

Good-times guide

Making happy memories together!

It's the perfect time to start a book club!

Love books? It's not too late to grab a few friends and indulge in summer's hottest reads (no beach necessary!). Our expert tips make it easy to gather the perfect group and enjoy engaging conversation!

To-Do List

Two weeks before:

- Choose your first book
- Invite members and ask them to come prepared with a comment or question
- Write up your own bullet points

The day of:

- Prepare a theme food
- Arrange furniture for conversation or reserve seats at a café
- Set aside a bowl for conversation topics



1 Organize your group!

How many? "Eight to ten women is the perfect number," says Barbara Mead of ReadingGroupChoices.com. "It ensures you'll have a solid group every time, even if a few members are absent."

Who to pick? Think beyond your inner circle and invite acquaintances or friends of friends, encourages Mead. "The important criterion is interest!"

When and where? "Once a month for an hour and a half is ideal, at any time that's convenient," says Mead. "You can rotate from house to house, or always meet at the same home or in a local coffee shop."

Tip!

Serve food before or after discussion time, preferably in a separate room. Just by switching rooms, members will make a mental shift and start concentrating on the book.

4 Get the fun discussion flowing!

Set aside the first 30 minutes for catching up and get-to-know-you time.

"Slip" into book talk! Ask each member to bring a quote, question or comment on a slip of paper. Have them place their slip in a fishbowl, then pass the bowl around and let each member pull a slip to read aloud. This guarantees that everyone gets the floor.

Jot notes! As hostess, you'll want to be ready to fill any lulls in the conversation. So write a few leading questions for discussion. For example, "Did anyone else find the main character more likeable as the book went along?"



2 Choose your first book!

Mead's top title for summer 2010 is *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake*, by Aimee Bender. "The tagline is a little girl can taste the emotion of the person preparing food—it's wonderful facilitating your first group conversations."

More of summer's club-perfect picks: *Seven Year Switch*, by Claire Cook. Readers will love Cook's single-mom protagonist and the witty beach-book vibe.

The Fixer Upper, by Mary Kay Andrews. A charming story about a woman's mission to redo an old Southern house and get her life on track after leaving her job as a lobbyist.



3 Serve a snack inspired by your title!

Think about a food that's featured in the book or enjoyed by a character. If, for example, you're reading *Lemon Cake*, serve a slice of the real thing!

Lemon-Poppy Seed Poundcake

1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour	granulated sugar	2 Tbs. grated lemon zest
1 tsp. baking soda	1/3 cup applesauce	3/4 cup sour cream
1/2 tsp. baking powder	1/3 cup oil	2 Tbs. poppy seeds
1/2 tsp. salt	3 eggs	1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
2/3 cup	1/4 cup + 1 Tbs. lemon juice	

● Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat 9"x5" loaf pan with cooking spray. Combine flour, soda, baking powder and salt. Beat granulated sugar, applesauce and oil. Beat in eggs, 1/4 cup juice and zest, then flour mixture. Fold in sour cream and seeds; pour into pan. Bake 45-55 minutes or until pick inserted comes out clean. Cool 20 minutes. Remove from pan; cool. Mix confectioners' sugar with remaining juice; pour over cake.

