

Maritza  
Breitenbach



A  
Peek  
Inside  
the  
Cookie  
Jar

# The Cookie Book

# The Cookie Book

A Peek Inside the Cookie Jar



*Maritza Breitenbach*



PADDYCAT  
PUBLISHING

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## WELCOME

Why would anyone want to write or read a book about the vagina? It is, after all, mainly a field of interest of the medical profession and pornographers, right? For the rest of us, society has deemed it a taboo subject ...

For this reason, much-needed information about our intimate bits is often scant and scattered. We, as the rightful owners of this wondrous treasure also feel uncomfortable and embarrassed when the subject is mentioned, and we lack the correct vocabulary and knowledge to take care of, and to embrace, our unique femininity.

But, fellow Eves, the time has come for us to reclaim this wonderful gift with pride and with the proper sense of its value. In order for us to empower ourselves we need to take responsibility and recognise ourselves as the agents and speakers for, and creators of, our intimate worlds. Education, information and celebration are the keys that will unlock the splendour of this secret, most sensuous part of our being.

Armed with a MPhil degree in Biomedical Ethics, a great love for research, and a deep-seated dedication to this project, I endeavoured the past few years to gather useful information and to reintroduce the topic in a format that is easily digestible and a

pleasure to read. And so *The Cookie Book: Celebrating the Art, Power and Mystery of Woman's Sweetest Spot*<sup>1</sup> came into being.

It promises to take you on the most enlightening journey of discovery. The book resonates with all women and their loved ones; it does not contain too much detailed or specialized information, but answers all the niggling questions we often have but are too embarrassed to talk about. The book is filled with beautiful graphics, illustrations, cartoons and photographs that play on the lighter side of things while reflecting the delicate and complex nature of this exquisite little organ, the vagina.

So, let's not beat around the bush any longer: join me on a sneak preview of a journey that will evoke the mirth, magic, and mystery of your sweetest spot. May this be a new beginning, one that gives you a confident voice, strengthened with all the knowledge you need to take care of, understand, embrace, and celebrate your unique womanness.

*What could be better than our nicely tapered entrance?  
It's discreet and stylish, everything is cleverly and compactly  
encased in the body... there's a neat triangle of hair above it,  
like a road sign, should you lose your way — it's perfect.*

— Yann Martel, *Self*<sup>2</sup>



# YOU ARE UNIQUE

‘Remember to always be yourself. Unless you suck,’ says Joss Whedon,<sup>3</sup> Academy Award nominee and Hugo Award-winning, American screenwriter of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, *Toy Story*, and others. It is a terrible thing to say, but the truth is sometimes we do feel that we ‘suck’. We may feel that we, or our life, suck when we feel insecure, not good enough, or ridden with uncertainty or anxiety.

We are at our sexiest when we are empowered and confident about whom we are, and about what we have to offer. In order for us to truly embrace our individuality, we need to explore, understand, love and embrace the uniqueness of every nook and cranny of our body, our mind and our soul. Getting to know your intimate self is a delicate task as it conjures up charm, love, attention, manipulation, meditation, medication, discord, tears, and maybe even war. But since the vagina really is the only true chamber of the universe (and without it there would indeed be no future) it is imperative that we start exploring right away.

We are all born into different societies—each with its unique historical, cultural, socioeconomic, geographic and political setting. These different cultures, or subcultures, offer the platform that determines our belief system. It has a direct effect on the way we view our bodies and our sexual identity. Our intimate beliefs are also often tainted by myths and legends that underlie, and form part of, these unique cultural systems.

