

# Book Club Eats

story by LAURIE WALLACE-LYNCH



Book Clubs. Yes, the books are generally great, but it's really the good company of like-minded friends that make book clubs so popular. That, and the food. If you belong to a Book Club, the rules vary in terms of supplying food. Sometimes the host provides the food, sometimes others bring food on a rotational basis. Other times it is pot-luck style where everyone brings something to share, ranging from appetizers to main dishes to desserts.

Since most clubs meet on a regular basis, often we are racking our brains trying to figure out something "new" and impressive to take. We've all done the typical pasta salad or brownies, so perhaps it is time to up our game and find some new recipes to impress our book club pals. We've discovered some new cookbooks that will help you do just that. From finger foods to delightful desserts, these books will bring on the compliments and requests for recipes. Two are even tailored to the book club theme. Ready, set, impress. »





## Afternoon Tea at Bramble Cafe

By Mat Follas,  
Masterchef UK Winner 2009

Excerpted from *Afternoon Tea at Bramble Café* by Mat Follas, published by Ryland Peters & Small. Photography by Steve Painter © Ryland Peters & Small. Used with permission from the publisher.

Mat Follas is the winner of Masterchef UK 2009 and the owner of *Bramble Cafe*. The recipes in this book are well known cafe classics; tried and tested until perfect. Best of all, they are quick and fairly easy to make, yet totally impressive. Fresh ingredients are the key to success, Follas stresses in the introduction. Fresh eggs will make your cake rise well and hold well. The recipes often call for self-rising flour which is commonly found in the UK, but not so easy to find here. To make your own self-rising flour, sift one level teaspoon of baking powder with one cup of all-purpose flour (make more as needed for the recipe).

You will find recipes as simple as *Rice Crispy Squares with Cherry Marshmallow*. With a bit of practice, the recipe for *Lemon & Lime Meringue Tartlets* is also easy to make.

Spring is the perfect opportunity to make the *Victorian Sandwich*, which is actually a cake, filled with fresh strawberries and whipped cream. With its four different coloured layers, the *Rainbow Cake* is a showstopper.



### Ingredients:

#### FILLING:

200 g-2 cups strawberries  
Freshly squeezed juice of 1/2 lemon  
30 g-2 1/2 tablespoons caster/  
granulated sugar  
150 ml-2/3 cup whipping cream  
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
50 g-6 tablespoons icing or  
confectioners' sugar

#### CAKE:

200 g-7 oz. eggs, lightly whisked with  
150 g-3/4 cup caster/granulated sugar  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract 150 g-  
generous 1 cup plain, all-purpose or  
sponge flour  
Icing or confectioners' sugar and fresh  
strawberries, to decorate  
*45 x 30-cm-18 x 12-inch non-stick Swiss  
roll-jelly roll pan, lightly oiled and  
base-lined with baking parchment*

1. Preheat the oven to 140°C (280°F) Gas 1.
2. For the filling, hull and finely chop the strawberries. Place them in a bowl and fold in the lemon juice and caster or granulated sugar. Leave for 30 minutes to bring out the flavour. Whip the cream, vanilla extract and icing or confectioners' sugar to a light, just setting, whipped cream. Chill.
3. For the cake, take the prepared Swiss roll-jelly roll pan, oil the top of the paper and lightly flour the paper and the sides. Place the whisked eggs and caster or granulated sugar in a bowl and mix for at least 10 minutes with a hand-held electric whisk or in a stand mixer, until it has tripled in volume and is thick and creamy. Add the vanilla extract and whisk.
4. Gently fold in the flour, one-third at a time, until just combined. Pour the mixture into the prepared Swiss roll-jelly roll pan and use a spatula to spread it to an even depth. Immediately place the pan into the oven and bake for 12 minutes. Check the cake is cooked by touch; it should bounce back when lightly pressed. If it is soft or it 'crackles' when touched, put it back in the oven for two minutes more, then check again.
5. Remove from the oven and leave to cool for two minutes. Cover a wire rack with a piece of oiled and floured baking parchment and, carefully, turn the cake out onto the rack. Leave the cake to cool for five minutes.
6. While the cake is still a little warm, carefully peel the baking parchment off. Gently cut halfway through the cake, across the width of the cake, on the short side, about 1 cm-1/2 inch from the edge, this will help it roll up.
7. Starting from the side where you have made the cut, carefully roll up the cake and gently squeeze it to form the roll, before unrolling again in order to assemble the final cake.
8. Finish the filling by folding together the whipped cream and strawberries. Plaster the mixture generously onto the cake, then carefully roll up to make a Swiss-jelly roll. Trim the ends off to make a neat finish and dust with icing or confectioners' sugar.





## Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice The Classic Novel with Recipes for Modern Teatime Treats

By Martha Stewart

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What could be more perfect for a Book Club than a book that also has recipes? Called a “Book-to-Table Classic”, these classic novels with recipes for modern teatime treats is the perfect combination of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* combined with must-try recipes by Martha Stewart. Recipes fit the book theme and include classics like *Cream Scones with Currents*, *Sugar-and-Spice Cake*, *Fruit Turnovers*, *Macaroons* and more.

Most read *Pride and Prejudice* in high school or university or have seen one of the many movie versions.

Spirited Elizabeth Bennet meets the rich, single and proud Mr. Darcy and their first meeting doesn’t go so well. Mr. Darcy reluctantly finds himself falling in love with Elizabeth—a woman beneath his class and struggles to overcome his pride and prejudice to find true love. We may not think too highly of Mr. Darcy in the beginning, but by the end of the book, are rooting for a romantic reunion. And your book club will be rooting for more treats from this book.



A Martha Stewart Recipe

Makes about 30 sandwich cookies

### Ingredients:

1-1/4 cups confectioners’ sugar

Pinch of salt

1-1/2 cups sliced almonds, finely ground,  
or almond flour

1/4 cup granulated sugar

1/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

All-purpose flour, for dipping

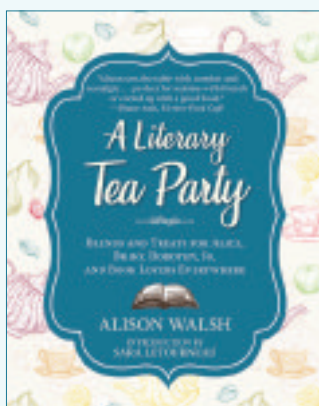
1/2 recipe Swiss Meringue Buttercream

3 large egg whites

(increase vanilla to 2-1/2 teaspoons)

1. Preheat the oven to 300°F. Sift confectioners’ sugar into a bowl. Whisk in ground almonds; set aside. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or nonstick baking mats (such as Silpats), and mark circles using a 1-1/2-inch cookie cutter dipped in flour.
2. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites on medium spread until foamy; add salt. Gradually add granulated sugar, 1 teaspoon at a time, until the whites reach medium-soft peaks. Transfer to a large bowl.
3. Sprinkle half of the sugar-almond mixture over the egg-white mixture. Using a large rubber spatula, fold until just incorporated. Add 1/4 teaspoon vanilla and remaining sugar-almond mixture, folding until just incorporated. Firmly tap the bottom of the bowl on a counter or work surface to eliminate any air pockets.
4. Transfer mixture to a large pastry bag fitted with a 1/2-inch plain tip (such as an Ateco #806). Pipe mixture into marked circles on prepared baking sheet.
5. Bake, rotating sheets halfway through, until macaroons feel slightly firm to the touch and can be gently lifted off the parchment (the bottoms will be dry), 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool on the baking sheets for 5 minutes, then transfer parchment and macaroons to a wire rack to cool completely. Using a small offset spatula, carefully remove macaroons from parchment. Spread 2 teaspoons buttercream on the flat sides of half the macaroons; sandwich with the other halves, keeping flat sides down. Refrigerate until firm, about 20 minutes, before serving. Filled cookies can be kept in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

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## A Literary Tea Party Blends and Treats for Alice, Bilbo, Dorothy, Jo, and Book Lovers Everywhere

By Alison Walsh

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Author Alison Walsh brings classic books to life with her recipes inspired by some of her favourite books. Discover a selection of savoury or sweet treats like *Devil's on Horseback: Bacon-Wrapped Dates* from *The Phantom of the Opera* to sweet treats like *Lavender Lemon Eclairs* (*The Secret Garden*), and *Queen of Hearts' Painted Rose Cupcakes* inspired by the book *Alice in Wonderland*.

The book is dedicated to book lovers everywhere and certainly will be the topic of conversation at your next book club. A great way to begin a book club evening (and get the conversation started) is to greet guests at the door with a cup of hot cider or a beverage based on a book. Surely guests will enjoy a cup of *Autumn Harvest Cider* (based on the book *Redwall*), *Hundred Acre Hot Chocolate* (*Winnie-the-Pooh*), *London Fog Lattes* (*Sherlock Holmes*), or cool, refreshing *Raspberry Cordial* from *Anne of Green Gables*.

There's even a chapter on brewing homemade tea blends. Pair a favourite speciality tea with themed treats from your favourite classic and find book club utopia with *A Literary Tea Party*. (And you will be most likely voted as "Book Club Host" of the year.)

