



REAL FOOD READS

A GUIDE FOR ORGANIZING YOUR BOOK CLUB

Quarantine Edition

GETTING STARTED

In this time of physical distancing and self-isolation, many of us are hungry for connection. Luckily, two of our favorite things are still there to keep us inspired: reading and food. Diving into books allows us to connect to other peoples' experiences and broaden our understanding of the world. Growing, cooking, and eating connects us to the land, our ancestors, food and farm workers, and the places and cultures that shape our food stories.

So what better way to turn quarantine into a celebration of all that connects us than by forming your very own virtual Real Food Reads book club? And Real Food Media is right there with you. We've got a rich [archive of books](#) and accompanying [podcast episodes](#) that explore the intersection of food, politics, and culture. Here are a few questions to think about as you're setting up your book club.

HOW MANY PEOPLE DO WE NEED?

The minimum number of people you need to start your book club is two. That's right, you and your best friend, partner, family member, or co-worker (okay, but maybe not your dog) can get together and launch your Real Food Reads Book Club. Having at least one other person to keep you accountable to reading the book—and to challenge you to think about it in new ways—is key.

Of course, the more people you bring in, the more perspectives you'll learn from, and probably the more fun you'll have! You'll just have to spend a little more time thinking about logistics like: which books are most people interested in, what days and times work best for everyone, does everyone have access and familiarity with the technology you will be using to host your virtual book club, and is your discussion accessible to people with different abilities.

HOW DOES A VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB WORK?

Whether you're self-isolating to protect yourself and others from COVID-19, or whether you just want to connect with friends in different parts of the world, technology makes it easy. You'll just have to decide on the best platform for your group. Your decision may be based on criteria like: what participants prefer or are already familiar with; the resources you are able to invest in a paid platform; and the accessibility features of different platforms. Options include:

GOOGLE HANGOUTS

Free and easy with your Google account, but limited to ten people:
<https://hangouts.google.com/>

SKYPE

Free group calls for up to 50 people, who must each set up a free Skype account: <https://www.skype.com/>

ZOOM

The free version hosts up to 100 people for a maximum of 40 minutes. Participants do not need a Zoom account to join a meeting. A paid subscription starting at \$14/month is required for meetings longer than 40 minutes: <https://zoom.us/>

FACEBOOK MESSENGER ROOMS & WHATSAPP GROUP CALLS

Facebook is rolling out new ways for multiple people to connect via its platforms:
<https://about.fb.com/news/2020/04/introducing-messenger-rooms/>

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE MEET?

Many book clubs meet on a particular day each month, but the frequency is up to you and your group. Some groups decide their next date at each meeting based on the availability of their members. Meeting virtually—without needing to reserve a physical space—gives you much more flexibility in scheduling your book club events.

WHETHER YOU'RE SELF-ISOLATING TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM COVID-19, OR WHETHER YOU JUST WANT TO CONNECT WITH FRIENDS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD, TECHNOLOGY MAKES IT EASY.



MAKE YOUR VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Like an in-person event, there are many things you can do to make sure your virtual event is accessible. Consider whether everyone in your group has internet access or the same comfort level with technology. Many web-based platforms like Zoom offer the option for attendees to dial in by phone and participate without a computer or internet. For deaf or hard of hearing participants, platforms like Skype offer closed captioning, which can be enabled by the meeting organizer beforehand. Here are some helpful notes about the accessibility features of different platforms: <https://bit.ly/app-accessibility>

HOW DO WE CHOOSE A BOOK?

The Real Food Reads book club and podcast has an [archive of over two dozen books and episodes](#) for you to choose from. Still overwhelmed about choosing your first book club pick? At the end of this Guide, you'll find a list of past Real Food Reads books, organized by topic and writing style. Choose a book that falls under your main interest or take a chance on something new—you may be pleasantly surprised at the insights you discover. If your group is on the larger side, consider choosing a few books or themes and sending out a simple survey asking people to rank them. If all your book club participants are on Facebook, you can try a [Facebook Poll](#).

WHERE DO WE GET THE BOOKS?

