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BOOK CLUB KIT

"Chaudry invites us into her life with candor, humor, and kindness. For anyone who has reflected on their relationship to food, I cannot recommend this book highly enough." —CHELSEA CLINTON

Fatty Fatty



A MEMOIR OF
FOOD, FAT
& FAMILY



Boom Boom

RABIA CHAUDRY

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF ADNAN'S STORY

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How did Rabia's experience as an immigrant in the United States complicate her relationship with food – both the typical American fare and the traditional Pakistani dishes?
2. How would you describe Rabia's parents? How was her relationship with her father different than the one with her mother? How does that compare to your own experiences with each of your parents?
3. How did Rabia's visit to Pakistan when she was 11 years old affect her sense of self? How did it affect her family's sense of her? What are some of the ways that trip differed from Rabia's trip to Pakistan after she graduated law school?
4. What about her time at her first in-laws' home? How did her development as a cook influence her outlook on food, her sense of self, her place within her first husband's family?
5. How has the act of cooking evolved over time for Rabia? How about eating? How does the relationship between food and body image change for Rabia? What has been your own relationship with food over the course of your life?
6. How is chai more than a cup of tea for Rabia and Ifran? Do you have rituals around certain foods or beverages?
7. Do you or your family cook culturally significant dishes? Are those your everyday meals or only special occasion meals? Why or why not?
8. Have you made any of the recipes in the book? Have you tried any of them at a restaurant or someone else's home? How do you think they compare to other South Asian dishes?

RABIA'S CHAI

AN EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK:

Chai can be as simple as tea, milk, water, and sugar, or you can add the flavorings that turn it into masala chai. My everyday chai only gets a couple of green cardamom pods. But when I'm feeling under the weather, I'll boil a piece of ginger in the water before adding the tea. If my digestive system needs a little help, a dash of cinnamon in my chai does the trick.

The proportion of tea-infused water to milk is also important, and that varies among people. I like a spot of milk in my tea so that it stays strong, the color a deep caramel. My husband would dispense with water altogether if he could and just cook the tea leaves directly in milk, that's how milky he likes it.

Abu hates the habit Irfan and I have developed of drinking chai from monstrous mugs, though that is how much chai my body demands every day. He prefers the beauty and delicacy of chai in a proper teacup with a fine, curved handle, served on a saucer. He insists the chai tastes better that way, but my guess is the experience itself makes the chai feel more special. And certainly, if anyone deserves that, it's Abu.

MAKES TWO LARGE MUGS

- 2 full teaspoons loose-leaf orange pekoe black tea, or 4 tea bags
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups whole milk
- 4 green cardamom pods

I only buy my tea from Pakistani or Indian grocers, because nothing in a general supermarket tastes as rich and flavorful as teas imported from back home, though Tetley comes close. My favorite brand is called Vital Tea, but Tea India and Tapal Danedar are also pretty damn good.

Combine the water, milk, and cardamom and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a low simmer, add sugar and tea and any other flavorings you're in the mood for (ginger, clove, cinnamon), and let simmer for 10 to 15 minutes.

Strain and serve piping hot, preferably Abu's way, in lovely teacups with delicate saucers.

