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Book Club To Go Titles ^[1]

Book Club to Go Available Titles

Get your own book discussion group going with these titles. Each Book Club to Go Kit ^[2] contains at least 5 copies of the book with notes and questions for discussion in a handy tote bag.

Fiction

- 84, Charing Cross Road ^[3]
by Helene Hanff. It all began with a letter inquiring about second-hand books, written by Helene Hanff in New York, and posted to a bookshop at 84, Charing Cross Road in London. As Helene's sarcastic and witty letters are responded to by the stodgy and proper Frank Doel of 84, Charing Cross Road, a relationship blossoms into a warm, charming, feisty love affair.
- Alias Grace ^[4]
by Margaret Atwood. Margaret Atwood writes about a notorious Canadian murder case of the 1840s in this historical novel. She takes the facts of the Grace Marks case and uses them to delve into the psyche of the convicted murderer and the social milieu that she lived in. The stations of women, immigrants, and the poor are examined in detail through the psychological investigations of a physician trying to get at the truth in Grace's mind.
- Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons ^[5]
by Lorna Landvik. Join the five women who form this book club and share the triumphs, tragedies, hardships, joys and sorrows of their lives over the course of 30 years.
- At Home in Mitford ^[6]
by Jan Karon. Bucolic Mitford is an attractive little village. Its rector, the bachelor Father Tim, is craving something more than small-town life, however. An attractive woman moves next door to the rectory; an oversized dog moves into the rectory; and a mystery concerning a jewel theft bubbles up amid secrets, love, and village intrigue.
- The Bee Season ^[7]
by Myla Goldberg. Eliza Naumann, a seemingly unremarkable nine-year-old, expects never to fit into her gifted family: her autodidact father, Saul, absorbed in his study of Jewish

mysticism; her brother, Aaron, the vessel of his father's spiritual ambitions; and her brilliant but distant lawyer-mom, Miriam. But when Eliza sweeps her school and district spelling bees in quick succession, Saul takes it as a sign that she is destined for greatness.

- Big Stone Gap ^[8]
by Adriana Trigiani. Ave Maria Mulligan, spinster at thirty-five, lives in the Blue Ridge Mountains, enjoying small-town life. She discovers that she's not who she always thought she was, and starts coping with marriage proposals, greedy family members, and the trip of a lifetime in this heart warming and humorous tale.
- Chocolat ^[9]
by Joanne Harris. Vivianne Rocher moves to the tiny French town of Lansquenet to open a chocolate boutique, and, suddenly, strange things start to happen. The townspeople begin to eschew the self-righteous gossip of small-town life, and they find the courage to break the rigid codes of provincial behavior. In short, they start enjoying life--all because of the sensual power of chocolate. But the hidebound local priest does not approve of Vivianne, and soon, a power struggle shapes up between the two of them.
- Cold Mountain ^[10]
by Charles Frazier. Based on stories in the author's family, this novel is about a wounded Civil War soldier who walks away from the hospital and finds his arduous way home to his sweetheart--a cultured young woman who has been forced to learn the brutal ways of farm life. The stories of the two lovers are intertwined; when they converge, they find that their worlds have changed radically, and so have they.
- Dante Club ^[11]
by Matthew Pearl. The Dante Club is a magnificent blend of fact and fiction, a brilliantly realized paean to Dante's continued grip on our imagination, and a captivating thriller that will surprise readers from beginning to end.
- The Diary of Mattie Spenser ^[12]
by Sandra Dallas. No one is more surprised than Mattie Spenser herself when Luke Spenser, considered the great catch of their small Iowa town, asks her to marry him. Less than a month later, they are off in a covered wagon to build a home on the Colorado frontier. Mattie's only company is a slightly mysterious husband and her private journal, where she records the joys and frustrations not just of frontier life, but also of a new marriage to a handsome but distant stranger. As she and Luke make life together on the harsh and beautiful plains, Mattie learns some bitter truths about her husband and the girl he left behind and finds love where she least expects it.
- Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant ^[13]
by Anne Tyler. The life, death, marriage, and family of Pearl Cody Tull, as she recollects it from her perspective as a dying 86-year-old woman. Over the course of these brief and poignant series of episodes, her husband leaves her, the three children grow up and develop their own families and contend with continually defining themselves as a part of this family. Pearl's son Ezra, in particular, longs for a lost unity and often tries to get everyone together at his place, The Homesick Restaurant. For her part, Pearl is ultimately content with recollections of the simple and ordinary past such as the summer wind, picnics, a country auction, and the weight of a sleeping baby.
- The Dress Lodger ^[14]
by Sheri Holman. Set in the 19th century, in an English city suffering from a cholera epidemic, this novel is about a young prostitute named Gustine who sells herself to pay for

the care of her horribly deformed baby. She becomes involved with a mad doctor who needs corpses for his research--a venture that ends in violence.

