

Reading Group Guide

Hey, Readers and Book Clubs,

There are a lot of interesting themes that run through these stories, and they make for pretty lively and challenging discussions. We thought we'd throw out some ideas for you to think about or discuss at your meeting—after you have eaten a meal made from some of the recipes in the book. Or, you don't have to wait until after—we give you permission to talk and eat at the same time!

1. Probably the most common theme in the book is the concept of trust. Most of these “connecting” stories involve trusting strangers. For many of the authors, extraordinary experiences resulted from saying yes to invitations, asking for help, accepting a hand or offering theirs—when they had no idea of the outcome. Trust can be difficult if you don't know the people, the culture, the circumstances. Yet, without trust, fear prevents you from opening up and enriching your life. For most people, safe, comfortable, and predictable are far better places to be than walking into the unknown. Do you agree? What is your comfort zone? We've all learned from childhood that we're not supposed to talk to strangers. Is it a valid concept in adulthood? Sometimes trusting too much can be dangerous. How does one balance caution with adventure?

2. Another characteristic that many of the authors share is the willingness to take risks. Think about the risks you've taken in your life, risks that took you away from the norm and allowed you to break free of what you were expected to do. Did you find out some interesting things about yourself—and about the positive side of taking risks? What did you learn?

3. How about risks in the kitchen? Food is often a common theme around which connections are made. Sometimes the best quality time spent with others is the time spent preparing the meal

together. Has the book motivated you to try new foods, play with recipes, invent your own? Would you feel comfortable having a dinner party in which everyone participated in the creation of the meal? Why or why not?

4. Some of the stories take the reader through some pretty dramatic moments. Though all of the authors of the stories have taken risks and made connections, each situation is unique. Which ones made you laugh or cry or want to shout, “Hooray!”? Which authors do you identify with the most? The least? Why do you think you feel that way?

5. Have a look at the many different kinds of connections in these stories. Think about the role of connecting in your own life. Do you think the ability to connect is something that can be developed or is it wired into people’s personality-genome?

6. Did the stories inspire you to think about breaking free and taking off? To revisit your dreams? If you were given ten thousand dollars to travel for three months, where would you go, what would you do?

If you’d like to share your thoughts or report on your club’s discussion, we’d love to hear from you. Thanks for choosing *Female Nomad and Friends*. If you enjoyed the book, please tell your friends. Don’t forget that all the royalties are going to The Golden Fund which has been set up to send poor kids in India to vocational schools.

Thanks.

Best,

Rita and Maria, editors
Bonnie Betts, author representative

Please send your comments to: femalenomadandfriends@gmail.com