leaf will be fine. Wrap it like a package, just roll it up and tuck in the sides. The leaves are flexible and the final product can have your unique stamp.
16. Remove the onion halves from the tomato sauce and discard them.
17. Add about 1/2 cup water to the tomato sauce and bring back to a simmer.
18. Set the stuffed chard leaves in the tomato sauce, cover, and cook until the meat and rice are cooked through and tender, 30 to 40 minutes.
19. Check on the pot occasionally - if the tomato sauce seems too thick or is starting to stick to the pan, add 1 to 2 tablespoons of water and sort of stir it in between the chard bundles and adjust the heat to maintain a steady but gentle simmer.

[THIS RECIPE IS ALSO AVAILABLE AT WWW.NARROWBOATFARM.COM](http://WWW.NARROWBOATFARM.COM)