We always recommend first heading to your local independently-owned bookstore or public library. That may be difficult right now, with many libraries and bookstores closed for business due to shelter-in-place orders. Find out what your favorite local bookstore is doing to stay in operation—whether it's doing business online or curbside book pickup. They need our support more than ever. You can also support independent booksellers by doing your online book shopping at [Bookshop.org](https://www.bookshop.org) instead of Amazon and other corporate retailers. For new releases, you can often order the book directly from the publisher's website—and if you sign up for [Real Food Reads email updates](#), we might even have a discount code to share for that month.



FIND AN INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE IN YOUR AREA:

[HTTPS://WWW.INDIEBOUND.ORG](https://www.indiebound.org)

SHOP ONLINE AND SUPPORT LOCAL BOOKSTORES:

[HTTPS://BOOKSHOP.ORG/](https://bookshop.org/)



HOW DO WE MAKE IT OFFICIAL?

Once you've decided to start a Real Food Reads book club, head to the Real Food Media website to [sign up for our monthly book club update](#): you'll receive a monthly email on new books, any publisher discount codes, podcast releases, book club resources, and more. Tag #RealFoodReads in posts about your book club meetings and discussions on social media.

ONLINE TOOLS FOR PLANNING AND OUTREACH

Some people like a more low-tech approach, like hand-written invites or a simple phone call (those still exist, right?) and that's great! That said, online tools can also provide a useful platform for planning your book club as well as sharing ideas, reviews, recipes, event photos, and more. For example, you can create an [event on Facebook](#) (it can be public or private, and you can even make it a recurring event) for your book club and invite people to join. You can also use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to share information about your upcoming book club discussions, post suggested discussion questions, share book reviews, post recipes... the sky's the limit. Let us in on the fun by using the hashtag #RealFoodReads and tagging @realfoodmedia.

ADDITIONAL ONLINE BOOK CLUB RESOURCES

BOOK MOVEMENT

Website & app for book clubs:
https://www.bookmovement.com/landing_2/

BOOKCLUBZ

Online book club organizing tool:
<https://bookclubz.com/>

GOODREADS


Online community of readers:
<https://www.goodreads.com/>

BOOK RIOT

Book Club in a Box:
https://bookriot.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/BR_BookClubBox.pdf

RECIPE IDEAS FOR YOUR VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB POTLUCK

One way to feel closer together during this time of social distancing is to have your friends or family members each prepare a delicious, comforting dish and eat together over Zoom or other virtual platform. Here's some recipe inspo from a few of our favorite cookbooks and recipe websites. They include Real Food Reads authors and dear friends whose imagination and love of food inspire us to keep reading—and cooking. You might even want to feature one of these books and pair your discussion with a sampling of its recipes. Another great place to start: your own favorite family recipes or dishes featuring local and sustainable ingredients. Either way, there's nothing like great food and great conversation.



"THERE IS NOTHING MORE LUXURIOUS
THAN EATING WHILE YOU READ—
UNLESS IT BE READING WHILE YOU EAT."

– EDITH NESBIT

SOME FAN FAVORITES

FOOD HEAVEN MADE EASY

<https://foodheavenmadeeasy.com/>

MARK BITTMAN

Dinner for Everyone: 100 Iconic Dishes Made 3 Ways—Easy, Vegan, or Perfect for Company

MINIMALIST BAKER

<https://minimalistbaker.com/>

REAL FOOD READS COOKBOOKS

BRYANT TERRY

Vegetable Kingdom: The Abundant World of Vegan Recipes

LAZARUS LYNCH

Son of a Southern Chef: Cook with Soul

LUZ CALVO AND CATRIONA RUEDA ESQUIBEL

Decolonize Your Diet: Mexican-American Plant-Based Recipes for Health and Healing

SEAN SHERMAN WITH BETH DOOLEY

The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen

GOT RECIPE RECOMMENDATIONS, GO-TO COOKBOOKS, OR RECIPE WEBSITES TO SHARE WITH THE REAL FOOD READS BOOK CLUB COMMUNITY?