## ARRIETTY'S MINI CHERRY CAKES FROM THE BORROWERS BY MARY NORTON



"Arrietty watched him move away from the step and then she looked about her. Oh, glory! Oh, joy! Oh, freedom! The sunlight, the grasses, the soft, moving air and halfway up the bank, where it curved round the corner, a flowering cherry tree! Below it on the path lay a stain of pinkish petals and, at the tree's foot, pale as butter, a nest of primroses."

Makes 7 mini cakes

### Ingredients:

- 1 10-oz frozen all butter pound cake
- 1/3 cup cherry preserves
- 1/2 cup Devonshire cream\*
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 7 fresh cherries

### SPECIAL TOOLS:

- 1 - 1/2–2-inch round cookie cutter

1. Thaw the pound cake according to package instructions. Cut it into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Using a round cookie cutter, cut 21 circles out of your cake slices.
2. Spread a small dollop each of cherry preserves and Devonshire cream on 14 of your 21 circles. Be careful not to spread it all the way to the edges, since the filling the will push out a little when the circles are stacked. Leave about 1/8 inch of clearance between the edge of the filling and the edge of the cake.
3. Stack the circles in towers of 3, with the plain circles (the ones without filling) on top.
4. Dust the tops of the cakes with powdered sugar. Add another small dollop of cream to the top of each cake, but don't spread it out. Set the cherries on top of the cream.
5. Serve under a cherry tree to your Borrower friends.

\* To make your own Devonshire cream, beat 4 oz softened cream cheese for 45 seconds in a standing mixer on medium-high speed. Add 2 Tbsp powdered sugar and 1 tsp vanilla, beating 2–3 minutes or until smooth. Gradually beat in 3 Tbsp heavy cream until the mixture is smooth and has the consistency of very dense whipped cream.



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## LEMON & LIME MERINGUE TARTLETS

Surprisingly simple to make, with a little practice, these tartlets use a Sablé sweet pastry or Pâte sablée, which can be quickly made in a food processor, and an Italian meringue which you will need a thermometer for.

Makes 6 Tartlets

Prepare 30 minutes

Cook 20 minutes



### Ingredients:

#### PASTRY:

200 g-1 1/2 cups plain/all-purpose flour  
100 g-7 tablespoons butter, at room temperature  
20 g-scant 1/4 cup ground almonds  
60 g-7 tablespoons icing or confectioners' sugar, plus extra for dusting  
1 egg yolk

#### TARTLET FILLING:

2 eggs  
1 egg yolk  
30 g-2 1/2 tablespoons caster/ granulated sugar

150 ml-2/3 cup double/heavy cream  
Grated zest and freshly squeezed juice of 1 lemon  
Grated zest and freshly squeezed juice of 1 lime

#### MERINGUE:

2 egg whites  
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
75 g-6 tablespoons caster/granulated sugar

6 small fluted tartlet pans or rings  
sugar  
thermometer  
Cook's blowtorch

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C (325°F).
2. For the pastry, blitz the flour, butter and almonds together in a food processor before adding the icing or confectioners' sugar, then the egg yolk. Continue to blitz until it forms a ball. Roll out the pastry to a thickness of about 2 cm-3/4 inch. Wrap it in some plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for an hour to chill.
3. Once the pastry is chilled, divide into six and roll each of these out to a thickness of about 3 mm-1/8 inch (you can dust the pastry with a little icing or confectioners' sugar to stop it sticking). Place the pastry into the small tartlet pans or rings, covering the base and sides. Place the tartlet bases in the refrigerator for a further 30 minutes to relax the gluten in the flour.
4. Prick the tartlet bases with a fork to stop them rising and bake in the oven for 10 minutes to 'set' the pastry; it should be just cooked but still pale.
5. For the tartlet filling, whisk the eggs, egg yolk, sugar, cream, and juice and zest of the lemon and lime together, before carefully pouring into the tartlet bases. Bake the filled bases for seven to nine minutes. Check after seven minutes to see whether the mix has just set, it should still wobble a little when shaken.
6. To make the meringue, you will need a spotlessly clean mixing bowl (I wipe mine with a little vinegar, or lemon juice, to remove any oil which will stop the meringue from setting firm).
7. Whisk the egg whites and vanilla to soft peaks.
8. Next, make a sugar syrup. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, add enough water to just cover the base, then add the sugar and heat until the mixture is boiling and the temperature reaches 115°C (240°F).
9. Now, while continuing to whisk the egg whites, pour the hot sugar syrup in a slow stream into the mixing bowl. Keep whisking until firm peaks are formed. Spoon or pipe the Italian meringue onto the tartlets and use a blowtorch to caramelize it. Serve as they are, or gently warmed for 10 minutes in a very low oven to make them extra special.