

Thank you for considering *Lily of the Nile: A Novel of Cleopatra's Daughter* for your book club. Together with the reading guide at the back of the book, this brochure will help you plan a memorable evening of food, fun, and fascinating discussion.



A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Rome's first emperor captured Cleopatra's daughter only to later make her the most powerful queen in his empire. He preferred simple fare, which was probably a surprise to Cleopatra Selene, who, as a princess of Egypt, had been raised on the finest delicacies.

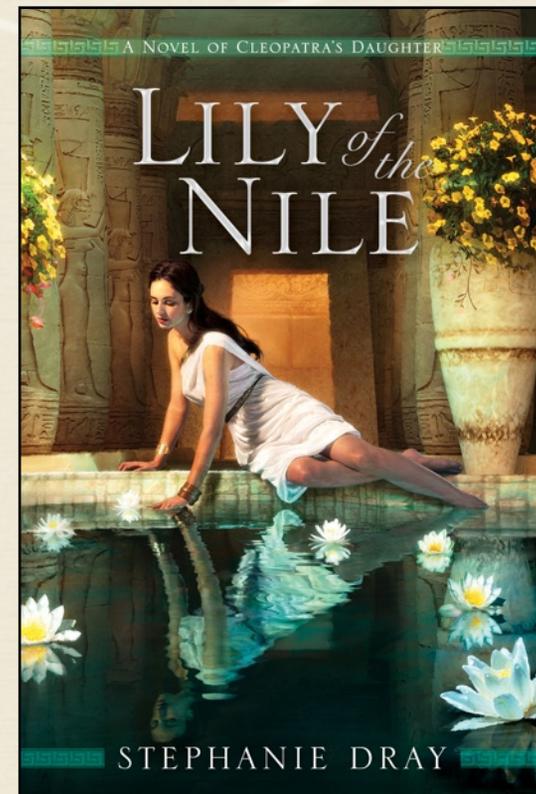
However, Selene was adaptable. With a heritage that combined Greek, Egyptian, Macedonian, and Roman culture, she would later adjust to Northwest African traditions as well. Consequently, the foods I've chosen are common to all these ancient peoples.

I also designed the suggestions in this pamphlet around the idea that the flavor of the ancients can be accomplished with a few rustic ingredients and a quick burst of creativity.

However, if you're an overachiever, I invite you to check back on my website where I've begun to compile more complicated recipes and other information about the world of Cleopatra Selene, the young girl who was heir to one empire and prisoner of another.

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AN EVENING WITH THE ANCIENTS



HOST A THEMATIC
EVENING FOR YOUR
BOOK CLUB

REFRESHMENTS

Set the mood with food and drink. Cleopatra's daughter was raised in a time of cultural fusion. Egyptian, Roman, and Greek food would have been common fare at the banquets Selene frequented. Here are some easy modern-day versions to serve at your gathering.



AMBIENCE

The more pleasant scents and sounds of the ancient world are easy to reproduce. Light some candles for a warm glow. Or, if you prefer, burn some incense. (The ancients prized scents like frankincense and myrrh.)

Flowers were popular adornments, then as now. Seasonal blossoms were woven into pectorals.

Roses were specially cultivated for perfume and even culinary uses. If you were Pharaoh or a wealthy Roman, you'd have your servants wash your guests' hands in rose-water before adorning them with wreaths of flowers, but for us, a few buds in a vase on the coffee table should do!

Though we have no recordings of ancient music, various musicians have attempted to recreate ancient songs and sounds. You might wish to play the stylings of *Synalia* for strict authenticity, but the soundtrack to *Gladiator* will work in a pinch!

SAVORY FINGER FOODS

The Romans started their meals with some light courses of eggs, greens, and vegetables. The latter was often pickled. For a modern-day adaptation, serve a dish of pitted olives. Goat cheese or cheese made from sheep's milk might seem exotic to modern palates but these were the most common type of cheeses in the ancient world. Find a variety of goat cheese with herbs and serve with slices of toasted pita bread.



Black olives might be an exotic alternative to the more traditional green.



Delicious herb-wrapped cheeses would have been a common sight on ancient tables.

BEVERAGES

While the Greeks and Romans were great connoisseurs of wine, the ancient Egyptians preferred dark beers. The Romans watered their wine, but they also sweetened it with honey and mulled it with spices during the holidays. If you'd like to spice up your wine into a festive punch, empty a bottle of red wine in a crock pot and simmer with five tablespoons of honey, three cinnamon sticks, and four cloves. Optionally, add nutmeg or allspice.



Much like today, wines were prized for their origins and age.



Barley was one of Egypt's main crops and they used it to make beer.

SWEETS

While grapes were a staple and iconic at Roman banquets, they weren't the only fruit that the ancients enjoyed. Figs, dates, and pomegranates were also very popular. Cakes were made from grains, honey, fruits, and nuts. The ancients didn't have sugar or baking powder and they didn't use butter. However, they made cakes using creamy cheeses, olive oil, nuts, honey, and eggs. Serve a rustic cheesecake or fruitcake and treat your guests!



The ancients ate grapes and used the leaves in savory recipes too.



Nuts were a staple in ancient cuisine.