The most celebrated myth perhaps is the toothed vagina, or *vagina dentata*. This myth has chewed its way throughout the world, striking fear in the hearts of many. Other myths include vaginal eels, dragons and snakes. A few, mostly prescriptive and restricting ideas, have also been introduced by the Christian churches—in England, for instance, sex was declared (during the twelfth



and thirteenth centuries) as illegal on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays, as well as for forty days before both Easter and Christmas.<sup>4</sup> Until the nineteenth century some Japanese folk believed that women carried a pearl inside their vaginas, and if it were removed, they would die.<sup>5</sup>

And then, the misguided notion of 'Hysteria, an illness attributed solely to women', that was caused by an alleged 'wandering uterus.' This upward migration of the uterus had women 'aching in all their limbs with pain to the sockets of their eyes... she turns up the whites of her eyes and becomes chilled; some [become] livid. She grinds her teeth and saliva flows from her mouth: if the womb lingers near the liver and the abdomen, the woman dies of suffocation.'<sup>6</sup>

The good thing, or shall we rather say a wonderful thing about this condition, is that it led to the invention of the first vibrator. How? Well, if prayer, and a number of other remedies, one that prescribed blowing sweet-smelling fumes into the vagina by means of a perforated penis,<sup>7</sup> did not work, hysterical ladies were taken to a medical doctor to be manually stimulated until

they reached an orgasm. Doctors were inundated by 'hysterical' women, which ended up being a time-consuming task. Midwives were employed to assist, but eventually a medical device, the first clockwork-powered vibrator, the *trémousoir*, was invented in 1734.<sup>8</sup> This very expensive medical instrument was exclusively used in asylums, and by the medical profession, to curb hysteria. Much later, perhaps by popular demand, we find electric and battery-operated 'sex toys' in abundance.

Another myth was that masturbation causes backaches, spinal diseases, memory loss, ulcers on the fingertips, pimples, hysteria, bedwetting, loss of appetite, swelling of the legs, epilepsy, gout, rheumatism, and blood in the urine. According to Dr Kellogg (1852–1943),<sup>9</sup> the warning signs of childhood masturbation included seeing 'the roses leave their cheeks, the luster depart from their eyes, the elasticity from their step, the glow of health and purity from their faces, increasing languor and lassitude, causing the poor victim to drop into a premature grave.' Adults who masturbated frequently, may 'becomes a mere animal, who eats, sleeps, and breathes; utterly deprived of all human characteristics. He is conscious of neither joy nor grief, pleasure nor pain. He sits staring vacantly into space, with an open, drooling mouth, and a senseless, idiotic smile upon his face.' Dr Kellogg suggested placing a child under 24-hour surveillance; bandaging the genital parts; tying the hands and covering the organs with a cage at night; preventing erections by putting a silver wire through the skin on either side of the penis and twisting the ends together is such a way as to draw the two sides closely together, and performing circumcision without anesthetic to have an everlasting salutary effect upon the boy's mind. For little girls, Dr. Kellogg recommended the application of pure carbolic acid to the clitoris as an 'excellent' means of allaying the 'abnormal excitement.'

Today we know that masturbation holds a wide range of health benefits. It helps prevent and relieve cervical inflammation and urinary tract infections; improves cardiovascular health and lowers the risk of Type 2 diabetes; relieves insomnia, stress, and anxiety; strengthens the muscles of our pelvic floor; is a natural mood booster; helps people who do not have an available partner to maintain

sexual functioning and expression; aids in sexual intimacy and satisfaction within relationships, and enhances feelings of self love and body awareness that contribute to a sense of ownership, control, and autonomy. We can safely say that joy in a natural, beneficial and healthy way is only a ‘happy wiggle’ away.

Today we still find a vast variety of different belief systems with regards to our vaginas and the way we view it. Some are wonderful, some terrifying, some fascinating, some even unmentionable—it’s wet, it’s dry, it’s big, it’s small, it’s clipped, it’s enlarged, it’s loved, it’s hated, it’s rosy, it’s raspberry, brown or gray, it’s underused, it’s overexploited, it’s hidden, it’s exposed, it’s enjoyed, it’s forgotten, it’s packed away in shame . . . and the list goes on. Read [\*The Cookie Book: Celebrating the Art, Power and Mystery of Woman’s Sweetest Spot\*](#) to obtain more information on cultural differences, and learn how to love your own unique, perfectly imperfect, vagina shamelessly.



# YOUR JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE

From being born with inherent sexuality (and a vagina that lubricates spontaneously every eighty to ninety minutes throughout our lifespan), we start becoming who we are today. Our natural inclinations, our society, our parents, the media and our friends all assist in creating our unique mindset.

