

**Cecilia McGowan's Specials of the Day
Book Group Extravaganza
Bellevue Regional Library
King County Library System
November 15, 2008**

First Course—Fiction



***Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel**

Tita De la Garza, the novel's central character, makes her entrance into the world in her mother's kitchen, and this female realm becomes both a creative retreat and a prison for her. As a site for the crucial link between food and life, the kitchen becomes the center of Tita's world.

***Five Quarters of the Orange* by Joanne Harris**

Framboise Dartigen, a stoic widow, is almost 65 and living a shadow life in the small French farmhouse she and her family abandoned after a mysterious tragedy that took place during the German occupation in World War II.

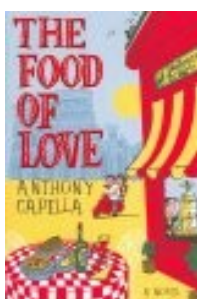
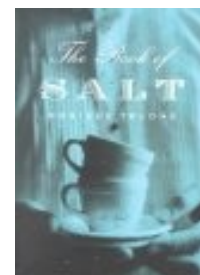


***Pastries: A Novel of Desserts and Discoveries* by Bharti Kirchner**

Sunya Malhotra lives to bake. This instantly likable woman owns and operates her own bakery in a trendy neighborhood in Seattle. But her Japanese boyfriend leaves her and she discovers that she can no longer conjure up her signature item, the Sunya cake. Mysterious notes left outside her bakery door lead her on a spiritual journey to Japan.

***The Book of Salt* by Monique Truong**

Set in Paris during the late 1920s and early 1930s, features Binh, the fictionalized Vietnamese cook to literary figures Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, who narrates the tale of his life working for "my Mesdames."



***The Food of Love* by Anthony Capella**

Laura is on her first trip to Italy. She's completely enamored of the art, beauty, and, of course, food that Rome has to offer. Soon she's enamored of the handsome and charming Tomasso, too, who tells her he's a chef at the famed Templi restaurant and proceeds to woo her with his gastronomic creations. But Tomasso hasn't been entirely truthful...

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Second Course—Nonfiction

My Life in France by Julia Child with Alex Prud'homme

Linked stories about the things Julia Child loved best are in this book: her husband, Paul Child; la belle France; and the many pleasures of cooking and eating. It also tells the story of how ***Mastering the Art of French Cooking*** came to be.

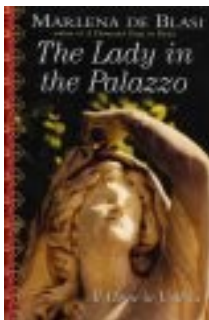


Salt: A World History by Mark Kurlansky

Salt - what could be more ubiquitous in our daily lives? But it not always so as we discover in this engrossing – and surprising – tale of the importance of salt in human existence.

Julie and Julia: 365 Days, 524 Recipes, 1 Tiny Apartment Kitchen by Julie Powell

Julie Powell is 30 years old, living in a rundown apartment in Queens, and working at a soul-sucking secretarial job that's going nowhere. She needs something to break the monotony of her life. So, she invents a deranged assignment: She will take her mother's dog-eared copy of Julia Child's 1961 classic, "Mastering the Art of French Cooking," and will cook all 524 recipes . . . in the span of just one year.



The Lady in the Palazzo by Marlena de Blasi

Chef and writer Marlena de Blasi and her husband lease a fifteenth-century palazzo in Orvieto. The owners promise to renovate, and Marlena and her spouse deal with endless delays, unfulfilled promises, money woes, and quirky workmen, even as they prepare wonderful meals, meet interesting characters, and explore Umbria.

The Botany of Desire by Michael Pollan

In linked narratives centering on four fundamental human desires--sweetness, beauty, intoxication, and control—we discover our interdependence on four plants that embody them: the apple, the tulip, marijuana, and the potato.

