# "Girls Night In" Book Club Menu Ideas

Below are some great ideas for book club menus submitted by my wonderful readers. Thanks goes out to those that sent in their favorites and I hope that you can now get some great ideas for your next book club gathering! Don't forget: regardless of what you drink or eat, the most important element of any Girls Night In is to have fun! Good friends and good conversation make the best pairing of all.

Warmest Wishes, Julie James, National Bestselling Author of *A Lot Like Love* 



## FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS

**Pinot and Salmon with Orzo:** I'm originally from Oregon, and one of my favorite meals to serve small groups is a simple baked salmon with olive oil drizzled over tri-color bell pepper and capers on top, cold orzo pasta tossed with fresh chopped herbs, olive oil and sea salt, and a fresh green salad. Serve this with a fabulous Oregon pinot noir...a lower cost favorite comes from Patricia Green Cellars, a small winery in the Willamette Valley with a very talented vintner, called "Dollar Bills Only". Finish with some special chocolate truffles or if that's too fancy just a grab bowl full of M&M's. Renee C.

**Warm and Smooth:** I like my wine like I like my men....warm and smooth. I don't like a wine that is too tart, or to sweet. I love Quady North's Syrah. Their Syrah has aromas of anise, black cherry pepper evolve The wine is substantial, but soft in style, with a lean, mineral profile. I would and have paired this with steak and pasta. Hope F.

**TJ's Won't Let Me Down:** In one trip I can get not only my food but also my beverages, all I need is access to Trader Joes. I'm a fan of several of TJ's house brands of wine & their specialty beers (TJ Vintas Pino Noir is fantastic) which I'd serve with an assortment of their fantastic cheeses & crackers; Stilton with Apricot's would certainly top the list. CursingMama

**Therapy Unwrapped:** Favorite feel-good pairing would have to be a bottle of Little Penguin's Merlot and a bag of individually wrapped Dove chocolates. Bonus: The more you drink, the more amusing the, er... "inspirational messages" inside the Dove wrappers become. To prepare: Tear Dove bag and dump contents onto flat surface. Pop cork on wine. Unwrap a chocolate and pair with a few sips from your glass. Repeat as necessary. While Little Penguin isn't a high end brand, it's not horrid for it's price (under \$10) and is even better if you decant for about an hour. Katharyn

### **BASIC RED VARIETIES**

#### Merlot

The leading varietal consumed by Americans, this wine is medium-bodied and deep in color. Pairs well with burgers, roasted or grilled meats, pizza, Latin and Tex-Mex foods (like fajitas). Also great with chocolate. Flavors and aromas: cherry, plum, chocolate, tobacco.

#### Zinfandel

Ranges from medium to full-bodied, with high alcohol. Deep, concentrated flavor with aromas of jam, cherry, blackberry, cinnamon and black pepper. Typically a spicier wine, it pairs well with burgers, BBQ, and cheese-based sauces.

#### **Pinot Noir**

Light to medium bodied, one of the most adaptable red wines. Pairs well with roasted and braised meats and poultry, fatty fish, ribs, roast beef, and richer vegetarian dishes. Flavors and aromas of berries, chocolate, mushroom--usually has an earthy quality to it.

#### Shiraz (also known as Syrah)

Medium to full-bodied, spicy, rustic and more earthy in style. A dense, dark red wine with flavors of pepper, blackberry, and leather. Pairs well with grilled meat, pork chops, and pasta with meat-based sauces.

#### **Cabernet Sauvignon**

Typically full-bodied and often referred to as the "king" of red wines. Almost always aged for at least one year from harvest, it has flavors and aromas of darker, deeper fruits (cherries, plum, black currants), black tea, eucalyptus, cedar and tobacco. Pairs well with steak, lamb, veal shank, dark chocolate and blue-veined cheeses. Apps or Desserts with Wine: I have two bookclubs and we always have wine and a few appetizers and a dessert. We alternate homes and hostesses and everyone takes a turn to bring something...we sometimes have a theme especially if the book has a food or wine theme in it but otherwise it is really just whatever the individuals decide to prepare. Our best spread was an Italian pasta salad from the *Barefoot Contessa* cookbook and beautiful crusty bread and carrot cake and Ghirardelli fudge brownie cookies...and at least 4 bottles of wine were consumed by the girls!!! It was lovely!! I also remember having some crabmeat stuffed mushrooms at one gathering that paired with my favorite Rosemount Pinot Noir was really good!! Shannon M.