Let us know at info@realfoodmedia.org or tag us on social media @realfoodmedia

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR ANY BOOK

- What did you like best about this book?
- What did you like least about this book?
- What feelings did this book evoke for you? Did any part of the book resonate with your experience or that of your family or community?
- What was the author's overarching point or argument? Did they convince you?
- What were the most compelling ideas, evidence, and stories the author used to support their argument?
- What did you already know about this topic before reading the book?
- What other books have you read on this topic? Would you recommend them?
- What new things did you learn?
- Anything surprise you?
- What questions do you still have?
- Share a favorite quote from the book. Why did this quote stand out to you?
- What songs does this book make you think of? Create a book group playlist!
- What do you think of the book's title? What other titles might you choose? Come up with a list of alternative titles as a group.
- If you had the chance to ask the author one question, what would it be?
- Has this book inspired you to take action in any way or make a change in your everyday life? If so, how?
- What is the COVID-19 pandemic revealing about issues presented in the book? Does the pandemic make you look at these issues differently?

You can also come up with some specific discussion questions for your book club picks and share them with us at info@realfoodmedia.org. We'd love to feature them in our monthly email to share with other readers and book clubs around the country and beyond!



REAL FOOD READS BOOKS BY THEME

BOOKS ABOUT AGRICULTURE, FARMERS, AND RURAL LIFE:

A Precautionary Tale: How One Small Town Banned Pesticides, Preserved Its Food Heritage, and Inspired a Movement

by Philip Ackerman-Leist

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants

by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Changing Season: A Father, A Daughter, A Family Farm

by David Mas Masumoto and Nikiko Masumoto

Eating Tomorrow: Agribusiness, Family Farmers, and the Battle for the Future of Food

by Timothy A. Wise

Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land

by Leah Penniman

Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement

by Monica White

Letters to a Young Farmer: On Food, Farming, and Our Future

edited by Martha Hodgkins

Life on the Other Border: Farmworkers and Food Justice in Vermont

by Teresa M. Mares

Red Meat Republic: A Hoof-to-Table History of How Beef Changed America

by Joshua Specht

Seeds of Resistance: The Fight to Save Our Food Supply

by Mark Schapiro

The Dreamt Land: Chasing Water and Dust Across California

by Mark Arax

The Farm Bill: A Citizen's Guide

by Daniel Imhoff and Christina Badaracco

BOOKS ON RACE, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY:

As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock by Dina Gilio-Whitaker

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants

by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Eating NAFTA: Trade, Food Policies, and the Destruction of Mexico

by Alyshia Gálvez

Decolonize Your Diet: Mexican-American Plant-Based Recipes for Health and Healing

by Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel

Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land

by Leah Penniman

Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement

by Monica White

Food Fight! Millennial Mestizaje Meets the Culinary Marketplace

by Paloma Martinez-Cruz

Son of a Southern Chef: Cook With Soul

by Lazarus Lynch

Vegetable Kingdom: The Abundant World of Vegan Recipes

by Bryant Terry

The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen

by Chef Sean Sherman

Zaitoun: Recipes from the Palestinian Kitchen

by Yasmin Khan

REAL FOOD READS BOOKS BY THEME

BOOKS THAT EXPOSE THE HARMFUL IMPACTS OF BIG FOOD AND CORPORATE POWER:

As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock
by Dina Gilio-Whitaker

Behind the Kitchen Door
by Saru Jayaraman

Big Chicken: The Incredible Story of How Antibiotics Created Modern Agriculture and Changed the Way the World Eats
by Maryn McKenna

Big Hunger: The Unholy Alliance Between Corporate America and Anti-Hunger Groups
by Andy Fisher

Bread, Wine, Chocolate: The Slow Loss of Foods We Love
by Simran Sethi

Chasing the Harvest: Migrant Workers in California Agriculture
edited by Gabriel Thompson

Diet for a Hot Planet: The Climate Crisis at the End of Your Fork and What You Can Do About It
by Anna Lappé

Eating Tomorrow: Agribusiness, Family Farmers, and the Battle for the Future of Food
by Timothy A. Wise

Red Meat Republic: A Hoof-to-Table History of How Beef Changed America
by Joshua Specht

Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us
by Michael Moss

Soda Politics: Taking On Big Soda (And Winning)
by Marion Nestle

The American Way of Eating: Undercover at Walmart, Applebee's, Farm Fields, and the Dinner Table
by Tracie McMillan

The Big Letdown: How Medicine, Big Business, and Feminism Undermine Breastfeeding
by Kimberly Seals Allers

