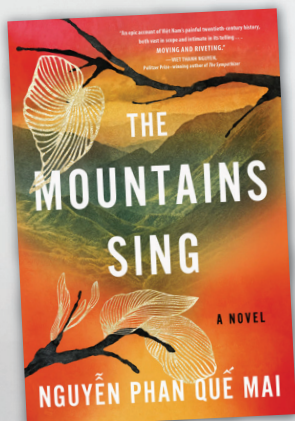


Book Club Companion: Meeting Planning Guide for Readers of *The Mountains Sing*



WELCOME TO THE CLUB

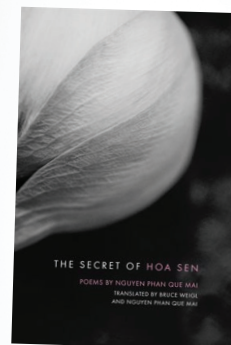
The hoopla catalog provides endless options to enhance your book club meeting. From history and culture to food and language, our Book Club Companion offers readers a glimpse of Vietnam, the setting for our spring Spotlight Selection, *The Mountains Sing*. Incorporating these creative complements will set the mood and tone for discussion of a novel that displays, according to *Library Journal*, “a lush and captivating storyteller’s gift.” Read along with us and share how these resources added to your book club experience on social media using #hooplabookclub!

All titles highlighted in the Book Club Companion can be found here—<https://www.hoopladigital.com/collection/8887>

ALSO FROM THE AUTHOR OF *THE MOUNTAINS SING*

Prior to writing *The Mountains Sing*, Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai penned eight books of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction published in Vietnamese, and her writing has been translated and published in more than ten countries. She has been honored with many awards, including the Poetry of the Year 2010 Award from the Hà Nội Writers Association.

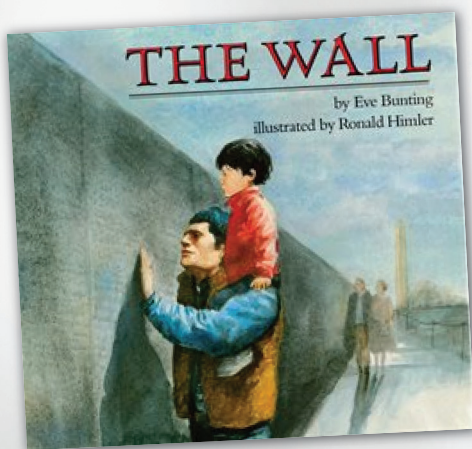
The Secret of Hoa Sen was Quế Mai’s first international publication, and it is available today on hoopla. In this selection, our author’s poetry was translated from the Vietnamese by Bruce Weigl. Driven by his personal experiences as a soldier during the war in Vietnam, Weigl has spent the past 20 years translating contemporary Vietnamese poetry. Through poems that build new bridges between cultures bound by war and destruction, *The Secret of Hoa Sen* shines with craft, art, and deeply felt humanity.



EXPLAINING WAR TO CHILDREN

In *The Mountains Sing*, Grandma had quite the undertaking in explaining how the many years of heartache and conflict affected Guava’s parents, aunts, uncles, and others. In the United States, Eve Bunting’s *The Wall* is a highly praised book that gives children similar context through its poignant story and artwork.

Bunting’s book does not attempt to explain the war itself but rather focuses on the loss to the United States. Filled with sympathy for those who served, the story follows a young boy and his father visiting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington, DC, to look for the grandfather’s name. How does this interpretation of generations later learning of conflict differ from the one passed down by Grandma in *The Mountains Sing*?