As small children, between the ages of 7 and 9, we instinctively start exploring our bodies and those of others. We may play investigative peeking games, or quietly discover the pleasure of our magic button. As we grow older, we seem to lose touch with our inherent sexuality, and are often unaware of the changes that occur between our thighs. The most dramatic and visible changes occur when we enter puberty, then again when we become sexually active, followed by pregnancy and childbirth, and ultimately, when we reach menopause.

These changes are most visible with regards to the vaginal colour, discharge, odour and our intimate anatomy, which includes the hymen, and the size and shape of our vulva. The 'vulva' refers to the exterior or visible parts of our private parts, and it includes the frilly inner lips (labia minora), the puffy outer lips (labia majora), the opening of the vagina and the urethra, the clitoris and the mons pubis (the hair-covered part just above the upper tip where the clitoris is situated). For instance, young girls will, just before onset of puberty, begin to produce increasing levels of oestrogen and the mucosal surface of their girly parts will start to change colour. The pre-pubertal mucosa is a bright red colour and will, with the onset of puberty, become thicker and turn a paler pink. Another telltale sign that your girl is about to have her first period is a whitish, odourless vaginal discharge. This secretion is called *leucorrhoea* and is a normal indicator that hormonal changes are taking place. Leucorrhoea is part of the vagina's natural defense mechanism to maintain a healthy chemical balance, and it also preserves vaginal tissue elasticity.

During sexual intercourse a plethora of changes takes place in and around our vagina to transport us into a state of euphoria and allows us to procreate. During pregnancy, due to drastic hormonal changes, we may even be overwhelmed by extreme fluctuations: we suddenly have irrepressible cravings, our sense of smell becomes acute, and we have whimsical shifts in our preferences and aversions, and may even have extra hair growth and a pigmented 'moustache'.

Apart from many other changes, we'll become more aware of our lady part from the fourth month of pregnancy: increased pressure and blood supply create a permanent state of gentle sexual arousal, leaving us moist, slightly swollen and our intimate bits more pronounced.

As we get wiser and the years go by, we enter our menopausal stage. Here we can again expect a number of exciting changes. Some, yes, quite annoying, particularly during the crossing-over, or premenopausal years. Find the detailed information and answers that you will need on the subtle or more pronounced changes that we can expect during our life cycle in [\*The Cookie Book: Celebrating the Art, Power and Mystery of Woman's Sweetest Spot.\*](#)

