Dolma, warak enab, or stuffed grape leaves: the name of the dish may change depending on where you’re from, but the taste and tradition is the same.

In this short podcast, I embarked on a mission to learn how to make my mother's favorite dish. We learn the basics and mix together a filling of meat, herbs, and rice folded into grape leaves. It's not easy--dolma takes a long time to prepare, and requires technique. But there’s a reason why dolma is a star of Middle Eastern food culture. In our kitchen, it's also a bridge through time, connecting a family across generations. While there are many different ways to prepare dolma, this recipe tells the story of a family and community that has survived hardship and forced dispersal, adding in the flavors of our new homes.

In particular, dolma reminds my mother of her grandmother, an Armenian Genocide survivor who later survived Stalin's Purge in the 1930s. My great-grandmother was a huge influence in my mother's life, passing along her positivity, resilience, and some beloved recipes. Enjoy this audio sample with traditional Armenian music, yogurt, and lots of garlic!