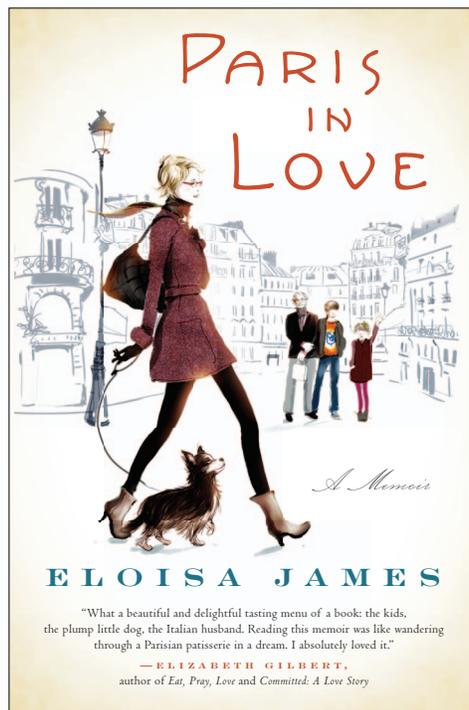


PARIS IN LOVE

BOOK CLUB PARTY KIT

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le livre (the book):

In 2009, *New York Times* bestselling author Eloisa James took a leap that many people dream about: she sold her house, took a sabbatical from her job as a professor of Shakespeare and moved her family to Paris. **PARIS IN LOVE: A MEMOIR** chronicles her joyful year in one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

Use this kit filled with Eloisa's tips to plan
your own Parisian-style party.



à boire (to drink):

I served pink champagne when I had my French readers over to the Paris apartment, dropping one or two red currants into each flute. Here's a pretty cocktail version of that drink to serve in regular glasses:

First, make dainty ice cubes by adding fresh raspberries to twice-boiled water (boiling the water first results in crystal-clear ice). Anna and I made these ice cubes for our Christmas party.

Then place a couple of raspberry ice cubes in each glass and add prosecco (Italy's answer to champagne) or sparkling water. Top it off with your choice of nectar (peach will turn it to a Bellini). Finally, add a dollop of cherry juice to give it a lovely color.

But if this all seems like too much work, just go for pink champagne! When we were in Paris, it was *the* wine to serve before a dinner party. Here's a great label:

André Clouet Champagne Brut Rosé

My friend who knows wines describes André Clouet's Brut Rosé champagne as having "notes of strawberry, white cherry, and orange blossom." What's not to love in that trio? The color is that of a rosy summer peach—and as champagnes go, it's not all that expensive, only about a third of the price of a bottle of Dom Pérignon.

Believe it or not, some people don't like champagne, so here's a red wine to offer those who don't care to drink stars (as the monk Dom Pérignon himself once said of champagne).

Domaine du Faucon Doré L'Authentique Rouge

My friend describes this Côtes du Rhône as having a "nose of licorice with spicy touches of truffles and pepper that gives way to red fruits on the finish." It's made from 80-year-old grapevines. I like to think of them growing, gnarled and slow, in the French countryside. Be sure to hold your glass up to the light because this wine is a gorgeous color, a smoldering garnet-purple.



à manger (to eat):

Why not try making an archetypal French cookie, the *macaron*? Anna and I had a great time making heart-shaped *macarons* with purple “JBs” on them (for Justin Bieber, with whom she is hopelessly in love). We’re no bakers, but these aren’t difficult.

My advice: keep ’em small. Don’t overbake, or the pink will turn light brown, at which point they will look (in my teenage son’s blunt estimation) like “turds.” Don’t worry if they crack on top. They still taste great!

Recipes for *macarons* are all over the internet. What you have here is an *homage* to online chefs who are kind enough to share their secrets. This recipe will make approximately six medium-sized *macarons* or ten small ones.

The night before you bake, separate the eggs and leave the (covered) whites out. (Save the yolks to make a frittata for supper.) The whites work best if they are “aged,” as it’s called in the *macaron*-making world. It’s also essential that they be at room temperature. The last time we made these, we forgot to age the whites, so Anna ran around with two eggs under her shirt, pretending she was a hen: when they didn’t hatch, we cracked them.

THE MACARONS

INGREDIENTS

¾ cup blanched almonds—grind them yourself
1 cup confectioners’ sugar
pinch of cream of tartar
2 extra-large egg whites (“aged”)
¼ cup superfine sugar
pink food coloring (or just a drop of red)

THE FILLING INGREDIENTS:

4 oz chocolate, (any flavor you want—
orange-flavored works really well),
chopped
1¼ cup heavy cream

DIRECTIONS

First, put the almonds in the food processor and process until they are the consistency of a fine meal. Already-ground almonds will lose flavor. You’re basically turning the almonds into flour (some recipes call for almond flour, but I wouldn’t know where to buy that). Then add the confectioners’ sugar and process for 15 seconds.



THE MACARONS (*continued*)

Put the egg whites in a bowl and whip them into foam, then add a pinch of cream of tartar and keep going for soft peaks. Start slowly beating in the superfine sugar until it all turns glossy. Add a drop of food coloring.

Fold the almond/sugar mixture into the egg whites by thirds. You want to keep folding until the mixture forms ribbons from the spatula. Watch this one—we overdid it once, and they all came out flat. (Still good, but flat.)