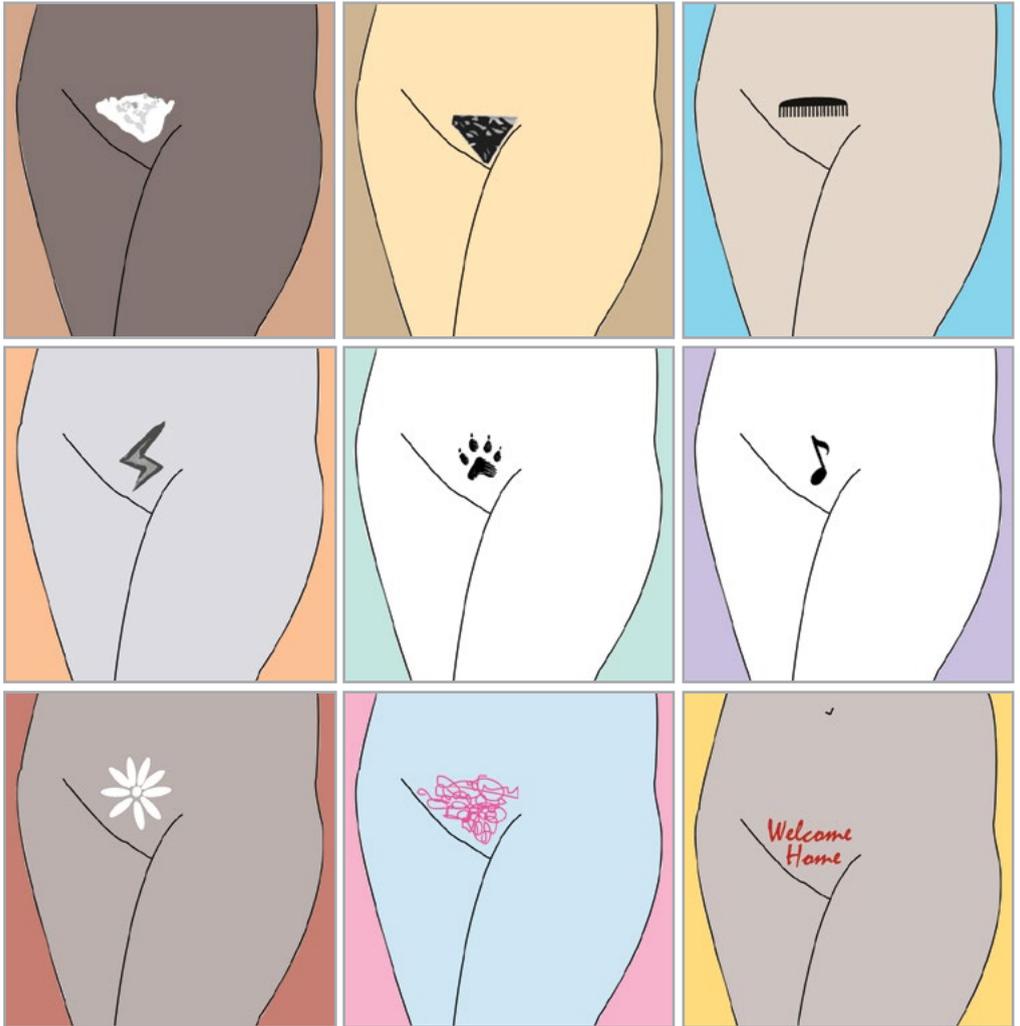


## FUN WITH HAIR CARE DOWN THERE

Over and above the many accomplishments of the vagina, like being able to ‘receive’, conceive, and give birth, our wild and woolies offer us an opportunity to give creative expression in an intimate and unique way. We may choose to shave, pluck, wax, electrolyse, lazer, colour, cut and condition at our leisure, and for our pleasure. British fashion designer Mary Quant (b. 1934) was famously proud that her husband trimmed her pubic hair into a heart shape.<sup>10</sup>

Although we are quite daring and public about pubic matters today, it was most certainly not the case in the past. In Western art, female nudes were unrealistically portrayed as being smooth and hairless for many a year. This earlier misrepresentation had the famous nineteenth century British author, artist and art critic, John Ruskin, at a loss for words on his wedding night. When he discovered that his lovely wife, Effie Gray, had a thatch of hair down there, he thought that she was freakish and malformed. Their marriage, which was never consummated, was annulled six years later.<sup>11</sup> The first ever depiction of pubic hair, the *La Maja Desnuda*, (circa 1797–1800), a painting by the Spanish master Francisco de Goya, hangs in the Museo del Prado, Madrid.

When deciding to give personal expression of our private selves through intimate piercing, tattooing or different hairstyles, we may be faced with a number of obstacles: ingrown hair, infections, allergic reactions and the formation of scar tissue. Enjoy the interesting history of tattooing and genital piercing, get information on how to treat and avoid ingrown hair, advice on anal bleaching, and more grooming ideas in [The Cookie Book: Celebrating the Art, Power and Mystery of Woman's Sweetest Spot](#). On the next page of the book you will find a few furry, fun ideas. Albeit a little risqué and naughty in a really nice way, pubic grooming does hold some wonderful promise. Apart from enhancing our sensuality, it simply makes us feel fabulously feminine.



## MEDICAL MATTERS

As in the case of intimate aroma, we find that vaginal discharge is a conversational topic one would not initiate, ever. It goes beyond the pale of subjects that is considered mentionable and is definitely a social taboo. For this reason we are often unaware of the wonders and function of our *aqua vitae*, or so-called 'love juices'.

Vaginal discharge is a normal and natural element of a healthy vagina. It does not smell unpleasant and is not accompanied by pain, itching, burning or redness. The amount of discharge is just enough to moisten the vaginal opening and may leave a light yellow stain on undergarments when it dries.