- Enemy Women ^[15]
by Paulette Jiles. After her father is taken away by Union soldiers, Adair Randolph Colley, who is 18 at the height of the Civil War, is herself imprisoned on a false charge of spying for the enemy. The prison commander, Major William Neumann, falls in love with her and, just before he is reassigned, helps her escape. Now the two lovers must somehow find each other again in the chaos of Civil War America.
- The Five People You Meet in Heaven ^[16]
by Mitch Albom. Albom's first novel introduces Eddie, an amusement park maintenance worker, who up until his death finds his own life mostly insignificant. In a fable-like style he is shown otherwise via five people he meets in heaven.
- Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe ^[17]
by Fannie Flagg. Cleo Threadgood, 86, shares a lifetime of memories of Whistle Stop, Alabama where the social scene centered on its one cafe with Evelyn Couch, a younger woman who is looking for meaning in her life.
- Girl in Hyacinth Blue ^[18]
by Susan Vreeland. A beautiful painting that's possibly a Vermeer provides the framework for this series of stories that reach further and further back in time to get at the truth--culminating finally in an episode in which the painter and his model are the protagonists.
- A Girl Named Zippy ^[19]
by Haven Kimmel. In this witty and lovingly told memoir, Kimmel takes readers back to a time when small-town America was caught in the amber of the innocent postwar period -- people helped their neighbors, went to church on Sunday, and kept barnyard animals in their backyards.
- Girl with a Pearl Earring ^[20]
by Tracy Chevalier. History and fiction merge seamlessly in Chevalier's luminous novel about artistic vision and sensual awakening. Through the eyes of 16-year-old Griet, the world of 1660s Holland comes alive in this richly imagined portrait of the young woman who inspired one of Vermeer's most celebrated paintings.
- The Good Earth ^[21]
by Pearl S. Buck. This great modern classic depicts life in China at a time before the vast political and social upheavals transformed an essentially agrarian country into a world power. Nobel Prize-winner Pearl S. Buck traces the whole cycle of life--its terrors, its passions, its ambitions, and its rewards.
- Last Girls ^[22]
by Lee Smith. In their youth, the five main characters of this comic novel took a raft trip down the Mississippi. Now they gather to review old times and compare notes on their lives, which contain heartbreak and anguish, as well as good luck and a measure of happiness.
- Like Water for Chocolate ^[23]
by Laura Esquivel. Peppered with recipes, remedies and folky digressions, this novel is a treat. The heroine of this fantastical love story, Tita, the youngest of three Mexican daughters, is expected to devote her life to her widowed mother. When her lover, Pedro, asks her to marry him, her mother denies her permission and offers Rosaura, her sister, instead. Pedro accepts in hopes of living close to Tita, but she is unaware of his intentions.

When her tears get baked into the cake, and everyone has a slice, they are moved-- emotionally, erotically, and physically.

