

May 7

My Year of Meats by Ruth Ozeki

My Year of Meats is a novel which blends boisterous comedy, human drama, sometimes violent action, and unflinching reportage as it reveals the unethical practices of the American meat industry. Its narrator, Jane Tagaki-Little, is a Japanese-American filmmaker hired by a Japanese concern to produce a series of television programs promoting American meat (especially beef) entitled “My American Wife.” Sponsored by a beef-importing concern, the show is designed to highlight a different wholesome American family each week, and Jane crosses the country in search of subjects. Along the way, however, she begins to learn frightening things about the use of hormones in meat, along with practices in feedlots and slaughterhouses, and she finds herself increasingly drawn to families whose lives deviate from the stereotypically “American” paradigm that her sponsors demand (a black extended family, a lesbian vegetarian couple). As Jane begins to sabotage the series (and find her own vocation as an independent filmmaker), she enters a correspondence with the abused, childless wife of her brutal Japanese sponsor, and the novel takes up issues of sexual exploitation as well as questions of food safety and ethical practice.



Lizard Butte Library

111 S. 3rd Avenue, Marsing

Monday evenings from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Reading Selections:

January 9

We Are What We Ate by Mark Winegardner

February 6

Chocolat by Joanne Harris

March 5

Choice Cuts by Mark Kurlansky



April 2

Mistress of Spices by Chita Banerjee Divakaruni

May 7

My Year of Meats by Ruth Ozeki



This program is made possible by the Idaho Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities, a generous gift from U.S. Bank, and administered by the Idaho Commission for Libraries.



January 9

We Are What We Ate: 24 Memories of Food

By Mark Winegardner

A smorgasbord of personal essays in which well-known writers share their memories of eating. Funny, touching, nostalgic, irreverent, and delightful reading, they also introduce readers to larger questions about food-related behavior and testify to the symbolic, as well as the nutritional, importance of eating.

February 6

Chocolat by Joanne Harris



Can indulgent food be a force for spiritual liberation, or is it inevitably an invitation to self-indulgent corruption? The novel *Chocolat* addresses this question through the story of a free-spirited outsider, a woman with a young daughter who arrives in a straight-laced French village and opens a luxury chocolate shop. The town's priest, a repressed and angry man, immediately conceives of her as a rival for the souls of the townspeople. While many solid citizens align themselves on his side, the town's less conventional residents, including a straight-talking elderly woman, a community of gypsies who live on river barges, and an abused woman who flees her husband, look to Vianne Rocher's shop as a place to share their secrets, fears, and dreams.



March 5

Choice Cuts: A Savory Selection of Food Writing from Around the World and throughout History by Mark Kurlansky

Choice Cuts is a wide-ranging anthology of writing about food, spanning the ancients (Plato is represented here, discussing food as medicine) to the turn of the 21st century (Mimi Sheridan writes about bialys, Jewish onion rolls).

April 2

Mistress of Spices by Chita Banerjee Divakaruni

The Mistress of Spices is a lyric novel, written in a mixture of prose and poetry, in the style that has been called "magic realism." While primarily set in this world (specifically, a run-down part of Oakland, California), it includes features which defy natural laws and give it an air of mysticism. The heroine, Tilo, shares the magic of her spices and her own psychic powers with a variety of Indian immigrants who are alienated, lonely, and/or in danger in their new homeland.