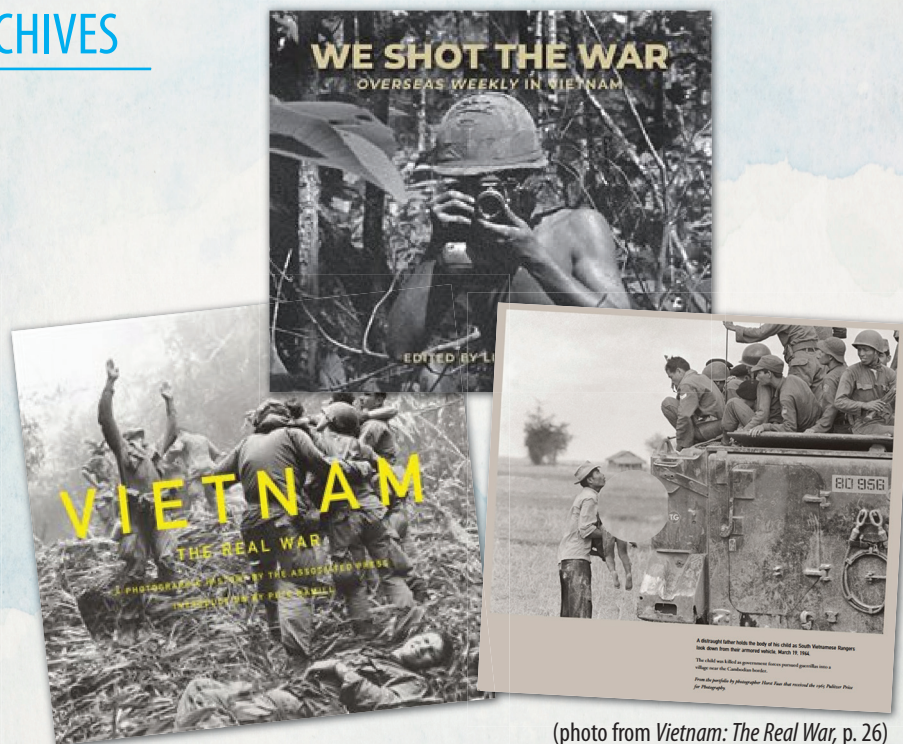
*Interested in learning about the Memorial’s history? Check out our Recommended Next Reads book club resource—available at theclub.hoopladigital.com—to learn more about *A Rift in the Earth* by James Reston, which tells the story of the “art war” that raged between 1979 and 1984 over what kind of memorial should be built to honor the men and women who died in the Vietnam War. The story intertwines art, politics, historical memory, patriotism, racism, and a fascinating set of characters. At its center are two enduring figures: Maya Lin and Frederick Hart.



IN THE FIELD: PHOTOGRAPHY ARCHIVES

Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai has painted heart-wrenching portraits of the many trials of the Vietnamese people—from Land Reform to the Vietnam War. Outside of the medium of writing, photojournalists have created a record of the drama and tragedy of that war, and several of these archives are available via hoopla eBook. Borrow *Vietnam: The Real War* by Pete Hamill of the Associated Press or *We Shot the War: Overseas Weekly in Vietnam* edited by Lisa Nguyen to view lasting images of a conflict that impacts people on both sides of the field still today.

(Note: These titles contain images that may be upsetting or triggering.)

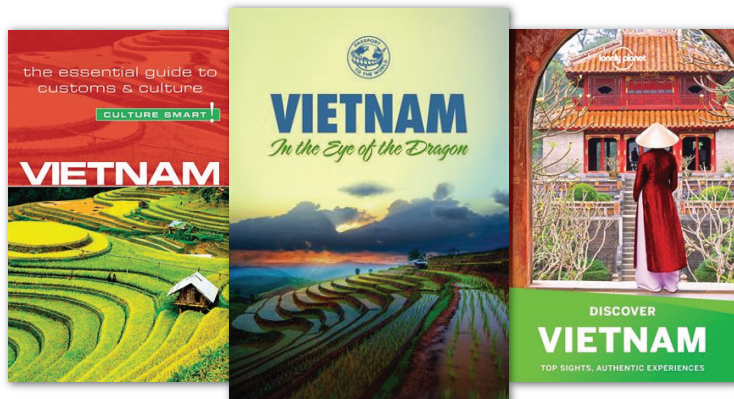


(Strip from *We Shot the War*, p. 32)

(photo from *Vietnam: The Real War*, p. 26)



