

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF  
*THE BOOK OF TWO WAYS AND SMALL GREAT THINGS*

# Jodi Picoult

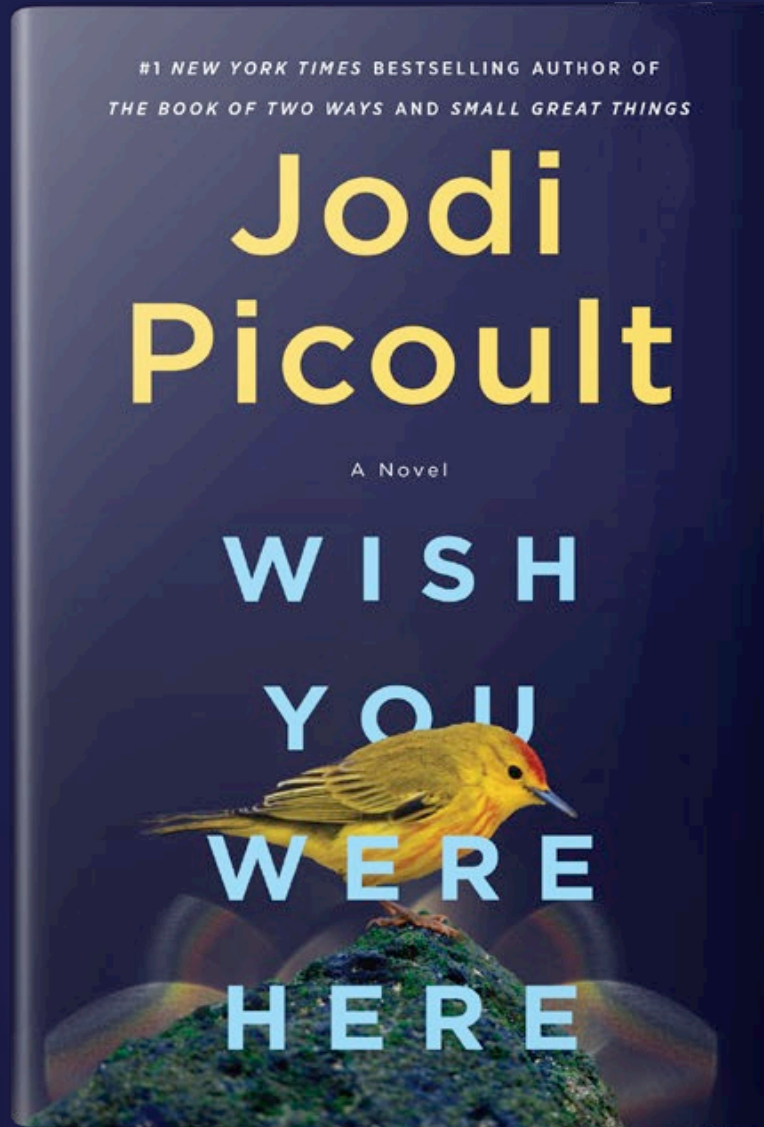
A Novel

WISH

YOU

WERE

HERE



BOOK CLUB KIT



## A Note from Jodi

Dear reader,

When the pandemic first started, I couldn't concentrate on anything else—I couldn't write. I couldn't even read. I was quarantined at home, paralyzed with fear at what COVID would do to my asthmatic lungs. When I was finally able to start working again, all I wondered was: How are we going to chronicle this pandemic? How do we tell the tale of how the world shut down, and why, and what we learned?

Diana's story is one we can all connect to: it's one of isolation, adaptation, and survival. We woke up one day, and everything as we knew it changed. To say it was catastrophic is an understatement, but it also gave us a much clearer sense of what matters.

I hope that *Wish You Were Here* has provided you with a means of reflection and of connection to one another. And, most of all, I hope you'll always remember to ask yourselves how this experience changed the way you think about the rest of your life. Because if I have learned anything, it's that the world can change overnight, and so can what we believe to be most important to us. What did you yearn for this past year? What did you discover about yourself? Are you where you really want to be?

