



DOLMA

DOLMA (or *dūlma*), Turkish term (Doerfer, III, pp. 203-04) for stuffed vegetable or fruit dishes common in the Middle East and in Mediterranean countries. Versions have been known in Persia since at least as early as the 17th century (Afšār, pp. 217, 238-39). Mīrzā ‘Alī-Akbar Khan Āšpaz-bāšī, chef to the court of Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah (1264-1313/1848-96), recorded *dolma* as a category of Persian cuisine and gave recipes for stuffing grape leaves, cabbage leaves, cucumbers, eggplants, apples, and quinces (pp. 42-43). Stuffings included ground meat, sautéed mint, rice, and saffron. Rice had not not been an ingredient of Safavid *dolmas* (Afšār, pp. 217, 238-39).

The most popular *dolmas* in Persia today are stuffed grape leaves, which are prepared by lightly parboiling the fresh leaves in salted water, then stuffing them with a mixture of ground meat, rice, chopped herbs like parsley, split peas, and seasoning. The *dolmas* are then simmered in a sweet-and-sour mixture of vinegar or lemon juice, sugar, and water. Stuffings vary, however, from region to region and even from family to family. Stuffed cabbage and grape leaves are the only *dolmas* that can be served hot or cold. When intended to be served cold they generally do not contain meat, however. Fruit *dolmas* are probably a specialty of Persian cuisine. The fruit is first cooked, then stuffed with meat, seasonings, and sometimes tomato sauce; the *dolmas* are then simmered in meat broth or a sweet-and-sour sauce. In recent decades new variations have been introduced, largely under Western influence: Potatoes, artichokes, green peppers, onions, tomatoes, and other vegetables are also stuffed.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ī. Afšār, ed., *Āšpazī-e dawra-ye šafawī. Matn-e do resāla az ān dawra*, Tehran, 1360 Š./1981.

Mīrzā ‘Alī-Akbar Khan Āšpaz-bāšī, *Sofra-ye aṭ’ema*, Tehran, 1353 Š./1974.

T. Mallos, *The Complete Middle East Cookbook*, New York, 1979.

R. Monteżamī, *Majmū’a-ye ġēdāhā-ye īrānī wa farangī*, Tehran, 1347 Š./1968, pp. 499-510.

M. R. Ghanoonparvar, *Persian Cuisine*, 2 vols., Lexington, Ky., 1982-84.

N. Ramazani, *Persian Cooking*, Charlottesville, Va., 1982, pp. 41-51.

M. Tehrānī, *Ṭabbāqī-e kadbānū*, Tehran, 1346 Š./1967, pp. 72-79.