Normal vaginal discharge varies with age, our menstrual cycle, sexual arousal, pregnancy, and the use of birth-control routines or other hormone replacement medication. Teenage girls, for instance, may have excessive amounts of watery discharge caused by high hormonal levels; when we ovulate it also thickens, increases and becomes slightly gluey to create a welcoming environment for contending sperm racing up through the uterus.

Our discharge serves as a good indicator of our intimate well-being as changes could be signaling that all is not well down south. An offensive-smelling discharge may be a warning of vaginal infections, an infection of the cervix, foreign objects in the vagina, or a sexually transmitted disease. Vaginal infections are inconvenient and annoying, but rarely lead to serious problems. The three most common types of vaginal infections are yeast infections, bacterial infections and trichomoniasis ('trich'), which is a parasitic infection. Vaginitis (inflammation of the vagina) is caused by these infections, all of which can be treated with oral or vaginal preparations.

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), on the other hand, are infections that are transferred from one person to another through any form of sexual contact. Sexual contact includes oral-genital contact, the use of sex toys such as vibrators, and even kissing. Although condoms are useful in preventing the spread of certain infections, they do not fully protect us against genital herpes, genital warts or syphilis. Furthermore, although many STDs are treatable, vaccines are not yet available to effectively remedy them all. The most common STDs, apart from 'trich', are gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis, genital herpes, human papillomavirus, chancroid, ectoparasitic infections and HIV.

It is most important that we gain knowledge about these sexually transmitted infections, some of which we can get by using a friend's swimming costume, or while relaxing in a Jacuzzi. Some infections are found in up to 80% of sexually active people, some so devastating that our casual lovers, or infected partners, may literally love us to death.

Refer to [\*The Cookie Book: Celebrating the Art, Power and Mystery of Woman's Sweetest Spot\*](#) to get the necessary information on how to 'read' and understand your discharge; how to prevent, recognise and treat infections, and the symptoms and treatments with regard to sexually transmitted infections.



## A FEW TIPS FOR YOUR LADY BITS

Our vaginas are divine, but also extremely sensitive, delicate and vulnerable. Here a few rules of thumb to ensure vaginal health:

- Use condoms during sexual intercourse. Unless you are in a monogamous relationship where both partners have been tested, there is absolutely no excuse. Switch to a polyurethane variety if allergic to latex condoms.
- Do not douche (spraying a jet of water into the vagina) unless it's prescribed by a medical practitioner.
- Wear only cotton underwear (preferably white); nylon and Lycra don't allow for sufficient moisture absorption.
- Sleep without panties and refrain from wearing garments that are too tight. Change out of wet swimming costumes after a swim.
- Be naughty and expose your vagina for a few minutes to direct sunlight and fresh air; apart from making you feel sexy, it is also healthy.
- Do not use perfumed soaps, scented tampons, toilet paper or sanitary pads, or intimate deodorants or sprays.
- Limit bubble baths to special occasions.
- Keep the anus clean and prevent contamination by wiping front to back.
- Drink alkaline powder and enough water to assist with general well-being. Alkaline powder balances our body pH level — it is available at pharmacies.

- Drink cranberry juice; it has antibacterial properties and helps maintain a healthy bladder.
- Apply plain yogurt to the vagina when you become aware of slight burning and irritation.
- When travelling abroad, take your own tampons from home to reduce the risk of developing toxic shock syndrome. Toxic shock syndrome (TSS) is a rare but potentially fatal illness caused by a bacterial toxin that is linked to some high-absorbency tampons.
- Change tampons regularly—never leave in for longer than eight hours.
- Use only water-based lubricants if you experience vaginal dryness.
- Always drink a probiotic when you have to take a course of antibiotics.
- Avoid too much coffee, wine, fizzy cool drinks, cigarettes and sweet delights as these disturbs our natural pH balance.



## FINAL THOUGHTS

Throughout history it has been alleged that once exposed, the vagina possesses the power to frighten gods, to drive out evil spirits and promote harvest fertility. A Catalan saying, *La mar es posa bona si veu el cony d'una dona*, tells us that even the sea calms down if it sees a woman's vagina,<sup>12</sup> yet some of us have never even caught a glimpse of our own.