Shaping the cookies depends on whether or not you own a pastry bag. If you have a pastry bag, pipe 'em! We didn't, so we just shaped hearts on baking sheets covered with parchment paper. Either way, tap the baking sheet on the table to get rid of air bubbles and let the cookies stand for at least half an hour, until they are dry to the touch.

While the cookies are drying, preheat the oven to between 325 and 350 degrees, depending on how hot your oven is. The key is to turn it down 25 degrees when you're just putting in the cookie sheet. Rotate the sheet after about 7–10 minutes. At this point, watch them carefully to ensure they rise, but don't overbake them. (As has been previously noted, allowing them to turn brown may result in indelicate remarks from nearby children.)



It's important to allow the cookies to cool completely before you fill them.



Heat half the cream until it boils, and then pour it over the chopped chocolate. Stir madly until the chocolate has melted and is thoroughly incorporated. Whip the rest of the cream into soft peaks, and then fold the chocolate in. Sad to say, this part can go wrong. Once we failed to whip the cream enough and it turned into a runny mixture. At that point (in case you're wondering), you can't just start whipping again, because it all turns disgustingly cottage cheese-like.

But let's say that you end up with a perfect filling. Put a couple of tablespoons between each side of the *macarons*. Now we become decorative—going at those *macarons* with purple icing and pale pink edible beads—but you needn't. They are perfect as is.



discuter (discuss):

Use these questions as a guide when discussing the book:

1. Eloisa sold the house and the cars, uprooted her family, and travelled all the way to France in reaction to a cancer diagnosis (though not a life-threatening one). Have you experienced a similar life-changing event? What could you do to experience the same sort of cathartic experience without going to the extreme of packing up and moving abroad?
2. Imagine that you decided to sell many of your belongings and move to a foreign country. What would you pack and what would you keep? What would be the pros and cons for your children? Would living abroad or divesting your belongings cause you the most anxiety?
3. Domitilla and Anna carried on a months-long battle, only to end up best friends. Eloisa speculates that the rapprochement came about because the girls are similarly rambunctious, bossy, and funny . . . and because they were both excluded by the “Queen Bee.” Must best friends have similarities, in your view? Have you ever formed a friendship with someone who you had once believed was your enemy?
4. There are a number of poignant side-stories in *Paris in Love*, among them the Romanian homeless man and his puppy, the love story of Florent and Pauline, and the story of the Camondo family during World War II. What was the one story you responded to most strongly?
5. After bra shopping for herself and Anna, Eloisa concludes that her year in Paris should be declared the “Year of the Brassiere.” Do you associate specific articles of clothing with happy memories in your life? What garment from your past do you still remember with affection—even one as small as the Minnesota hat that bobbles its way through Paris on Anna’s head?
6. Many readers adore the love story of Pauline and Florent. Some two years later, they are very happy together and thinking of starting a family. Do you know of any love stories that originated with such a sweet, romantic gesture as the lemon tart? How about in your own life—what’s the most romantic thing that’s ever happened to you?
7. Elizabeth Gilbert, the author of *Eat, Pray, Love*, said that she “absolutely loved” *Paris in Love*. Like Eloisa, Gilbert came home transformed by her travels. Why do you think that major life changes can impel people to travel? If you could spend a year anywhere in the world, where would you go?

(continued)

8. Of course, *Eat, Pray, Love* was turned into a wonderful movie starring Julia Roberts. If you were in charge of casting the film version of *Paris in Love*, who would you pick to play Eloisa? Or Alessandro? (Hint: Alessandro would like to be portrayed by Johnny Depp.)
9. Anna announces (with a wail) that her parents promised they'd stay in France only one year—"and it's been two years at least." Time seems to move slowly when we're young...faster as we grow older. What do you remember about being eleven-years-old? Were you fighting with your classmates, happy with your environs, thrown into a new situation?
10. Is it possible to fall in love with a *place* in the same way we fall in love with people? Have you ever been to Paris, and if so, did you fall in love with it (or better yet, fall in love with someone while there)? How was your experience different from or similar to Eloisa's?
11. Eloisa has a gift for conjuring tiny pictures of the world, as when she describes (on page 108) snowflakes that "float sideways, looking fluffy and indecisive, as if they belong in another part of the world and are falling here by accident." What's your favorite description in the book?
12. *Paris in Love* originated as updates for Eloisa's friends and fans, posted on Facebook and Twitter. In what ways do you think that social media have made the world a smaller, more intimate place? Or do you think the opposite is true?
13. Eloisa insisted on keeping much of the book in small paragraphs, so as to keep the feeling of tiny bursts of experience. Did this format work for you, or would you have preferred a more conventional narrative structure?
14. The story of Luca's sixteenth birthday is arguably the funniest in the book, despite its moments of unhappiness. (As someone once put it, "Comedy is tragedy plus time.") A lot of readers say they laughed all the way through the piece. Did it remind you of any stories from your own life—mortifying at the time, but afterwards could now be laughed at?
15. Eloisa's friend Rose died during the year that Eloisa lived in Paris. But Eloisa picks up Rose's invitation—"It's so beautiful here; you must come before you die"—and hands it on to her readers. What is "here"? Or, rather, *where* is "here"? Does Eloisa mean that you should travel—or something else?

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

What did your book club think? Send your feedback (and even a picture) to rhpg@randomhouse.com.

For more information about the book and Eloisa James visit:
www.ParisInLoveBook.com.



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