Lasagna and Chianti: I love Girls' Nights In. When we get together, my friends and I love lasagna with a chianti. It's easy and super delicious! For a chianti, try the 2006 Danzante Chianti--only \$12 a bottle. Tessa

**Chocolate and Box Wine (don't judge!):** Set up a blind taste test with an assortment of milk and dark chocolate bars to be rated - both high and not-so-high end. Pair that with a 2009 Bota Box Old Vine Zinfandel and you've got a fun and inexpensive party for lots of girlfriends! Mollie

Wine goes with everything I eat: I love Michael Torino Argentina Cabernet. It is a little unique in that the grapes grow 5,500 ft above sea level. The warm sunny day help gives this wine a vivid fruit flavor. Priced in the low teens, we enjoy this wine by itself or any food or dessert. Our favorite is with Alaskan salmon which my husband catches each year.He remembers the name of the wine by connecting Torino with cars. Sue B.

When we get together I have to make my cheesecake. I'm famous for my cookies & cream cheesecake! With an Oreo crust, it's almost better than sex. Put it with a fruity Merlot or a nice Chardonnay and a fabulous book, and it's a perfect Girls' Night In. Dina M.

I'm on the dessert wines kick at the moment so my suggestions are all dessert wines or port. My last visit to the Napa Valley, I discovered V. Sattui winery and their Madeira port...yummy:) as well as their Muscat and Angelica dessert wines. Another winery with a good port was Prager winery and port also in St. Helena, their Sweet Claire riesling also yummy. Estelle C.

My friends and I get together once a month for dinner. Usual appetizers are guacamole and chips and artichoke dip. Depending on who host our gathering depends on the food for the night. The favorite desserts for our group would be cheesecake or rum cake. There are a few local vineyards in the Nashville area. Arrington is my favorite. They have a great white wine called Stag's White. My favorite red by them is called Red Fox Red. They also have amazing dessert wines in either Raspberry or Blackberry flavors. Liza

**Spicy & Sweet:** Mexican Cucumber Salad and Robert Mondavi Johannesburg Riesling. Sandra M.

**Conundrum**: My favorite wine is Conundrum. Anything pairs well with this, but I love making bruschetta. Fresh tomatoes seasoned with italian herbs, fresh shaved parmesan, and placed on crusty bread sliced thin and lightly brushed with olive oil. Yum! Kris G.

**Riesling & Chicken Pasta:** I LOVE Riesling because it's so sweet and light. I think it is best served with some light pasta and chicken. Kristi D.

**Tapas Night:** Aaaaahhh, I feel like having a girls night in now. Food drinks wise I would go for either a tapas & sangria evening (marinated and / or battered mushrooms, garlic/rosemary potatoes, olives, chorizo, garlic prawns, bread with aioli / olive oil / homemade tapenade)...or cheese fondue (also with bread, olives, mushrooms and chorizo). And for dessert I would either make what's knowns as "THE dessert" in my family (it's 'kwark' -don't know the name in English-, bananas, vanilla ice cream and whipped cream mixed together and it is absolutely

### BASIC WHITE VARIETIES

#### Chardonnay

One of the most popular wines throughout the world, it can range from medium to full-bodied depending on whether it is aged in oak. Aged chardonnay pairs well with rich, creamy foods and richer, fatty poultry and fish. Unoaked Chardonnay is lighter and pairs well with lean poultry and seafood, lighter pasta, and vegetarian dishes.

