NPR Listening Party Kit: February 2016

Pick a story, gather friends and spark thoughtful conversation through a shared listening experience.
1. How to Host an NPR Listening Party

What is a Listening Party, Anyway?
How to Get Started
Quick Checklist
How to Moderate a Conversation

2. Stories: Matters of the Heart

Hidden Brain: Aziz Ansari - Talking ‘Modern Love’ With The Master Of None
TED Radio Hour: Are We Asking Too Much Of Our Spouses?
Morning Edition: Letters Of Heartbreak
Find Some Love In Verona, Italy

3. Bonus Reads: Shot (Blog) To The Heart

Three extra articles from NPR’s Shots Blog to deepen your love of curiosity

4. Set The Tone: Music + Snack Ideas

Curated Music Playlist
February Cookie Recipe
How to Host an NPRListeningParty
WHAT IS A LISTENING PARTY, ANYWAY?

Bring together friends for a fun, refreshing social experience that's usually solitary: listening to radio stories.

At an NPR Listening Party, great audio storytelling gives you and your crew the chance to take a break from screens, listen together, and go deeper with thoughtful discussion and stories of your own.

It's easy. All you have to do is:

• Pick a story
• Gather friends in a cozy place
• Hit airplane mode, listen and discuss!

Each month, our themed toolkit offers a section of stories curated to help spark discussion and includes conversation catalysts.

Show us how you #HostYourOwn #NPRLISTENINGPARTY and together we can spread the mission of public radio for a more informed, engaged, and empathetic world.
HOW TO GET STARTED

1. Pick a day and time.
   Weekend brunch works great, as do weekday evenings. Consider other events happening in your community already and schedule around them so you don’t have to compete. We recommend carving out about 90 minutes for the whole event.

2. Pick a venue.
   We recommend hosting at your house to keep things cozy and casual. But if you have other ideas or access to an intimate space, go for it! Ideally, aim to keep the group no larger than 20 people so that everyone gets a chance to speak.
3 Send your invite.

You can use email, Facebook, or whatever you like. Please include the NPR Generation Listen logo or feel free to use our invite graphic. Have fun with it! A day or two before the Listening Party, send your guests a reminder to be on time and include any key information about arriving to / parking at your home, etc.

4 Choose a story or podcast.

Think about what will connect with the friends you’ve invited. You can choose one longer piece, or pair a couple of shorter segments. Generally aim for no longer than 45 minutes. Stories with a bit of tension or controversy make for a more lively discussion. Listen ahead of time and prepare some conversation starters to kick off your discussion. Also, consider which friends may have some interesting ideas to contribute based on subject matter expertise.
**HOW TO GET STARTED**

5 **Prep the space.**

Coziness is key. You want people to settle in — kind of like watching a movie. Put out lots of pillows and blankets. Keep the lighting soft. If possible, arrange seating into a circle, which will help conversation flow. It’s a good idea to have a focal point for folks to settle their gaze on (it may feel strange at first to not be looking at a screen). We also recommend setting out paper and pens so people can take notes and/ or doodle while they listen.

6 **Mind the details.**

Identify the device you plan to play the story from ahead of time. Make sure it’s fully charged and notifications are off. You may consider downloading the piece if your Internet is spotty. Make sure your speakers are powerful enough for everyone to hear with no problems. Oh, and stock up on some light snacks and drinks for folks to munch on.
QUICK CHECKLIST

- Set date + time
- Send invite
- Pre-listen to story
- Jot down a few discussion-starting questions
- Create a cozy feel where you’re hosting:
  - Arrange seating in a circle if possible
  - Pillows, blankets, comfy chairs
  - Soft lighting
  - Pre-download story or make sure you have solid Internet connection

- Turn off notifications on streaming device
- Set out some notepads and pens / markers
- Stock up on light snacks & beverages
- Know the room: are there some subject matter experts you can pass the ball to during the discussion?
- Snap some pics for the socials
- Be creative! Make your Listening Party uniquely yours
NPR’s Guy Raz

is an award-winning journalist and host of NPR’s TED Radio Hour

As a host and correspondent, he has interviewed and profiled more than 6,000 people that span the gamut from Jimmy Carter to Mark Zuckerberg to Taylor Swift. Suffice it to say, Guy is a true master of the art of opening people up. He was kind enough to share his top tips for moderating an incredible conversation.

   Give something, get something. If you make yourself vulnerable, others will be willing to open up to you.

2. Be open and curious in your conversation.

3. Find moments of common experience whenever you can. (i.e. I like jazz! Me too!)

4. Acknowledge silences and awkward pauses.
February’s Stories: Matters of the Heart
On Housing Have you ever moved to a new city or community? What surprised you about this story? Does your city or community have a volunteer-run organization that supports people in a similar way? What could one look like?

On Staying In Love Do Perel’s research and theories resonate with you? If you are in a long-term relationship, what do you expect from your partner? How do you try to cultivate and sustain feelings of love and desire?

On Losing Love Were you surprised by this story? Does your city or community have a volunteer-run organization that supports people in a similar way? What could one look like?
Bonus Reads: Shot (Blog) To The Heart
Mapping Emotions On The Body: Love Makes Us Warm All Over

Try focusing on feeling one of the emotions explored in the article. How do they feel in your body? Try another one. How did it change?

Young And In Love? Thank Mom And Dad, At Least A Little

Did this article resonate with you? Reflect on your parents’ relationship - and potential parallels with your own romantic relationships.

Breaking Up Is Hard To Do, But Science Can Help

Did anything in the article surprise you? Think about a breakup you went through: what helped you most? What would you do differently?
Set the Tone with Music + Snacks
A list of standard love songs didn’t feel right, so our friends at NPR Music got a little creative with chronological order. This month’s playlist takes you through the stages of love: falling for each other, sticking together, breaking up, looking back, and nostalgic reflection. Find a jam that meets you wherever you are in your love story.
Thin Crisp Gingerbread Cookies & Royal Icing

Cookies (makes 5 dozen)
- 1/2 pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 2/3 cup confectioner’s sugar
- 2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, sifted
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Royal Frosting (makes 4 1/2 cups)
- 2 pounds powdered sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- About 11 tablespoons pasteurized whites (or 5 large egg whites)
- Flavoring to taste
- Soft gel food coloring, to desired shade (for example, Chefmaster Liqua-Gel)

FEBRUARY RECIPE
from our friends at The Salt

We love the name of the post that features this recipe on The Salt blog:

‘Valentine Hearts That Are Meant To Be Broken’.

Too cute for your taste? Get creative with the shape.

Click here for full recipe from The Salt
#HostYourOwn

SEND AN INVITE
visit our website for more information

generationlisten.npr.org/listening-party

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