Enjoy this great kit, which includes discussion questions, an awesome playlist, and photos from my trip to the Galápagos. Thank you for reading and sharing!

—Jodi

Photo © Tim Llewellyn



# Discussion Questions

***The questions below have major spoilers for the book—please come back to this page once you’ve finished reading and are ready to dive into a discussion.***

1. What was it like to revisit March 2020 right at the moment the world changed as we entered the pandemic? Did the author capture what it felt like when everything started? Was it strange to think back to that time? What emotions and thoughts came up as you started to read?
2. Diana was trapped in the Galápagos, unable to return to New York City due to travel restrictions. But she managed to make friends and explore the island every day. Do you think she would have been more or less isolated if she had stayed in the city?
3. Diana chooses to stay on Isabela, even though she knows it might mean getting stuck there. Would you have made the same decision? Has there ever been a time in your life when you made a split-second decision that surprised you?
4. When Diana realizes she is stuck without any resources on the island, she is rescued by the generosity of Abuela. How does Abuela’s instinct to come to a stranger’s aid compare to Gabriel’s instinct to preserve the needs of himself and his family first? Is one or the other’s motivations better justified?
5. Think about how Diana and Gabriel’s relationship evolves over the course of the book. How does their understanding of one another compare to the way Diana and Finn relate?
6. Why do you think Diana was able to form such a close bond with Beatriz? What can the book teach us about mental health and how to help those who are struggling?
7. What did you think about the revelation that Diana didn’t physically get stranded on Isabela after all? Did you see the twist coming, or did it surprise you?
8. Do you think unconscious, lucid experiences like Diana’s have meaning? Are these experiences “real” in some way?
9. Diana insists that she must have gotten Covid and imagined her time in the Galápagos for a reason, while Finn believes that “viruses don’t need reasons.” What do you think about the way other people (Finn, Dr. DeSantos, Rodney, others) react to Diana’s experience?

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10. Diana instantly connects with Kotomi Ito over the Toulouse-Lautrec painting, something that held huge promise for Diana’s career. When Diana returns to New York and recovers, she bumps into Kotomi in Central Park, eventually meeting up regularly to walk together. Why do you think the author chose to include this storyline?
11. Art is described as a partnership between the artist and the viewer. Do you agree? How does this relationship differ from the one between an art therapist and a patient?
12. Diana and her mother have a complicated relationship, but by the end of the novel, Diana understands her mom much better and is finally able to forgive her. What do you think allowed Diana to forgive? In what ways do our relationships with our parents—even when those relationships are tense—define who we are?
13. What was your reaction to Diana’s increasing certainty that marrying Finn isn’t what she wants for herself after all? Have you ever realized that the plans you have for your future don’t align with your desires?
14. Darwin’s theory of natural selection—gleaned from his research in the Galápagos—addresses how isolation can be both a curse and a blessing. Has humanity “evolved” during the pandemic? Why or why not?
15. Covid-19 changed Diana—from her job to her personal relationships—but do you think those changes would have still happened if 2020 was “normal?” How did the pandemic change you? What lessons did you learn about yourself, and what changes to your life will you keep as we move forward?
16. How do you interpret the book’s ending? Who do you think has saved Diana from falling?
17. *Wish You Were Here* deals with the pandemic in ways that can be intense. Jodi Picoult even discusses in her Author’s Note that she struggled with finding a way to process these unprecedented events, and wondered: “How do we tell the tale of how the world shut down, and why, and what we learned?” How did reading about the pandemic compare to experiencing it? What kinds of emotions and reflections did the book bring up for you? What parts of the early pandemic had you already forgotten?
18. Who would you cast to play the characters in a TV or movie adaptation of *Wish You Were Here*?