- Memoirs of a Geisha [24]
by Arthur Golden. In 1929, a poor fisherman sells his nine-year-old daughter to an elite geisha house in Kyoto. So begins the remarkable first-person account of how the lovely child, Chiyo, became the accomplished and much sought-after geisha Sayuri, with the help of a kindly mentor and despite the malice of a rival; and of how Sayuri struggled to balance professional success as a courtesan with the demands of her heart. Adapted into a 2005 movie starring Zhang Yiyi as the protagonist, this bestselling debut novel opened up a world hitherto unknown to most Westerners and sparked new interest in Japan and its culture.
- Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind [25]
by Ann B. Ross. Miss Julia, a recently bereaved and newly wealthy widow, is only slightly bemused when one Hazel Marie Puckett appears at her door with a youngster in tow and unceremoniously announces that the child is the bastard son of Miss Julia's late husband. Suddenly, this longtime church member and pillar of a small Southern community finds herself in the center of an unseemly scandal -- and the guardian of a wan nine-year-old whose mere presence turns her life upside down.
- Murder at the Vicarage [26]
by Agatha Christie
Colonel Protheroe, St. Mary Mead's most loathed magistrate, has been found shot through the head. It isn't his murder that raises eyebrows, but rather the scandalous secrets it exposes which send Miss Marple on the trail of a killer with something to hide. This was Miss Marple's first outing.
- No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency [27]
by Alexander McCall Smith. McCall Smith, a law professor and reference book writer, offers a gentle, humorous tale with a memorable private detective, Precious Ramotswe, the first female private detective in her native Botswana. However, Precious isn't interested in crime; she only takes cases that help her clients: she looks for a missing boy, investigates the true identity of a parent, and checks up on the daughter of a very worried man.
- The Pilot's Wife [28]
by Anita Shreve. Kathryn Lyons learns that her husband's plane has exploded off the coast of Ireland. As she traces the details of his life leading up to the crash, Kathryn discovers that her husband had a secret life.
- A Prayer for Owen Meany [29]
by John Irving. Owen Meany is a child whose life circumstances, including a physical limitation that affects the sound of his voice and an inner conviction that he is an instrument of God, set him apart from the average.
- Rebecca [30]
by Daphne du Maurier. A variation of the Cinderella tale, this most famous of Du Maurier's novels relates the story of an unnamed heroine who begins as a paid companion to a wealthy, but vulgar older woman. When she accompanies her employer to Monte Carlo, she meets the wealthy aristocrat and widower Maxim de Winter. Maxim is attracted by the innocence of our heroine, eventually proposing marriage, much to everyone's surprise. When the newlyweds return to Manderly, Maxim's family mansion in Cornwall, the happiness experienced by the new Mrs. de Winter on her honeymoon is marred by the

mystery surrounding the death of the previous Mrs. de Winter, Rebecca.

- The Seamstress ^[31]
by Sara Tuvel Bernstein. This remarkable autobiography recounts the experience of a young girl who lived through the Holocaust by becoming a seamstress. Through her talents, she was able to live through concentration camps and provide enough money for her family to survive.
- Water for Elephants ^[32]
by Sara Gruen. Jacob Jankowski is a student at Cornell University with a promising future in veterinary medicine. That all changes when his parents are killed in a car accident. Grieving and unable to pay his college tuition, Jacob leaves school and joins the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth, a traveling circus. Jacob's job is to care for the animals in the circus menagerie, a task made more difficult by the abuses heaped upon the creatures by the circus's boss, August. Jacob forms a close relationship with an elephant, Rosie, whom he strives to protect from August. He also falls in love with August's lovely, abused wife Marlena. This atmospheric tale is based on actual circus stories and is documented with historical circus photographs.
- The Witness ^[33]
by Sandra Brown. Newlyweds Kendall and Matt Burnwood make the perfect couple as they prepare to live happily ever after in the sleepy southern town of Prosper, South Carolina. All is well until Kendall stumbles upon a secret vigilante group committing a brutal murder in which her husband and several Prosper town leaders participated. Terrified, Kendall runs for her life, fearing that she and her unborn child may be their next victim.
- A Year of Wonders ^[34]
by Geraldine Brooks. During the plague that decimated the population of England during the 17th century, the vicar of an isolated village tries desperately to save the townspeople from death. Narrated by his courageous young housemaid, whose own family members have become victims, Year of Wonders is a story of the heroism that can arise in extreme situations--and it's also a love story.

NonFiction

- Better Off : Flipping the Switch on Technology ^[35]
by Eric Brede. An undergraduate course in the history of technology led Brede to enroll in a graduate program at M.I.T. that contemplated the social effects of machines on human life. He then decided to test his idea that the more advanced the machine, the bigger the downside, by moving to the country to farm and live cheaply without electricity for 18 months. This is not a back-to-the-land book on how to dig a root cellar; rather, it's the Brendes' experiences on the farm they rented.
- The Devil in the White City ^[36]
by Erik Larson. Two events focused attention on Chicago in 1893: the World's Fair with its hundreds of newly built structures (all white), and the investigation into the crimes of Dr. Henry Holmes, reputedly the first American serial killer.
- Isaac's Storm : a Man, a Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History ^[37]
by Erik Larson. This book is based on Isaac Cline's personal accounts of a devastating hurricane that wreaked havoc in Galveston, Texas, in September 1900. After it was all over, more than 8,000 people were dead and the personal property of many others was

destroyed. Author Larsen also discusses the role of the government and other authorities in dealing with this horrible natural disaster.

- Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting By in America [38]
by Ehrenreich, Barbara. Journalist Ehrenreich, leaving her past life behind and working a series of low wage jobs, chronicles the barriers to even getting by while waitressing, cleaning houses and working at Wal-Mart.
- Plain Secrets : An Outsider Among the Amish [39]
by Joe Mackall. In an engaging personal memoir, Mackall, an Ohio-based writer and professor of English, describes the close-knit relationship he has cultivated over more than a decade with a neighboring Amish family.
- The Professor and the Madman [40]
by Simon Winchester. The origins of the Oxford English Dictionary are examined in this fascinating book that details the relationship between editor James Murray and the criminally-insane yet prodigious contributor, Dr. William Minor. It turns out that Minor sent in a great number of entries for the dictionary from an asylum for the criminally insane. This book offers a view of their odd pairing, which is one of the most unique in modern literary history, as well as a compelling study of a mad genius.
- Reading Lolita in Tehran : a Memoir in Books [41]
by Azar Nafisi. Azar Nafisi, a professor of literature at Tehran University from 1979 to 1981, recounts her experiences in Iran under the Islamic Republic. She secretly hosted a weekly gathering at her home of young university women. The group read and discussed works of Western literature, which were forbidden by the ruling regime. Nafisi was eventually dismissed from the university for refusing to wear the required veil. She left Iran for the U.S. in 1997 and now teaches at Johns Hopkins University.
- Rocket Boys [42]
by Homer Hickam. This memoir tells the story of a NASA engineer who grew up in West Virginia in the 1950s, when he was interested in the physics of rockets rather than football and mining.
- Seabiscuit : an American Legend [43]
by Laura Hillenbrand. This is a chronicle of one of the most exciting horses in racing history. In the beginning, many people felt Seabiscuit was a waste of time and energy. Charles Howard, a wealthy car dealer, had faith and the resources to change public perception. He hired trainer Tom Smith who was more accustomed to taming wild mustangs out west than to training thoroughbreds. To complete the foursome, Charles brought jockey Red Pollard on board. After more than 50 unremarkable lower class races, what they brought out of Seabiscuit was phenomenal. He absolutely conquered every race and the press couldn't get enough. An underdog in every way, Seabiscuit was one of the fastest and most admired racehorses in history.
- Shadow Divers: The True Adventure of Two Americans Who Risked Everything to Solve One of the Last Mysteries of World War II [44]
by Robert Kurson. In 1991 John Chatterton and Rich Kohler, two deep-sea divers, heard of a wreck about 60 miles off the New Jersey coast. Diving at a depth of nearly 230 feet, they believed they had found a German submarine, and assembled a crew to research the wreck. They attempted to keep the location secret and thwart others interested in the wreckage, determined to discover the truth of the wreck themselves. Tragedy struck the team during their mission: three divers died, a friend was lost to alcoholism, and a marriage

was torn apart before the seven-year search for the WWII U-boat's identity was completed. The discovery of the Type IX U-boat U-869 was thrilling to U-boat researchers and survivors and a complete surprise to WWII historians, placing the Nazis in areas previously unknown. This true tale of adventure is mixed with facts about the Third Reich's plans, making it a story with appeal for many.

- [Under the Tuscan Sun](#) [45]
by Frances Mayes. Frances Mayes, a gourmet cook, travel writer, and poet, bought herself a crumbling 17-room villa in the Italian countryside. It changed her life and renewed her spirit. Her immensely appealing chronicle of the experience, and of her romantic relationship with the man she eventually married, comes complete with recipes from the region.
- [A Walk in the Woods](#) [46]
by Bill Bryson. Bill Bryson, known in England as "the funniest travel writer alive," returns to the States and walks the Appalachian Trail, starting in Hanover, New Hampshire.

For more information, call Becky at 940-767-0868, ext 4233, or email us at ref@wfpl.net [47].

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