#### Riesling

There are two kind of rieslings. German ones are sweet and fruity, and pair well with salty, spicy, smoky and sweet food items (Examples: Thai and Indian cuisine, BBQ ribs.) Alsace rieslings from France are less sweet and leaner, and pair well with delicate, lighter and simple dishes.

#### Sauvignon Blanc

Commonly ranges from light to medium-bodied, always a crisp, acidic wine. On its own, this wine can be tart and refreshing. Drink while young to capture the wine's zesty flavors and aromas. Pairs well with appetizers, soups, and salads, lean poultry and fish, and vegetarian dishes.

delicious). Of course I could also change my mind here and go for chocolate fondue with fresh fruit & marshmallows and wine wise I would get out the gewurztraminer (a white wine from the Alsace in France) and a bottle of strawberry wine that we buy from a small farm in France. Jasja

**Why Girls Like Pink:** Gloria Ferrer Brut Rose (Pink Champagne) paired with: Oysters on the Half Shell (Appetizer) Grilled Lemon Prawns with Cream (Entree) Floating Islands with Lemon-Scented Custard Sauce and Raspberries (Dessert). Christina T.

Wine and Cheese: My favorite menu is a great cheese plate and several bottles of Pinot Grigio to share with my friends. Carol

**Wine and Dip:** When having people over my favorite things to have are dips like spinach dip and my favorite wine, Blue Nun. Maureen

A Perfect Fare For Girls Night In: A nice bottle of white zinfandel or for a non alcoholic drink, punch with pineapple juice, ginger ale and vanilla ice cream. Swedish Meatballs, Quiche Lorraine, Tossed spinach salad with everything in it. My wonderful stuffed mushrooms and homemade potato salad. Chicken salad sandwiches with cranberries and apples. Baked Ziti. For dessert: Fruit Trifle with pound cake and whipped cream, Lemon Bars, Dark Chocolate Covered Strawberries Enjoy! Pat L.

We have this awesome homemade wine "Hinnants" made out of Pine Level NC. We'd have the classic muscadine wine, the pomegranate (which is my favorite) and the blueberry. The lady friends and I sure wouldn't be eating meat and potatoes. We would dive into something that kids and men would



never touch =) and LOTS of Chocolate, and a rustic apple tart! Cristal

Great idea. What would I serve to a girls-night inn ? It probably depends on which "girls" I'm inviting. My best friend is all about wine. So I'd probably serve a nice chilled Lambrusco (red preferably). This wine allows so many pairing from stuffed mushroom to chocolate desserts. And you can drink more than one glass without getting tipsy (which is always good). A few other of my friends are tea-addicts so I'd propose different tea blends with the customary cookies and cupcakes. Both are really appealing to me... Think of it, I should probably plan one of those girls night in soon. Emmanuelle

### Pizza Snacks

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 lb. sausage, removed from casing
- 1/2 box Velveeta
- 1/4 tsp garlic
- 1/4 tsp oregano
- Party rye sliced bread loaf

Mix together meat and cook over medium-high heat until done. Add Velveeta and stir until melted. Then add spices and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.

Spread on Party Rye sliced bread, and bake at 350F for 10 minutes.

I have my girls over, we usually eat girly things that I can whip up in advance, like quiche or a nice strata. Occasionally, I'll mix it up with a nice bolognese over some pasta-either spaghetti or rigatoni, depending on what I've got on hand. If it's a fancy occasion, I'll splurge for a bottle of champagne, such as Moet and Chandon. Otherwise, we drink a lot of light beer (Amstel Light) or whatever wine is on sale at Trader Joe's! Courtney

When my friends and I get together for a Girls Night In we usually all bring our favorite wines my is cheap but oh so delicious Bully Hill Sweet Walter Red and by Bestie usually brings Arbor Mist Pear Pinot Grigio or White Zinfindel. We always make Pizza Snacks for an appetizer which is 1lb of burger and 1lb of sausage

cooked together after it gets done add half a box of velveeta 1/4 tsp garlic and oregano mix well. Then spread on Party Rye bake at 350 for 10 min. The meal is always different we choose someones favorite every month but for dessert we do white chocolate brownie bites and cherry cheese pie. Wow, now I'm hungry. Miranda