# Playlist

*The Lucky Ones* - Breathe - A New Musical (Original Cast Recording)

*Wish You Were Here* - Pink Floyd

*Empire State of Mind* - Alicia Keys and Jay-Z

*Six Feet Apart* - Luke Combs

*Imagine* - John Lennon

*Brave* - Sara Bareilles

*Stronger* - Britney Spears

*Stuck with U* - Ariana Grande and Justin Bieber

*Seasons of Love* - RENT (Original Cast Recording)

*Somewhere Over the Rainbow* - Israel "IZ" Kamakawiwo'ole

*Welcome to New York* - Taylor Swift

*Survivor* - Destiny's Child

*Dog Days Are Over* - Florence + The Machine

*Go Your Own Way* - Fleetwood Mac

*I Can See Clearly Now* - Johnny Nash

*Anywhere Away from Here* - Pink

*I Wanna Love You but I Don't* - Ben Platt

*Don't Stand So Close to Me* - The Police

*So Far Away* - Carole King

*Mad World* - Gary Jules

*Everybody Hurts* - R.E.M.

*Somebody to Love* - Queen

*Unwell* - Matchbox Twenty

*With or Without You* - U2

*Island in the Sun* - Weezer

*Better Together* - Jack Johnson

*De Donde Vengo* - Alex Alvear

*One Day at a Time* - Jeremy Voltz

*Riptide* - Vance Joy

*Forever Like That* - Ben Rector



[Listen to this playlist on the Random House Spotify page.](#)

# Recipe: Abuelita's Quesadillas

Try your hand at these Ecuadorian quesadillas. Not to be confused with Mexican quesadillas, these pentagon-shaped pastries are both sweet and savory (and are typically enjoyed at breakfast)!



Servings: 8

## FOR THE TORTILLAS

2 cups of all-purpose flour  
3 large eggs  
½ teaspoon salt

## FOR THE PASTRY FILLING

1 x 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened  
½ cup sugar  
1 large egg yolk  
¾ cup arrowroot starch flour (you can also use all-purpose flour)  
½ teaspoon salt  
1-2 tablespoons water (if the pastry dough becomes too thick)

## TO MAKE THE TORTILLA:

Combine flour and salt in a large mixing bowl. Add the eggs and mix until the dough forms a sticky ball.

Once you can no longer mix with a fork, knead the dough on a well-floured surface until smooth and elastic (about 8-10 minutes) then let the dough rest for 10 minutes.

Generously dust the counter with more flour and roll the dough into a long snake-like rope that is ½-inch thick. Cut into 1-inch-long pieces. You should end up with approximately 8-10 pieces of dough.

Roll out each ball of dough into a circle that is ⅛-inch thick. Set aside until you have made the filling.

## TO MAKE THE PASTRY FILLING:

Whisk together the cream cheese and egg yolk. Add the sugar, flour, and salt until thoroughly combined.

## TO MAKE THE PASTRY:

Place a large scoop of filling in the center of the tortilla.

Spread the filling out to the edges of the tortilla but keep most of the filling in the center.

Bake at 350°F degrees for 8-10 minutes.

Credit: [zestofzen.com/sweet-quesadillas-from-san-juan-bakery-in-quito](https://zestofzen.com/sweet-quesadillas-from-san-juan-bakery-in-quito)

# Recipe: Canned Banana Peppers

Diana saw plenty of canned vegetables during her visit to Isabela Island's outdoor market. Learn to can your own veggies!



Servings: 1 quart

## **INGREDIENTS**

4 cups peppers (banana, jalapenos, serrano, etc.) cut into  
¼-inch rings  
2 cups vinegar  
2 tbsp. sugar  
2 tsp. kosher salt

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Place pepper in a sterilized quart jar. Set aside.

Place vinegar, sugar, and salt in medium non-reactive saucepan, stirring until salt and sugar is dissolved. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Pour the mixture over the peppers, leaving ½-inch headspace in the jar and seal.

