



Pasuts Tolma – Cabbage Rolls

Country of origin: Armenia

Ingredients

2 kilograms fermented cabbage leaves,* (or store-bought pickled cabbage leaves), rinsed thoroughly and drained

150g dry beans or 400g can of cooked red kidney, pinto or white beans

150g dry lentils or 400g can of lentils

150g dry chickpeas or 2x 400g can of chickpeas

¾ cup coarse bulgur wheat soaked in water (use quinoa for gluten free option)

2 medium brown onions, finely diced

2-5 tablespoons olive oil

3 tablespoons no added salt or salt reduced tomato paste

2-3 tablespoons capsicum/pepper sauce or paste

½ teaspoon ground pepper

1 teaspoon sweet paprika

½ teaspoon cayenne or red chili flakes (optional)

4 teaspoons mixed dried herbs, such as mint, dill, basil, parsley and thyme. Mint is essential.

4-6 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs, such as basil, dill and parsley

6-8 pieces of dried fruit (dried sour plums, black prunes or apricot)

A few dried chillies (optional)

1 ½ – 2 cups of boiling hot water (plus additional if required)

1 – 2 teaspoons salt (for health reasons you may choose to reduce or eliminate salt)

*see recipe for fermented cabbage

“Tolma originates from the ancient Armenian word ‘toli’ meaning grape vase and was originally made by stuffing vine leaves with various fillings.

Armenians make more than 50 different types of tolma dishes and even have an annual Tolma Festival.

Pasuts Tolma (Lenten Tolma) were popular during Lent when it was customary to observe fasting and eat only foods of plant origin. Armenians now enjoy Lenten Tolma all year round.

Different versions of Tolma are also popular in Greek, Turkish, Iranian, Ukranian and Serbian cuisine.”

Ingredients Notes:

- If using dried beans and chickpeas, soak overnight, drain and rinse. Lentils only need to be soaked for 1-2 hrs, then drained and rinsed.
- If using canned beans, chickpeas and lentils try to buy no added salt varieties. Drain and rinse thoroughly before using.
- You can make your own fermented cabbage using the recipe or pickled cabbage leaves can be bought from European food stores. Store bought pickled cabbage can be quite salty, so be sure to rinse it very thoroughly.
- Coarse bulgur wheat can be bought from the Adelaide Central Market, Greek or Middle Eastern grocers, some supermarkets and whole food shops.
- Capsicum/pepper sauce or paste can be purchased from some supermarkets and European food stores or you can make your own using the recipe below. Pepper paste purchased from stores can be quite spicy.

Capsicum sauce recipe

1. Roast or grill 6-8 whole red capsicums. Allow to cool slightly, then peel off skin and remove seeds.
2. Rinse briefly to remove any remaining skin.
3. Using a food processor, mix until smooth.
4. Place the pepper paste in a saucepan, along with 2/3 cup tomato paste and a splash of balsamic vinegar or 1/3 cup red wine.
5. Stir constantly and cook over medium heat about 10-15 minutes or until it slightly thickens.
6. Stir in 1 ½ tablespoons of sugar and season with salt if required. *For health reasons you may choose to reduce or eliminate salt.* Cook another 5-10 minutes.
7. Let it cool and place in glass containers and keep in the fridge.



Method

1. Mix beans, chickpeas and lentils together in a large bowl. Add chilli flakes and/or cayenne pepper (if using), black pepper and sweet paprika. Stir and set aside.
2. Heat a frying pan and add oil. Sauté the onions on a low heat until a light golden colour. Start with 2 tablespoons of oil and add more if needed.
3. Add bulgur wheat to the onions and continue cooking for 5 minutes. Add the dried herbs.
4. Add capsicum sauce/paste and 1 tablespoon of tomato paste to the onion and bulgur mixture and stir for 2-3 minutes over medium heat.
5. Remove onion and bulgur mixture from the heat and add to the legumes. Whilst mixture is still hot add chopped fresh herbs and salt (for health reasons you may choose to reduce or eliminate salt, try adding a pinch at a time). Mix well to combine.
6. Line the bottom of a large pot with cabbage cut offs (to protect the cabbage rolls from burning).
7. Stuff the cabbage leaves with a good amount of mixture (around 2 tablespoons) and roll, tucking in the ends to make a parcel. Don't wrap too tightly as the legume mixture needs room to expand while cooking.
8. Arrange the stuffed cabbage rolls very closely side by side in the pot in layers.
9. Place pieces of dried fruit and dried chillies (if using) on top of the last layer of cabbage rolls. Place a plate upside down on top of the cabbage rolls. The plate will help to secure the rolls and stop them moving around while cooking.
10. Pour 1 cup of water mixed with 2 tablespoons of tomato paste over the cabbage rolls. Add additional hot water if necessary to just cover the plate.
11. Place lid on pot and cook on low to medium heat for 45 minutes to 1 hour.
12. Remove from heat and set aside for at least an hour before serving. Can be served hot or cold. Garnish with pomegranates, dried prunes, fresh dill leaves or extra capsicum sauce.