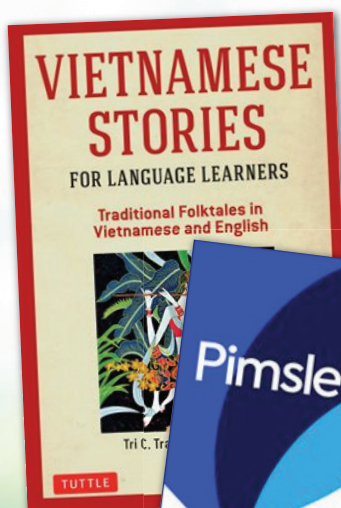
*Interested in learning more about the reporters, photojournalists, and videographers who captured the Vietnam War? Check out our Recommended Next Reads book club resource—available at theclub.hoopladigital.com—to read more firsthand. There, we recommend *On the Frontlines of the Television War* by Yasutsune Hirashiki. David Westin, former president of ABC News, said of the cameraman, "Tony Hirashiki is an essential piece of the foundation on which ABC was built. From the day he approached the Bureau Chief in Saigon with a note pinned to his shirt saying he could shoot pictures to the anxious afternoon of 9/11 when we lost him in the collapse of the Twin Towers (and he emerged covered in dust clutching his precious beta tapes), Tony reported the news with his camera and in doing so, he brought the truth about the important events of our day to millions of Americans."



VOYAGE TO VIETNAM

Curious as to what modern-day Vietnam looks like? This video and these eBooks will give you and fellow book club members a peek into the current landscape, culture, and more!

SPEAK VIETNAMESE



Parables, symbols, sayings, and folklore appear throughout *The Mountains Sing*, as does some Vietnamese terminology. Further explore the language with *Vietnamese Stories for Language Learners*. In the eBook, 40 folk stories have been edited and simplified for learning purposes and are presented in parallel Vietnamese and English versions to facilitate language learning. These delightful Vietnamese tales immediately animate the culture, offering readers a glimpse of the social, cultural, and religious aspects of Vietnamese society in bygone eras.

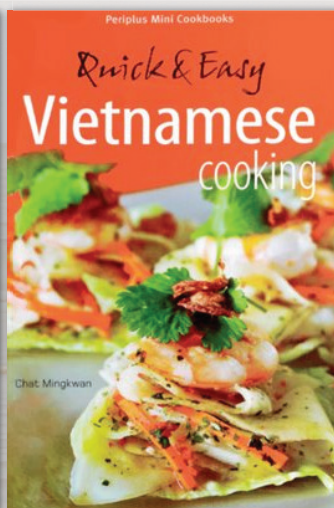
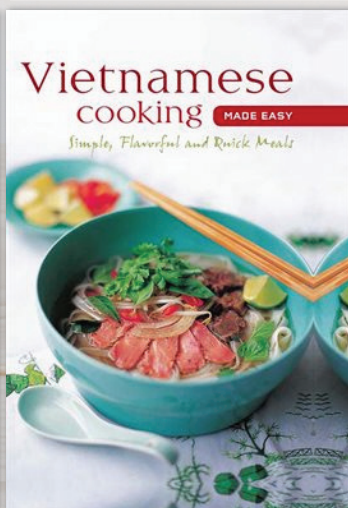
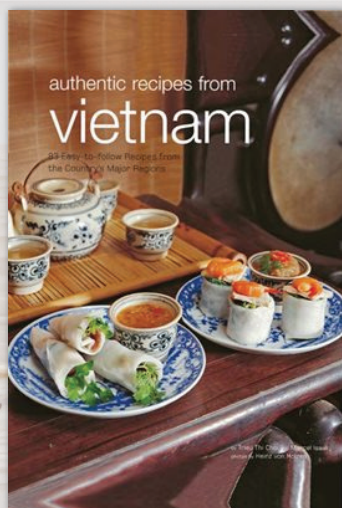
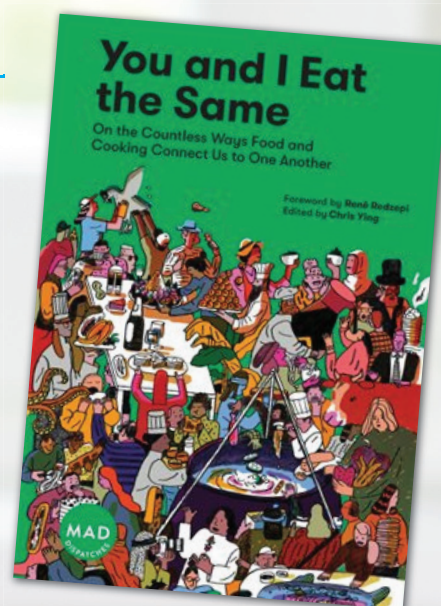


Interested to hear Vietnamese pronunciations? Play the *Vietnamese Level 1* edition from the Pimsleur series as book club members are settling in for the meeting, or commit to one 30-minute session of spoken language practice. Each lesson provides 30 minutes of spoken language practice, with an introductory conversation along with new vocabulary and structures.