Our girls nights are usually to celebrate one's birthday. All of us have husbands and children of our own and our group tends to try to drag out the night if possible. We usually start dinner at a nice restaurant in town called Town Bistro. We are white wine drinkers and usually start with a Pinot Grigio. They have a wonderful mixed greens salad with toasted almonds, dried cherries, and their house balsalmic vinegarette. My favorite entree is the panko crusted scallops. Some of the girls get the lamb. We usually end the night with their signature dessert, creme brulee. Seriously, it is to die for! They also have a flourless chocolate tort that isn't half bad either. Hungry Yet? We don't usually discuss any book in particular but we do exchange our new favorites. Paige

**The best food and beverage pairing for me:** When ever I have a girls night in, we do a couple different things. We either put in a great sappy movie (anything with an extremely happy ending) and munch on popcorn, brownies and white zin wine, or we talk about a great love story we just read and eat chinese food with a large cup of hot teal! Both are such a treat to me that I cherish them a lot!!! Sarah C.

# MENU IDEAS WITH RECIPES

**Girls Night In- No Boys Allowed:** For a girls night in book club I would probably get a couple bottles of Yellow Tail Wine, make a champagne punch (a bottle of cranberry juice, a bottle of cheap champagne and a ring of cranberries frozen in ice), and have some Woodchuck cider on hand. To go along with that I would fix seasoned oyster crackers (1 tbsp of garlic salt, dill, and lemon pepper, a packet of dry ranch dressing mix, and 1 cup of veg. oil, shake crackers in Zip-loc bag and serve), an assortment of little hershey's candies, a tray of Chik-fil-a nuggets (with various dipping sauces of course), and a pasta salad for the more health conscious (bow-tie pasta, covered in olive oil, mixed with fresh basil leaves, mozzarella balls, and cherry tomatoes). There also might need to be some good old fashioned Toll House cookies (in dough and cooked form). And because I'm a Texas girl, chips, salsa, queso (velveeta melted with Ro-tel), and guacamole. If I had time I would make cinnamon-sugar tortilla chips (cut up tortillas like a pie, wet them with damp paper towel, coat in cinnamon sugar mixture, bake for 7-10 minutes, or until crispy). Taylor L.

**Feel Good Comfort**: Catalan Seafood Paella and for desert: Zifandel and Chardonnay with Fresh fruit and cheeses and an assortment of fine chocolates Catalan Seafood Paella. Shirley H.

### Catalan Seafood Paella

Ingredients:

- 8 Shrimps
- 1/2 Lb of Monk Fish
- 8 Clams
- 16 Mussels
- 3 fresh leeks, white and tender parts only
- 2 Spanish Artichoke Hearts
- 1 Piquillo Pepper
- 1 Spanish onion, diced
- 1 Large Tomato, hand crushed
- 4 cups short grain Bomba Rice from Delta Del Ebro
- 6 cups homemade stock, warm See instructions
- Essencia 100% Arbquina Extra Virgin Olive
  Oil
- Sea Salt from the Mediterranean

Instructions:

Add a one to two tablespoons of Essencia Olive Oil to the pan. Sauté the artichoke hearts (cut in eighths), leeks (white tender part only cut in strips), piquillo pepper (cut in strips), Reserve. Make a "sofregit" by sautéing the onions; cook for 2 or 3 minutes on a medium heat. Then, add tomatoes and cook until the mixture caramelizes a bit and the flavors meld. Fold in the rice and stir-fry to coat the grains. Add some salt, after 2 or three minutes stop stirring. No more stirring from now on. Place the leeks, artichoke and pepper in the pan as shown in the picture. Pour in the stock and cook for 10 minutes. Add the monk fish, shrimp, mussels and clams as shown in the picture and continue cooking for 8 more minutes. Paella is ready to serve. Serves 4 hungry people.