The Case Against Sugar
by Gary Taube

Unsavory Truth: How Food Companies Skew the Science of What We Eat
by Marion Nestle

Whitewash: The Story of a Weedkiller, Cancer, and the Corruption of Science
by Carey Gillam

World Hunger: 10 Myths
by Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH:

Chef Roy Choi and The Street Food Remix
by Jacqueline Briggs Martin and June Jo Lee

REAL FOOD READS BOOKS BY THEME

COOKBOOKS THAT ARE MORE THAN JUST RECIPES:

Decolonize Your Diet: Mexican-American Plant-Based Recipes for Health and Healing
by Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel

Green Enough: Eat Better, Live Cleaner, Be Happier
by Leah Segedie

Son of a Southern Chef: Cook With Soul
by Lazarus Lynch

Sugar Detox Me: 100+ Recipes To Curb Cravings and Take Back Your Health
by Summer Rayne Oakes

The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen
by Chef Sean Sherman

Vegetable Kingdom: The Abundant World of Vegan Recipes
by Bryant Terry

Waste Free Kitchen Handbook: A Guide to Eating Well and Saving Money by Wasting Less Food
by Dana Gunders

Zaitoun: Recipes from the Palestinian Kitchen
by Yasmin Khan

BOOKS ON LABOR IN THE FOOD SYSTEM:

A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet
by Raj Patel and Jason W. Moore

Behind the Kitchen Door
by Saru Jayaraman

Chasing the Harvest: Migrant Workers in California Agriculture
edited by Gabriel Thompson

Eating NAFTA: Trade, Food Policies, and the Destruction of Mexico
by Alyshia Gálvez

Life on the Other Border: Farmworkers and Food Justice in Vermont
by Teresa M. Mares

The American Way of Eating: Undercover at Walmart, Applebee's, Farm Fields, and the Dinner Table
by Tracie McMillan

The Labor of Lunch: Why We Need Real Food and Real Jobs in American Public Schools
by Jennifer Gaddis

The New Food Activism: Opposition, Cooperation, and Collective Action
edited by Alison Hope Alkon and Julie Guthman



SUPPORT FOOD & FARM WORKERS

The pandemic is further revealing the injustices food workers face—from wage theft to lack of basic protections. Your book club group can support food and farm workers. Here are some places to start.

Real Food Media food workers toolkit:
<http://bit.ly/RFMfoodworkerstoolkit>

HEAL Food Alliance resources:
<https://bit.ly/HEAL-workers-platform>

REAL FOOD READS BOOKS BY THEME

BOOKS THAT DIG INTO POLICY:

As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock by Dina Gilio-Whitaker

Behind the Kitchen Door by Saru Jayaraman

Beginning to End Hunger: Food and the Environment in Belo Horizon, Brazil, and Beyond by M. Jahi Chappell

Diet for a Hot Planet: The Climate Crisis at the End of Your Fork and What You Can Do About It by Anna Lappé

Eating NAFTA: Trade, Food Policies, and the Destruction of Mexico by Alyshia Gálvez

Eating Tomorrow: Agribusiness, Family Farmers, and the Battle for the Future of Food by Timothy A. Wise

The Dreamt Land: Chasing Water and Dust Across California by Mark Arax

The Labor of Lunch: Why We Need Real Food and Real Jobs in American Public Schools by Jennifer Gaddis

The Farm Bill: A Citizen's Guide by Daniel Imhoff and Christina Badaracco

The New Food Activism: Opposition, Cooperation, and Collective Action edited by Alison Hope Alkon and Julie Guthman

BOOKS WITH AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE:

A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things by Raj Patel and Jason W. Moore

Beginning to End Hunger: Food and the Environment in Belo Horizon, Brazil, and Beyond by M. Jahi Chappell

Bread, Wine, Chocolate: The Slow Loss of Foods We Love by Simran Sethi

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Zaitoun: Recipes from the Palestinian Kitchen by Yasmin Khan

JOIN THE REAL FOOD READS BOOK CLUB & TUNE IN TO THE PODCAST AT
REALFOODMEDIA.ORG



Real Food Media uses media and storytelling strategies to strengthen the food movement by decoding corporate spin, revealing the true cost of industrial food, and showing how, together, we can transform the food system.