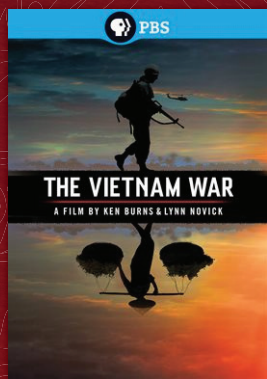
A LANGUAGE WE ALL SHARE

A common ground shared by us all? Good food! In 18 thoughtful essays and stories, *You and I Eat the Same* explores the ways in which cooking and eating connect us across cultural and political borders, making the case that we should think about cuisine as a collective effort in which we all benefit from the movement of people, ingredients, and ideas.

You and I Eat the Same examines cooking techniques that circle the globe. In a section titled “Everyone Wraps Meat in Flatbread,” recipes from Mexico, Africa, Ethiopia, and Vietnam (the land of *The Mountains Sing*) are explored. In Vietnam, bánh xèo is the flatbread encasing meat—crepe-like, it’s made of a coconut milk and rice flour batter and wraps pork or shrimp alongside herbs and bean sprouts. Read on in the section about nem nung (skewered sausages), bánh ít nhân dừa and bánh chung (dishes cooked in leaves), and more delicious Vietnamese food, and utilize hoopla’s Vietnamese cookbook collection to whip up these dishes for your book club meeting!



VIETNAM WITH HOOPLA VIDEO



The Vietnam War: A Film by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick

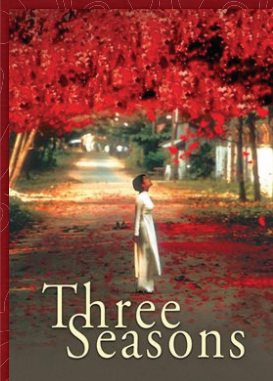
Speaking to the history of Vietnam, the events of the war, and postwar rebuilding, this documentary account by well-known filmmaker Ken Burns is quite popular on hoopla. Highly rated, you'll find this account within Top 20 TV selections on IMDb, and it was nominated for four primetime Emmy Awards. The 10-part PBS documentary presents firsthand accounts of the Vietnam War from nearly 80 witnesses, including Americans who fought in the war and some who opposed it, as well as Vietnamese combatants and civilians from both sides.



The Quiet American

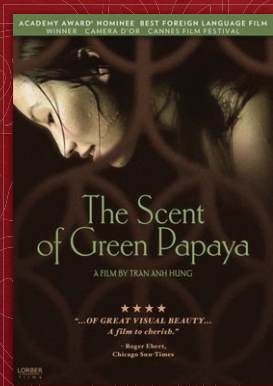
Notice *The Quiet American* title as part of our Recommended Next Reads*—this film is an adaptation of Graham Greene's novel depicting Vietnam in the throes of war. A strong cast includes Michael Caine (in an Academy Award-nominated performance) and Brendan Fraser. Book lovers will be pleased to note this 2002 rendition of *The Quiet American*, in contrast to an earlier 1958 film version, is loyal to Greene's original ending and treatment of Pyle, the principal American character.

* Find this title alongside additional Recommended Next Reads for those who enjoyed *The Mountains Sing* at theclub.hoopladigital.com.



Three Seasons

In 1999, *Three Seasons* became the first fictional American movie to be fully filmed in Vietnam since the war. The film became a Sundance darling—taking home the Audience Award, cinematography honors, and Grand Jury Prize. Filmed in Ho Chi Minh City by (at the time of filming) a 26-year-old American born in Vietnam, Tony Bui, *Three Seasons* features three interwoven stories set in Vietnam, including an ex-Marine who fought in the war and has returned to find the child he fathered years before.



The Scent of Green Papaya

An Academy Award-nominated foreign-language film (Vietnamese), *The Scent of Green Papaya* also earned accolades at Cannes. Directed by Vietnamese-French director Tran Anh Hung, the film follows a 10-year-old who enters household service for an affluent family and continues as she is grown and falls in love with the family's pianist. Set from the late 1940s through the '60s, Roger Ebert's review lauded *The Scent of Green Papaya* as so "filled with sweetness that watching it is like listening to soothing music."



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