**Wine and Brownies:** My favorite pairing is red wine and dark chocolate. A good choice for a reasonable red is Chateau Chevalier Cabernet from Napa Valley (\$16 at Trader Joe's) and the following brownie recipe (source: The Farm of Beverly Hills (and the Grove)'s Brownies (from *Gourmet Magazine*). Karen

#### **Gourmet Brownies**

Ingredients:

- 3 sticks unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 12 oz fine-quality bittersweet chocolate (not unsweetened), chopped
- 6 large eggs
- 1 1/4 cups cake or pastry flour (not self-rising)
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder (not Dutch process)
- 3 cups sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter and flour a 13- by 9by 2-inch metal baking pan, knocking out excess flour. Melt butter with chocolate in a large metal bowl set over a saucepan of barely simmering water, stirring until smooth. Remove bowl from pan and whisk in eggs, 1 at a time. Sift together flour and cocoa powder in a separate bowl and stir into batter with sugar and salt. Pour batter into pan and bake in middle of oven until top is firm and a tester inserted into center comes out with crumbs adhering, 40 to 45 minutes. Cool completely in pan on a rack, about 2 hours, before cutting into 20 squares.

# SANGRIAS, MARGARITAS, MOJOTOS AND OTHER COCKTAILS

**Port or White Sangrias:** Okay, I know this sounds weird but one of my favorite appetizers for pairing with wine is buttermilk blue cheese, drizzled with honey and served with wheat crackers and port wine. Heavenly! For girls night in I typically make white sangrias using Rhine wine, peach schnapps, honey, and chunks of orange, lemon, and granny smith apples and mix it with a little ginger ale to give it a fizz and our snack of choice is spicy red pepper hummus and pretzel chips. Tori

I would love to host a girl's night in! I'm getting ready to go to a girl's afternoon out in a bit. However, if I hosted one I think Sangria with fresh fruit would be the perfect beginning! I would also have a chocolate fondu with several dipping items with fruit, brownies, and Rice Krispie treats!!!! Yummy! Shahenda

**Teo Takeout:** takeout from Teotihuacan, a Mexican food place about 8 blocks away: Enchiladas Suisas, chips, and 1 order of flan for each person, and margaritas made in-house Melinda P.

**Pizza and a Movie:** We always have Pizza and Margaritas while we watch movies and make jewelry and Gossip!! Cynthia S.

**Girls Night In Fiesta:** Margaritas, Chicken Tortilla Soup, Chips, Salsa, and Guacamole and a great Beach Read Melissa

**Books, Girls and Fun Food:** Sinful nachos and Petron Margaritas Susan

When we actually get together, tough with schedules, we mix a batch of coconut margaritas and order pizza. Easy on the schedules and no one has to spend a lot of time cooking. Of course, just the fact that the "girls" can spend time yakking, uh I mean, discussing the book, is the best part of all! Gale

Me and my buddies have simple tastes and we don't drink a lot of wine and we don't know much about wine either! I like the box kind! LOL! We prefer having Margaritas, mudslides or mojito nights! Sometimes we have a taco buffet with all the fixings. Homemade salsa's and guacamole is a must! Some nights its fresh vegetables and crackers or crusty french bread with with flavored oils and dips. My favorite is my sisters cheesy artichoke dip! We always have lots of garlic hummus, pita strips, and marinated olives too! Yummy! We

### TRADITIONAL SANGRIA

- 1 bottle dry red wine
- 1/2 cup brandy
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup triple sec
- 1 orange, sliced into rounds
- 1 lemon, sliced into rounds
- 1 lime, sliced into rounds
- 10 maraschino cherries
- 2 cups ginger ale (or carbonated soda)

In a large pitcher or bowl, mix together the red wine, brandy, lemon juice, orange juice, and triple sec. Drop slices of orange, lemon and lime, and maraschino cherries into pitcher. Refrigerate overnight for best flavor and for a fizzy sangria, add ginger ale just before serving.

always have cheesecakes or brownies too! Us girls need our chocolate! Oh, I'm making myself hungry! Johanna J.

