



Let Us Eat Cake

By Sharon Boorstin
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Introduction

Sharon Boorstin wrote a wonderful article called "Recipes for Friendship" in the February 2001 issue of *More* magazine in which she described how a notebook of recipes she'd compiled as a newlywed led her on a journey of reconnecting with past girlfriends. Her story touched a chord with women of all ages and inspired them to reminisce about their own experiences of food and friendship.

Let Us Eat Cake is a powerful memoir that explores the power of cooking and food to cement relationships among women, from famous women chefs to grandmothers over the stove, from young girls baking their first cake together to college students sharing bread and cheese along a European roadside. In it, Boorstin includes 25 delicious recipes from memorable times in her life and the lives of others.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are our earliest childhood memories related to food? Are they good or bad, and did they influence the way we looked on food and family as we grew up?
2. How are our food memories linked to our mothers? Grandmothers? Our cultural and religious heritage?
3. Do we pass down our food memories, food traditions, and attitudes towards food, to our children?
4. What are the main reasons we cook? Necessity and obligation? Pleasure? Creativity? To nurture?
5. How would we characterize the female friendships we had in our childhood? Our teenage years? Young adulthood? Middle age? Which were the closest, the most meaningful? How have they differed?
6. Why do we bond with some women and not with others? How do our female friendships change during the different stages of life? Why do we stay friends with some women our whole lives, but not with others?
7. How do women in their teens and twenties today differ in their attitudes from earlier generations of women regarding cooking, romantic relationships, and female friendships?

Quotes for Discussion

1. "Women bond over food the way men do over sports."
2. "When I was younger, friendship could be undermined by competitive feelings == about men, looks, career. Not anymore. Ask any woman over forty if she agrees. Most likely she'll say, 'Competition? We're too old for that!'"
3. "The generation of women born during or just after World War II were raised with old-fashioned notions about what constitutes 'respectable' behavior and our place in society, yet we were just ahead of those who grew up with the freedoms afforded by women's lib."
4. "I never said 'I love you' to my high school and college girlfriends, though what I felt for them was deep, unconditional love. Those three magic words were reserved for the most intimate moments between a woman and a man."
5. "Today I say 'Love you' (not only) to my mother, my sisters, and my grown-up children, but to my girlfriends, and they say it back. Why not? We really do love each other. Having reached middle age, we have learned that we may fall in and out of love with men, but we never stop loving our parents, our children == and our girlfriends."
6. "When it comes right down to it, a woman really is the sum of all the friends she has had in her life."
7. "Between women, as there is between women and men, sometimes there is just a chemistry."

About the author

Sharon Boorstin was the restaurant critic for the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* and her articles have appeared in *Bon Appetit*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Playboy*, *More*, *Food Arts*, *Conde Nast Traveller* (U.K), and *Porthole*. She and her husband have two children and live in Beverly Hills, California.