

BOOK CLUB KIT



SEPTEMBER 28

Today at school I burnt my arm while taking a sheet pan out of the oven. And it turned out to be one of the greatest moments of my entire life! Jeff launched into action and put my arm under cold water before applying ointment to my screaming welt. Then, as he held my hand while wrapping my arm in gauze, I looked up at him and our eyes met — and held. “Good as new,” he finally said, holding my hand for a little longer than necessary. Thank you, Chef McDreamy.

Twenty-something Ruthie Cohen, a data entry minion for a second-tier movie app, spends her days thinking about the kickass meals she’s going to make for her besties, Trish and Lilly, while pining for Dean (sigh, Dean), her vacation fling from six months earlier. Could they have made it work in real life?

On top of that, Bubbe Bobby Grace, Ruthie’s beloved and inspiring grandmother, passed away and left Ruthie an inheritance of \$62,873.42, along with instructions on how to use it: “Follow your passion, Dollface.” During a prosecco-fueled night with her gal pals, Ruthie decides to turn her passion into a career and learn the art of French cooking, enrolling in culinary school, paying tuition, and buying her chef’s whites with a few quick clicks online. It’s not long before Ruthie marches into the kitchen and feels the heat from her cooking partner, Jeff, the super hunky (totally taken!) musician that weasels his way into her brain — right next to Dean.

How can anyone be expected to focus on school, cooking, career planning, baking, friends, and deciding between two hot guys, especially when one of them *also* thinks that John Cusack is woefully underrated? And what if neither feels quite like Ruthie’s perfect pairing?

PRAISE

“Written as a series of **charming and hilarious** diary entries, this novel is a fantastic blend of Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, Nora Ephron’s *Heartburn*, and the humor of Molly Harper, Janet Evanovich, and Emily Henry. Perfect for foodies who love a bit of fun, hijinks, and romance.”

– **LIBRARY JOURNAL, STARRED REVIEW**

“I simply devoured this **delicious debut** of a novel! Amy’s signature wit shines through in this quintessential mid-20s stumbling journey of romance, friendship, and every delectable bite that ties it all together.”

– **MARY BERG**, cookbook author and host of *The Good Stuff with Mary Berg*

“[This] was such an entertaining book, and it was a pleasure to read a foodie fictional piece where the dishes, places, and culinary terms are actually accurate! A delicious way to daringly dine and swoon from the comfort of your cozy chair.”

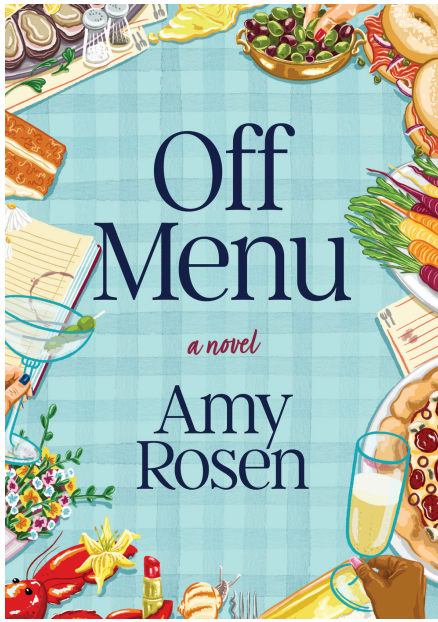
– **ANNA OLSON**, pastry chef & cookbook author

MOVIE LIST

The 10 Essential John Cusack Films

Ruthie's Hollywood obsession has appeared in almost 100 films: romantic comedies, action flicks, Oscar winners, box office flops, and more than a few cult classics. Here are John Cusack's 10 essential roles.

1. **THE SURE THING** (Romance/Comedy, 1985): A college road trip proves a sure thing isn't necessarily the best thing.
2. **SAY ANYTHING** (Romance, 1989): This coming-of-age classic captures the intense feelings of first love.
3. **THE GRIFTERS** (Crime/Drama, 1990): Three hard-boiled hustlers converge in L.A. It spells trouble for everyone.
4. **BULLETS OVER BROADWAY** (Comedy, 1994): A period piece featuring a play within a film – and it's a hilarious musical to boot.
5. **GROSSE POINT BLANK** (Romance/Comedy, 1997): A puppy-eyed assassin returns home for his high school reunion and the bullets fly.
6. **BEING JOHN MALKOVICH** (Comedy/1999): Underemployed puppeteer takes on a temp job and finds a secret portal leading to the mind of actor John Malkovich.
7. **HIGH FIDELITY** (Romance/Comedy, 2000): A record store owner with attitude recounts his many failed relationships to a pitch-perfect soundtrack.
8. **SERENDIPITY** (Romance/Comedy, 2001): Love at first sight, then an ocean and ten years apart until finally, destiny smiles.
9. **MARTIAN CHILD** (Family Drama/Comedy, 2007): A single sci-fi writer and widower wants to adopt a troubled child who believes he's a Martian. Is he?
10. **LOVE & MERCY** (Biography/Drama, 2014): The Beach Boys' Brian Wilson creates his masterpiece *Pet Sounds* while on a path to spiritual enlightenment.