Moms and Mojitos: My idea is to get together my mom's book group and make it a Spanish flavored

### SIMPLE MARGARITA

- 1 ounce tequila
- Dash of Triple Sec
- Juice of 1/2 lime or lemon

Pour ingredients over crushed ice and stir. Rub the rim of a stem glass with rind of lemon or lime, spin in salt—pour drink into glass and sip. romance bash. I am envisioning a tapas table, a mojito bar, and tiny enchiladas and spicy tacos. Then as we sample we can cluster and rave about our top 5 romance titles of 2010, and our top 5 wants to be read in 2011. Teri

When the girls get together, we often time have to make a double batch of pomegranate martini mojitos and a slow cooker full of spinach and artichoke dip. So good!!!! Shannon P.

**Cozy and Comfortable:** chicken and dumplings, sweet potato casserole, nachos, wine, beer, hot buttered rum. Tracy E.

I would serve "Accra" (a Haitian appetizer) ... drink that I always serve is [1 cup of mix fruits (frozen mango, peach, pineapple and cherry) with 1/4 cup frozen (100% apple and dark cherry juice) and 2 cup of champagne (or other alcohol of choice). Mix all in a magic bullet or blender and it's the best drink you'll ever have.] Desert of course will be cheesecake. Rose

#### It must be the night fever [we know how to do it!]: Home-

made California Rolls and Sesame rolls [sushi] Locally made Saké [Takara] for those who drink, Local plum juice for those who don't drink. Steamed snow peas with mushrooms Salmon, broiled Mochi for dessert. mmmm. Jan P.

**Fun and Good For You:** Broccoli and Spinach (just steamed to warm and topped with a light sprinkle of butter). Drink Pomegranate Martinis (best made with fresh squeeze home-grown pomegranates!) Yummy and good for you. Z.

### CLASSIC MOJITO

- 1.5 oz rum
- 12 fresh spearmint leaves
- 1/2 lime
- 7 oz club soda
- 2 tbsp. simple syrup
- (or 4 tsp. sugar)

Gently crush mint leaves and lightly squeeze lime in a cool tall glass. Pour sweet syrup to cover and fill glass with ice. Add Rum, club soda, and stir your emerging mojito well. Garnish with a lime wedge and a few sprigs of mint.

Me and the girls already have a monthly get together where we have Chinese food, sushi, a lot of apple martinis, and a local wine that's on the sweet side. I love our times together, the night just flies, and there's a lot of laughing to be heard. Joder

**Out Night:** Love the menu for a girls night out start with an appetizer of tacos/popcorn then move on up to seafood or pizza depends on the mood with soda but to end with a nightcap of brandy. Karen M.

### LEMON DROP MARTINI

- 1 & 1/2 oz citron vodka
- squeeze 1/4 lemon juice
- splash fresh lime juice
- 1 oz sugar syrup.

From Hook restaurant in Washington DC. The key is to shake it with lots of ice to make it really cold to bring out the bright lemon flavors.

### DESSERT MENUS

I would make a chocolate trifle with chocolate cake, I would drizzle the chocolate cake with Frangelico, then a layer of chocolate pudding, then fresh raspberries, repeat. Cover the trifle with fresh whipped cream (no sugar) than top with granulated sugar. Serve coffee with the Frangelico! Elizabeth I.

One of the best accompaniments with red wines is dark chocolate so it would be fun to make up a mix of dark chocolate truffles to complement those red wines. Dark chocolate is especially good with port too. I bet someone could come up with a fantastic cheese/dark chocolate truffle that would work really well with wine tastings.... Christi S.

