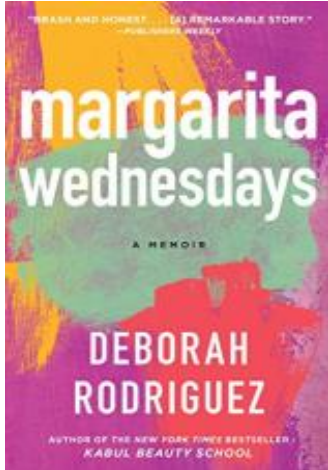

Margarita Wednesdays: Making a New Life by the Mexican Sea

by Deborah Rodriguez



About the Book

Irreverent, blatantly honest and at times touching, MARGARITA WEDNESDAYS: Making a New Life by the Mexican Sea is the story of Deborah Rodriguez's intimate and often hilarious journey of self-discovery and renewal after she is forced to flee Afghanistan in 2007. She first lands in California where she feels like a misfit and teeters on the edge of a nervous breakdown while suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

From being told to commune with glowworms to fishing with a weed-smoking Indian on a reservation and working out with strippers, at the age of fifty Rodriguez decides to focus for the first time on who she really is and who, and where, she's meant to be. She packs her life into her Mini Cooper and moves to a seaside town in Mexico. There she learns Spanish, finds new friends, new love and new family. She opens Tippy Toes, an overnight salon sensation, and in the magic of Mexico, she builds the life she never knew was possible --- a life on her own terms.

Discussion Guide

1. "My life sometimes seemed like a series of one-act plays starring the same character, a gutsy heroine who over and over seems destined to triumph, yet somehow never quite does," admits Debbie (page 55). What is your overall impression of her after reading MARGARITA WEDNESDAYS? How does she view herself versus how others see her?
2. How did leaving Afghanistan --- and the circumstances surrounding her departure --- impact Debbie mentally and emotionally? Why was she reluctant to leave Kabul despite the danger she was in? Why do you think it took her so long to realize and to accept that she had Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

3. While Debbie is in California, therapist Steve Logan advises her to sit with glowworms, while Larry cautions her to wait a year before making any big decisions. What advice would you have given her at the time?
4. Why is Cynthia the person who is able to help Debbie the most with her recovery? What is the energetic force that Debbie describes feeling in Patzcuaro? Share whether you've ever experienced something similar.
5. What motivates Debbie to settle in places like Afghanistan and Mexico, with language barriers and cultural differences? Would you ever consider living in another country? Why or why not?
6. Debbie's inner voice whispers doubts into her ear during the drive from California to Mexico. What keeps propelling her forward rather than turning back? Is 'Debbie Downer' right or wrong when she suggests that Deb is running away by moving to Mexico?
7. 'Plenty of women would have killed for what I had. So why was it so hard for me?' Debbie asks (page 49). Does her inability to embrace a quiet, secure life in Napa have more to do with her surroundings or with her state of mind? In contrast, what is it about Mazatlan and its expat community that makes her feel at home?
8. Debbie is remarkably honest about her rocky romantic past and failed marriages, including her risky union with Sam. What realizations does she come to about her relationships with men and her reasons for marrying? What new perspectives does she bring to her relationship with Denis?
9. Owning a home has always been important to Debbie, who acquired her first house when she was 21. Why is home ownership such a crucial factor in her life? What meaning does living on Carnaval Street have for her?
10. Do you agree with the 'tough love' stance Debbie takes with Noah? Why does she change her mind and allow her son to come live with her in Mazatlan? How does the news that she's going to be a grandmother affect Debbie and her views about moving to Mexico?
11. Discuss Debbie's conflicted feelings about being a hairdresser. In her view, firefighters, police officers and military service personnel are the kinds of people who help others through their vocations. But in what ways has she changed lives using her profession?
12. Debbie tells Sergio that she has 'absolutely no interest in opening a salon here in Mazatlan' (page 223). Why then does she change her mind and do just that? What does she enjoy about working in a salon?
13. Debbie makes a list of what the 'new her' would look like if she were given a clean slate in Mexico (page 79). How many of these aspirations does she achieve? Did she make the right decision by relocating to Mexico? Ultimately, does she find what she was seeking?
14. What universal lessons and insights are there in MARGARITA WEDNESDAYS that could benefit all women? Which aspects of Debbie's story particularly resonated with you?

15. What factors do you think contributed to Debbie's complicated relationship with her father, and how does her experience during the Day of the Dead help her come to terms with that relationship.

16. How does Day of the Dead help others who have suffered loss?

17. What other religious and cultural traditions do people turn to in order to deal with a loved one's death? Do you think these help, and if so, how?

Enhance Your Book Club

Take a virtual visit to Mazatlan, Mexico, Debbie's adopted hometown, at gomazatlan.com and allaboutmazatlan.com.

Prepare a Mexican-inspired feast using recipes found at epicurious.com and foodnetwork.com, including ones for guacamole and margaritas. Craving coconut shrimp like Debbie enjoys in the book? There are variations on that dish that, too.

Enjoy a visit to a salon or spa for your discussion of *MARGARITA WEDNESDAYS*, or have members bring supplies and host a "do it yourself" manicure and pedicure party before or after you talk about the book.

Along with *MARGARITA WEDNESDAYS*, read *KABUL BEAUTY SCHOOL*, Deborah Rodriguez's first memoir.

Visit debbierodriguez.com to learn more about the author and her books.

Author Bio

Deborah Rodriguez is the author of the nonfiction *New York Times* bestseller *KABUL BEAUTY SCHOOL* and the internationally bestselling novel *THE LITTLE COFFEE SHOP OF KABUL*. The hairdresser and motivational speaker was a cofounder and director of the first modern beauty academy in Afghanistan, and also founded the nonprofit Oasis Rescue. She lives in Mazatlán, Mexico, where she owns Tippy Toes salon and spa. Her latest book is *MARGARITA WEDNESDAYS: Making a New Life by the Mexican Sea*.

Critical Praise

"Deborah Rodriguez is an inspiring, brave and giving woman. She has embarked on a voyage of healing, self-discovery, entrepreneurship, giving back to the community and finding love. I'm so glad that she has once again fearlessly allowed us to join her journey."

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