Off Menu

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A wickedly funny, fast-paced, clever and fresh novel that is *Heartburn* meets *Bridget Jones's Diary* for a new generation. Catering to our insatiable appetites for food and romance, hilarity and heartbreak are dished out in equal measure. Mid-20s Ruthie navigates learning what she wants, who to love, and how to laminate pastry.

- 1 Is there a character you related to the most? Who and why?
- 2 How did you feel when Dean came back into Ruthie's story?
- 3 Did you relate to the friendships between Ruthie, Trish, and Lilly? How so?
- 4 How did the food scenes speak to you? Did you feel like cooking or eating after (or both)?
- 5 If Bubbe Bobby Grace hadn't passed away, do you think Ruthie's year would have still changed in any meaningful way?
- 6 Was there a point when you wished you could step in and give Ruthie advice? What did you want to say?

7

Which character would be your ideal dinner guest and why?

8

What did you think of Ruthie's reaction to Trish's "coming out"?

9

Did you trust Ruthie as an honest narrator?

10

Were you Team Jeff or Team Dean, and why?

11

Were you happy with Ruthie's final decision?

12

What do you think happens to the characters after the book ends?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy Rosen is an award-winning food and travel writer and cookbook author who writes for publications such as *Food & Wine*, *Bon Appétit*, and *The Globe and Mail*. A former editor-in-chief at *Modern Farmer* and food editor at *Chatelaine*, she's the author of seven cookbooks. Amy's also the proud founder of Rosen's Cinnamon Buns. She lives in Toronto, Ontario.



FIVE EASY RECIPES

RUTHIE'S FAVOURITE VEGGIE CREAM CHEESE (makes 1/4 lb)

1/4 lb cream cheese
2 tbsp minced red pepper
2 tbsp grated carrot
1 chopped green onion
4 chopped green olives
Small pinch of chili flakes
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients, toast up some bagels, spread generously with veggie cream cheese.

FETA DIP FOR TRISH AND LILLY (serves 4)

6 oz goat's milk feta cheese
1 large roasted red pepper (fresh or bottled), peeled, drained and chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp fresh lemon juice, as well as a bit of its zest
2 tsp olive oil
A few shakes Tabasco

Blitz everything together in a mini food processor. It goes great with warm, soft, Greek-style pita for ripping and dipping.



ROASTED APPESSAUCE FOR WHEN YOU'RE SAD (serves 4)

4 medium sized MacIntosh apples, peeled, cored, and quartered
2 tbsp brown sugar
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
Pinch of sea salt
1/2 - 3/4 cup boiling water

Preheat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit. Add prepared apples, sugar, cinnamon, and salt to an ovenproof pot. Roast for 25 - 30 minutes, or until apples are very tender. Remove from oven and add water, then allow to cool and pour mixture into a food processor or blender and blitz until smooth. Extra soothing when eaten warm.

VEGAN MAPLE LEMON VINAIGRETTE FOR DEAN (makes about 1 cup of dressing)

1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1/4 cup real maple syrup
1/4 cup white balsamic vinegar
2 large shallots, minced
1/2 cup light olive oil
Juice of 1 lemon
Salt and pepper to taste

To a mixing bowl add mustard, syrup and vinegar, and whisk to combine. Add minced shallots then slowly add the oil, whisking so that dressing emulsifies. Add lemon juice and season with salt and pepper. Enjoy on fresh leafy greens sprinkled with toasted nuts or pumpkin seeds, and maybe even some vegan alfalfa sprouts.



MEMORIES OF THAILAND GREEN MANGO SALAD

(serves 2-3)

2 small bird's eye chilies

1 garlic clove

Pinch of salt

3 tbsp roasted peanuts

10 cherry or grape tomatoes, cut in half

2 cups julienned green mango

1/2 cup steamed green beans, sliced into thirds

2 tbsp palm sugar (or more to taste)

2 tbsp fresh lime juice, about the juice of 1 fat lime

1 tbsp fish sauce

Pound chilies, salt, and garlic with mortar and pestle. Add peanuts and pound to a coarse paste. Add tomatoes and gently bruise in mortar. Toss into a bowl with prepared green mango and grated or pounded palm sugar, lime juice, and fish sauce. It should taste sour, salty, sweet, and hot. In other words, like a day on the beach in Thailand. Adjust seasoning until you close your eyes, taste, and you're there.

BONUS: PRINT YOUR OWN RECIPE CARD

Ruthie's Easy (Serves 8) Lemon Meringue Pie

Ingredients

15-20 Social Tea biscuits, crushed or blitzed into crumbs
1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
3 eggs, separated into yolks and whites
3/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
5 tbsp sugar

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Mix biscuit crumbs with melted butter. Pat down firmly into an 8" greased pie dish.

To a medium bowl add condensed milk, egg yolks, and lemon juice. Beat for several minutes with a whisk until well combined. It will be smooth but runny. Pour filling into the piecrust and bake for 30 minutes in preheated 350 degree oven. Remove and let cool for a half hour.

With a whisk, whip the egg whites until foamy and then gradually add sugar. Beat until firm peaks form in meringue, and then pour the meringue on top of baked, cooled pie, artistically smoothing and mounding it. Turn the oven on to broil. Put the pie under broiler for about 30 seconds, or until meringue browns slightly. Take that, Chef Bertrand!