# NON-ALCOHOLIC MENUS

**Sushi and Sparkling Beverages:** I'd pair a sparkling fruity cider with one of my favorites–the Lizzy roll, which features fresh salmon and avocado, topped with lemon. Yum! Diana

My book club meets in the cafe of the bookstore. We order our food individually. However, if were we to meet at a home I think on the menu would be artichoke dip with crispy French bread slices, brie en croute, chocolate fondue, cheesecake, bellinis. Ameliad

When we girls get together, we are al about the sweet tea. I know it's a southern thing, y'all, but still. Tea is the best Pair that with anything covered in and/or made of chocolate, and we are happy people. Chelsea B.

### HOLIDAY PUNCH

- 80oz frozen raspberries in syrup
- 48oz frozen lemonade concentrate
- 184oz pineapple juice
- 256oz chilled 7-Up® soda

Place raspberries and lemonade in blender, process till smooth. Strain into punch bowl. Discard seeds. Stir in pineapple juice. Just before serving, add 7-Up.

Cheese & Wine: Favorite pairings would be some Thai noodles and curry with Thai Ice Tea. Yum! Lydia

# ALL ABOUT THE FOOD

**Caprese and a Caper:** Caprese Salad (slice of tomato with a soft slab of mozzarella on top, sprinkled with freshly-chopped basil and a splash of garlic-infused oil) and any sparkling water or wine. Reanne B.

**Friends, Food, and Footnotes Fiesta:** Friends and books are the spice of life, so what better to serve at our book club than Mexican food and Spanish wine. We will savor each other's company while we savor the wine. We will share our thoughts on the spicy Julie James novel while sharing spicy Mexican dishes. And we will relax in the afterglow of an entertaining evening together...just us girls. Allison

On of my favorites and my guest's favorites is feta artichoke dip!! We all eat it until it's GONE!! A must have at any gathering! Jackie

I serve one of two things because they are always requested one is Candy Apple Salad and the other is an Ice Cream Cake. The whole outer layer is made of ice cream sandwiches. It is made in a springform pan then there is a cookie crust layered with ice cream and topped with whipped topping. You can get creative with the ice cream flavors. Michele B.

Favorite appetizers include homemade hot artichoke dip and sausage bites. The bites are made with just two ingredients. Pepperidge Farm Puff Pastry and sausage. Super easy to make and and very delicious! Vanessa

My very favorite 'girls night in' drink and foods are: Wine, of course, trays of fresh veggies with dips, cheeses, hard salami, fresh fruits, assorted crackers and chips. Also, I make a killer Texas Nacho Dip that is usually eaten up first. YUMMY!!!! Noel V.

**Girls Night in book club:** Well, I would go for a nice white wine (any will do as far as I am concerned) petit crab cakes, sliders, garden salad, and a chocolate mousse for dessert. Soncie L.

Now I liked to mix it up a bit. My sister is newly gluten-free (she discovered that she has celiac disease), so gluten-free fried tacos are pretty easy to make followed with something sweet like Dove milk chocolate pieces. Enjoyed by my friends, too. Snacks can include seven-layered dip (also easy), guacamole, salsa, and chips. (I love the bowl of M&Ms. A fav!) Paige

I would make a pasta bar with different sauces and add-ins so everyone could make their own plus a second serving to take home for lunch the next day Cynthia

# TAKING THE GIRLS OUT

**Girls Night Out:** Our Girls Night is usually spent out at a Restaurant or Pub. I work two jobs so when we do manage to get together we want to do it where someone else waits on us. One of our fav spots is Duffy's Irish Pub. The food is fabulous and the owner changes the menu constantly. Lobster grilled cheese is incredible. Most of the time we pig out on the fabulous "Quesadillas Loco" and Neverending Nachos heaped high with "the works!" Cocktails always consist of at least one specialty martini and then we bring on the wine. A nice Merlot (Little Penguin) or a Chianti (Ecco Domani). Food, friends, good wine and catching up on gossip, books and fashion makes for a spectacular Girls Night Out. Karen F.

When I have a girls night out we always end up at B&N, for coffee, dessert and book talk so this is especially a good contest for me. We tend to go with the frozen girly drinks, Orangatangs, and a white wine. While we always end with dessert, we like a good bean dip with chips and hot beer wienies first. Lisa R.