



SANTA FE
international
LITERARY
FESTIVAL

SANTA FE INTERNATIONAL LITERARY FESTIVAL **Frequently Asked Questions**

Over the weekend of May 17–19, 2024, writers, readers, and thinkers will gather at the Santa Fe International Literary Festival to celebrate the power of story.

The three-day festival features keynote lectures and intimate conversations with literary heroes and visionary voices from near and far. They will engage audiences in dialogue about vital local and global issues—politics, race, immigration, the environment, sustainability, and more—at a time of extraordinary change. Other unique author-related events will take participants into the community of Santa Fe, the storied site of this exciting and inspiring festival of words, books, storytelling, and ideas.

Q: Why Santa Fe?

A: The vibrant literary history of Santa Fe—and all of New Mexico—spans centuries and cultures. This history is filled with stories and books coming to life in communities statewide where literary luminaries, both native and newcomer, have made their home.

An international literary festival is a natural fit for Santa Fe, a city that takes great pride in its melting pot of peoples and multicultural traditions, where art markets and cultural festivals are a major draw for locals and visitors alike. As Santa Fe's newest festival, our desire is to reflect the vast diversity of the world's literary community as we strive to create a global gathering of extraordinary writers, readers, and thinkers from near and far.

Q: What do you mean by the power of story? And what makes this festival different from readings, book signings, and other local literary events?

A: Storytelling, like music and art, has the power to transport people across borders, cultures, and worlds beyond their own. The convergence of words, ideas, and imagination truly knows no bounds. This power resonates in Santa Fe's literary history, which has always made space for a range of voices, storytelling traditions, and points of view. Our unique mix of global and local authors working in multiple genres is intended to feed readers' appetites for a range of creative and educational literary experiences at once familiar and unknown.

Q: The Festival's lineup of authors is so diverse. How do you manage such an ambitious program?

A: The Festival's co-founders live in and have longtime ties to Santa Fe. We have all worked for decades in the literary field and are sharing the task of curating, programming, and promoting the Festival along with a small and dedicated staff and a team of literature-loving volunteers.

Mark Bryant, our chief curator, is an editor and publisher who has worked with both emerging writers and winners of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, and the Booker Prize. His network of leading national and international writers as well as prominent regional authors provides connections for Festival headliners. Clare Hertel, who moved her public relations firm from San Francisco to Santa Fe in 1994, brings decades of media relationships and experience to bear as the head of the Festival's marketing and public relations efforts. And award-winning author and journalist Carmella Padilla, a native New Mexican, brings experience, knowledge, and understanding of local cultures and communities to help the Festival reflect the best of our city and state.

Q: Many other community members are also contributing to the Festival. How so?

A: The advantage of being part of the local community is that we know many area writers, businesspeople, nonprofit and cultural leaders, and book-loving residents who have enthusiastically become involved. We've tapped this diverse group as an informal sounding board for our ideas, especially with regard to engaging the local community. They've provided enthusiasm, vision, and new ideas while volunteering time and resources. This has led to individual donations as well as important public and private collaborations, including a community-based educational and literacy component that will be central to our long-term success.

Q: What exactly is this educational and literary component?

A: We believe that stories have the power to lift us up, particularly when we're young. That's why we're partnering with local schools and nonprofit organizations to help our community's youngest writers tell their stories and write their futures. The Santa Fe Public Library and the Witter Bynner Foundation for Poetry are generously helping us organize events during the Festival, including free community poetry slams and opportunities for young writers to meet with festival authors.

We are also collaborating with local literacy nonprofits which provide free tutoring for adults in reading, writing, and speaking English. Their experience tells us that 46 percent of New Mexicans read at or below a seventh-grade level, severely impacting opportunities for employment and other areas of life. We want to help change that by spotlighting the power of story at the Festival.

We welcome interest and involvement from young readers, writers, and educational organizations throughout the community in helping us make all of these programs a centerpiece of the Festival.

Q: The Festival's home base is the Santa Fe Community Convention Center. How exactly is the City of Santa Fe involved?

A: While this is not an official City of Santa Fe–sponsored event, the city's tourism division enthusiastically supports the Festival for its appeal to locals and tourists alike, and for its benefits to the city economy. In the same way that the city supports Santa Fe's long-established art markets and cultural events, it supports our venture as one that spotlights the city's literary legacy and community of writers and readers. The Festival also fills in a gap in the city's cultural calendar, kicking off the summer season with unique literary offerings not previously provided in Santa Fe.

Q: How is the Festival supported and paid for?

A: Ticket sales. This is an ambitious festival featuring dozens of events, a range of activities large and small tailored to diverse interests and tastes. Our ticket structure reflects that range while addressing the practical realities of sustaining a major international festival with limited resources.

Providing both accessibility and a range of extraordinary literary experiences is our priority, which is why we're offering discounts for New Mexico residents for each of our events. In addition to purchasing tickets to individual events, we also provide options to buy a Day Pass for entry to a full day of events. Finally, our top-tier ticket is a VIP all-access pass that provides entry to all festival events, extends invitations to exclusive receptions, and includes books by featured authors. Ticket sales for all ticket levels will launch in January 2024.

We are fortunate to have the support of a number of generous individual donors, as well as organizational grantors and business sponsorships. Together, they are all helping us bridge the gap between ticket revenues and the overall costs of hosting such an ambitious festival.

Q: Why are reading and literature especially important now, and how does the Festival fit in?

A: At a time of extraordinary change in our world, the Festival provides not only space to escape into great stories but also a forum to explore important issues—in politics, race, immigration, the environment, and more. From visionary keynote speakers and intimate author conversations to immersive experiences of the culture and natural beauty of Santa Fe and environs, the Festival is a place to learn, relax, refresh, contemplate, and connect with ourselves and the world.

Q: What are your highest goals for the Santa Fe International Literary Festival?

A. In curating the Festival, we strive to be thoughtful about serving our community and its diverse residents as well as the visitors who make this an international destination. Our local/global mix of authors, literary genres, and community activities is designed to teach us what people are most interested in today and as we plan for the future.

Our hope is to continue to grow the Festival into an increasingly diverse and robust event that reflects the best of our city, state, and the world. We consider all of our offerings—indeed, the Festival itself—as works in progress, and we hope to learn from the community and our visitors so that we can refine our format and ensure a sustainable future for the Festival. Our greatest hope is to send festival goers back into the world inspired.

