

WHEN  
IN  
ROME

A Novel

LIAM  
CALLANAN

Book Club Kit

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# WHEN IN ROME ... DRINK LIKE THE ROMANS!

When you discuss *When in Rome* with your book club, try one—or more—of these drinks:

For the  
**DREAMER:**



**APEROL SPRITZ.** Made with equal parts Aperol and dry Prosecco—and a splash of club soda—over ice, this refreshing orange drink is one of Italy's star cocktails.

*"She suddenly wanted an Aperol spritz; in June, in Rome, early evening, the drinks were their own source of light."*

For the  
**CLASSIC:**



**WINE.** Italian wine is the best in Europe (in my unbiased opinion), and you can't go wrong with a nice Chianti, Moscato, or celebratory Prosecco.

*"She took a big swig of the wine, white, late sun made liquid."*

For the  
**TIRED:**



**ESPRESSO.** If you can find the right brew, drink it without sugar like Claire does in the novel.

*"Then Paolo, after she'd tipped yet another sugar packet into yet another espresso, held up a finger, made her a second cup, and asked her to try that one without sugar: amaro, he said, giving each syllable more than its due, and she'd blushed, having confused the word bitter for love."*

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# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Throughout the book, Claire explores the Italian language through varied means, from conversation to app translation. How do her interactions with the language reflect or differ from the ways she is searching for belonging?
2. Claire has to learn the nuances of Rome. We see it in the first chapter while she orders an espresso and considers the unspoken rituals behind the coffee culture in Italy—and in this specific shop. Consider a time when you have learned an unspoken culture in a new location.
3. History overlays every street in Rome. As Claire explores, her daily actions are often accompanied by some of the deep history of that location. Consider the weight of history in this novel, both in the city and in Claire’s own past.
4. Claire has deep connections back in America: her best friend, Monica, and her daughter, Dorothy. How do these other women in Claire’s life shape her decisions?
5. When Claire first learns of the convent, she thinks: “Rome was a challenge, a bribe, a dare” (pg 17). How does her relationship with the city and the convent change over time?
6. Claire jogs across Rome, including running laps outside St. Peter’s Basilica. How does touring a new place via long walks or runs impact your perspective or deepen your connection with it?
7. Marcus is an actor. How does that career influence his thoughts and actions—and when does it not?
8. We see Claire’s relationship with faith and her desire to become a nun both in college and now later in life. What would you have done at the end of the book? Do you think Claire made the right choice?
9. Have you ever connected to a place you have spent time in, the way Claire did with Rome? Could you see yourself moving to that place?