

My kind of book

Veronica Roth celebrates Chicago in her first novel for adults

by JUDY GELMAN

Costco's suggested Book Club read provides insight into a selected novel, as well as an appropriate recipe to accompany your own book club's discussion.

The book *Chosen Ones*, author Veronica Roth's first fantasy novel for adults, begins with five friends who were celebrated as teenagers for defeating a powerful entity. The teens, known as "The Chosen Ones," saved the world from the Dark One's attacks, which leveled cities and claimed thousands of lives. Fifteen years later, the heroes face even greater demons—and discover the Dark One's ultimate goal was much bigger than anyone could have foreseen.

Chicago is home to Veronica Roth and her *Chosen Ones* characters, who spend a lot of time separated from their home city and longing for it.

"Food connects us to the places and the people we miss most, and that's the purpose it serves in *Chosen Ones*," says Roth. She suggests two dishes synonymous with the Windy City to accompany a *Chosen Ones* discussion: deep-dish pizza and Chicago-style hot dogs.

"Chicago loves its food," she emphasizes, "and Chicagoans are particularly purist about these distinctive dishes."

Born in New York, Roth moved to Chicago as a child; deep-dish pizza and Chicago-style hot dogs made an



Veronica Roth

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indelible impression. "Pizza can be emotional for people living in a pizza-eating culture," she says. "The regional variations are so distinct and connected to our experience of 'home.'"

As her family put New York-style pizza on a pedestal, Roth learned to love deep-dish pie. She says, "It was a bit of a journey for me, coinciding with learning to love my new home." A Roth favorite is deep-dish pizza stuffed with mozzarella cheese, tomato and basil, a Caprese salad in pizza form.

Roth's affinity for Chicago-style hot dogs came later, when her husband urged them on her as she was writing *Chosen Ones*. These are beef hot dogs topped with mustard, pickles, pickle relish, sport peppers, diced onion, tomatoes and celery salt, served on poppy seed buns. "The combination of flavors works in a way I couldn't have predicted," she adds.

The couple have visited many of Chicago's famous hot dogs spots. "It's made a place I've lived in almost my entire life just a little bit better," says Roth. ■

Judy Gelman is the author of *The Book Club Cookbook* and creator of the website BookClubCookbook.com.



JUDY GELMAN

Mini Caprese Deep-Dish Pizzas

Oil or cooking spray, for oiling pan

1 can (16 oz) refrigerated flaky biscuit dough

12 oz mozzarella cheese, shredded and divided

18 cherry tomatoes, finely sliced

½ cup shredded fresh basil leaves, divided

½ cup pizza sauce

Preheat oven to 400 F. Lightly oil a standard-size 12-cup muffin pan.

Cut 6 biscuits in half. Place 1 biscuit half in each muffin cup. Firmly press into the bottom and up the sides, forming a ¼-inch rim over the edge.

Layer 10 oz of the mozzarella cheese, tomatoes and ½ cup basil into the cups. Top with pizza sauce and sprinkle with remaining mozzarella. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes, until dough is golden brown. Garnish with remaining basil leaves.

Cool slightly before removing from pan and serve warm. Makes 12 pizza cups.

Recipe courtesy of Judy Gelman.

COSTCO CONNECTION

Chosen Ones (Item #1406535; 4/7) is available in most Costco warehouses.