Your vagina is iconic, mystical and divine, and it is perhaps time to get to know those fleshy folds you call your own. Make time for yourself. Plan it. Plot it. Send your children away on an errand far far away, give the dogs some ice-cream, turn off your telephone, and curl up with [The Cookie Book: Celebrating the Art, Power and Mystery of Woman's Sweetest Spot](#). Claim what is rightfully yours. Then, engage in conversations with your loved ones, and share the message of celebration and wonder with your daughters as they undergo this splendid voyage into womanhood.

*The vagina is a miraculous gift,  
and it is inherently delightful and sexy—  
let it be lived, heard, and celebrated!*



## ENDORSEMENTS

'*The Cookie Book* is the 'sweetest thing' since Eve left the Paradise.' — Riana Scheepers

'Books we love — *The Cookie Book* by Maritza Breitenbach.' — *O, The Oprah Magazine*

'Recognising the importance and profundity of the vagina ... philosophical and humorous ... a tome that admirably attempts to unravel and ponder the history, impact and beauty of the vagina.'

— Oliver Roberts, *Sunday Times*

'Funny and creative, beautiful artworks ... celebrates the best of being female.' — Nicole Sparrow, *Longevity Magazine*

'It is a small, beautifully illustrated booklet that certainly packs a punch. When it comes to the health and understanding of one's 'private zones' one simply has to call a spade a spade — and this book does just that.' — *Odyssey Magazine*

'I loved the book — read it from cover to cover as soon as I got home and found it delightful — a very beautiful book visually, written with warmth and wit: informative and positive. Essential reading for everyone who has one of these very special treasures!' — Patricia McNaught Davis, Radio Helderberg

'Wonderful must-have book ... all women, men and teenage girls should read it.'

— Soli Philander, award-winning actor, presenter, comedian, emcee and motivational speaker

'Reading *The Cookie Book* epitomizes 'sexuality' to me — an experience in which one's senses are simultaneously assaulted culminating and forever feeling alive, woman, wild and wonderful. Like sexuality, Maritza's book is multi-layered, and each page presents a surprise. Oh no, this author has well researched her book, with mixed medias from cartoon strips to poetry and gorgeous illustrations to keep the reader constantly alert, educated and interested. A beautiful contribution to women and their sexuality.' — Dr Marlene Wasserman, aka Dr Eve, author, registered sex therapist in South Africa and the USA, lecturer and radio talk-show host

'Absolutely beautiful and well written ... filled with vital information.' — Nancy Richards, author and radio talk-show host, SAfm

'A must-have illustrated read.' — *Women's Health Magazine*

'... written with great elegance. I regard it as pioneering work and want to suggest that all mothers and daughters read it, and then pass it on to the fathers and boyfriends ... then allow them time to recover!' — Dave Pepler, author, environmentalist and television show host

'What a refreshing and candid look at something we all want to know more about and discuss but often do not! Maritza has managed to educate, make one laugh and be amazed all at the same time, and it's all delivered with such humor, passion and love for her subject. This is a must-read for all the women out there and for any man who likes women and wants to know more!' — Embeth Davidtz, actress, LA, United States of America

'Although not all parts of the book are specifically relevant to male readers, it remains worth knowing and a topic that intrigues them for life! Especially when presented with such refinement and style.' — Kerneels Breynbach, journalist, award-winning author and publisher

'A mini coffee table book ... a gem, tastefully illustrated with classic artworks and modern pieces ... colourful and non-explicit.' — Ilse Krige for *Die Burger, Die Beeld, Die Volksblad*

'From the cultural importance of virginity to how the cookie crumbles as we age and how and why people groom and adorn their "lovely lady parts"—this creative little book will educate you on all things vaginal.' — Lesley Byram, *Cape Times*

'Inspirational, creatively illustrated ... delightful ... should be given to all teenage girls.' — Vivien Horler, *Cape Argus*



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## CONTACT DETAILS

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4. Contact the [author](#), or for informative, light-hearted talks that inspire women to enjoy and celebrate the most intimate part of their being. [maritza6@vodamail.co.za](mailto:maritza6@vodamail.co.za)

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