

# Lebanese Grape Leaf Rolls

a recipe from [www.maureenabood.com](http://www.maureenabood.com)

*The method is the same whether you are using fresh or jarred grape leaves, except the fresh leaves need not be soaked in cold water. To make smaller rolls, cut jarred leaves in half.*

80-100 grape leaves, medium size

1 cup long grain rice

1 pound ground beef (90% lean) or lamb

½ cup butter, melted

½ tablespoon salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 lamb or pork neck bones, 2 bone-in pork chops, or 6 chicken wings (optional)

3 large grape leaves

2 lemons

Rinse the leaves thoroughly and soak in cold water for 15 minutes. Line a heavy, deep pan with meat bones if using, then 3 grape leaves. (Line the pan with just the leaves if no meat is being used).

*For the filling:*

In a medium-size bowl, combine rice, ground beef or lamb, butter, salt, pepper, and cinnamon. Mix well with your hands.

Prepare a dutch oven by lining the bottom with lamb or pork bones, pork chops, or chicken wings. Spread 3 large leaves over the top of the meat.

*To stuff and roll the leaves:*

Place grape leaves facing vein-side up on work surface with the wide stem-end of the leaf toward you. Drop 1 heaping teaspoon of filling across that stem edge of the leaf, shaping like a finger, leaving enough leaf on either side of the meat for rolling. Don't roll the leaves too tightly—allow room for rice filling to expand. Fold each side of leaf over the meat like an envelope and roll securely, away from you.

Arrange stuffed leaves in rows in a heavy, deep pan, alternating the direction of each layer of rows. Slice the lemon crosswise into several ¼-inch slices and lay the lemon slices over the rolls. Place a plate face down over the top layer to prevent the rolls from floating.

Fill pot with warm water up to the plate. Cover and bring slowly to a boil. After about 20 minutes, add the juice of one lemon to the cooking water. Some prefer much more lemon than this, or none at all; adjust as you please. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 30-40 minutes, for a total cooking time of about one hour, until rice is tender.

Serve with cooked lemon slices as a garnish and labne.