Refrigerate the peppers for up to one month or process them in a boiling water bath (for 15 minutes if you live in altitude below 6,000 feet, or for 20 minutes if above 6,000 feet).

Allow at least 24 hours before opening the peppers for the best flavor.

Credit: [addapinch.com/pickled-peppers-recipe](https://addapinch.com/pickled-peppers-recipe)

# Recipe: New York-Style Cheesecake

Make this NYC classic at home and enjoy a slice!



Servings: 12

## INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp. melted butter  
18 graham crackers, crushed  
¼ cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup sour cream  
1 tbsp. vanilla extract  
4 (8 oz.) packages cream cheese  
1½ cups white sugar  
⅔ cup milk  
4 eggs  
1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest  
1 tsp. finely grated orange zest

## INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Lightly grease the bottom and sides of a 9-inch springform pan.

Mix graham cracker crumbs and melted butter in a bowl until evenly moistened. Press crumb mixture into the bottom and about ½-inch up the sides of the springform pan.

Whisk flour, sour cream, and vanilla extract in bowl. Set aside.

Stir cream cheese and sugar with a wooden spoon in a large bowl until evenly incorporated, 3 to 5 minutes.

Pour milk into cream cheese mixture and whisk until just combined.

Whisk in eggs, one at a time, stirring well after each addition.

Stir in lemon zest, orange zest, and sour cream mixture; whisk until just incorporated.

Pour mixture into prepared springform pan.

Bake in the preheated oven until the edges have nicely puffed and the surface of the cheesecake is firm except for a small spot in the center that will jiggle when the pan is gently shaken, about 1 hour.

When the cheesecake is done, turn off the oven and let it cool in the oven for 3 to 4 hours. This prevents any cracks from forming on the top of the cheesecake.

Credit: [allrecipes.com/recipe/221142/new-york-style-cheesecake](https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/221142/new-york-style-cheesecake)



# Drink: Manhattan

This classic cocktail is a perfect drink to help you unwind after a long day of work (or reading!)



Servings: 1

## **INGREDIENTS**

2 oz. bourbon or rye  
1 oz. sweet vermouth  
2 dashes Angostura bitters  
1 dash orange bitters  
Garnish: brandied cherry

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

Add the bourbon (or rye), sweet vermouth, and both bitters to a mixing glass with ice and stir until well-chilled.

Strain into a chilled coupe.

Garnish with a brandied cherry.

# Drink: Sex on the Beach

No explanation needed here . . .



Servings: 2

## **INGREDIENTS**

Ice

50 ml vodka

25 ml peach schnapps

2 oranges, juiced, plus 2 slices to garnish

50 ml cranberry juice

Glacé cherries, to garnish (optional)

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

Fill two tall glasses with ice cubes. Pour the vodka, peach schnapps, and fruit juices into a large jug and stir.

Divide the mixture between the two glasses and stir gently to combine. Garnish with the cocktail cherries and orange slices.

Credit: [bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/sex-beach-cocktail](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/sex-beach-cocktail)

# Chicha de piña

Ecuadorian spiced pineapple drink



## INGREDIENTS

The skins and core of 1 pineapple (organic if possible and thoroughly washed)

½–¾ lb. of panela piloncillo or brown sugar (whole or in chunks—more or less to taste)

Assorted spices: cinnamon sticks, all spice peppers, cloves, anise  
10–12 cups of water

## INSTRUCTIONS

Combine all the ingredients in large saucepan or pot.

Bring to a boil and simmer partially covered for at about an hour, stirring occasionally.

Let cool, unless you are drinking it warm or hot; you can drink it immediately or let it rest refrigerated to allow the spices and pineapple flavor to concentrate.

Credit: [laylita.com/recipes/spiced-pineapple-drink-chicha/](http://laylita.com/recipes/spiced-pineapple-drink-chicha/)

Check out these photos from Jodi's trip to the Galápagos!

