

Readerpalooza!

Events that celebrate **BOOKS, AUTHORS, and the PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEM.**

You probably (desperately) need a summer vacation. But like a lot of us, you're also probably prone to sunburn and constitutionally averse to recreation involving the wearing of a bikini. So forget the beach and, for that matter, one of those expensive, epic, phrasebook-assisted voyages to foreign lands.

Because there is a way you can simultaneously relax and broaden your horizons: Head out to one of America's great book festivals. Feed your mind, meet other avid readers, and, just maybe, get David Sedaris's autograph. If you're really lucky, you'll also return home with the ultimate reading list: enough inspiration, ideas, fresh voices, and new worlds to carry you through the winter. —Leslie Nipkow

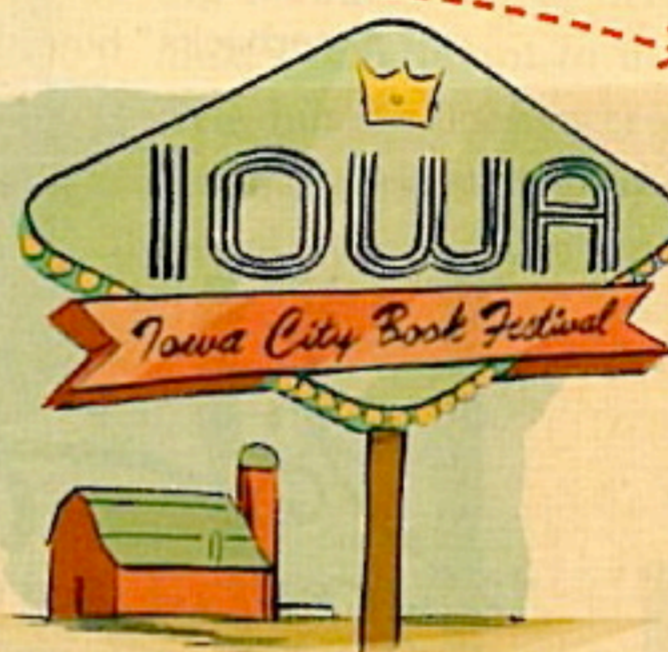
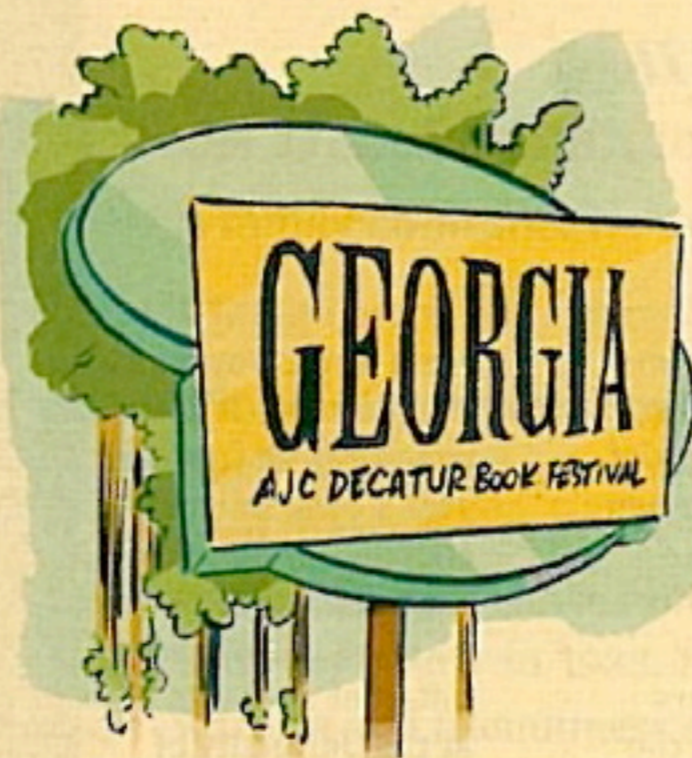


START HERE!



The theme of **ASPEN SUMMER WORDS** is "Papyrus: Literature of the Modern Middle East." Guest authors, including Khaled Hosseini (*The Kite Runner*) and Firoozeh Dumas (*Funny in Farsi!*), will explore the region's magical storytelling tradition. A festival pass (\$200) buys unlimited access to readings, panels, receptions, and evening presentations. For an additional fee, booklovers may attend a two-day Reader's Retreat, a sort of grad school of book clubs led this year by award-winning columnist and Middle East expert Mona Eltahawy (preregistration required). The event takes place at Colorado's Aspen Meadows Resort, where you can pamper yourself with an end-of-day massage or an hour spent reading poolside. (June 19-24, aspenwritersfoundation.org)

The **AJC DECATUR BOOK FESTIVAL**, a three-day bash just outside Atlanta, features readings by high-profile authors, writer panels, and book signings. Interactive events include poetry slams, parades for kids, a scavenger hunt, music, a writers conference, and a street fair. Festivalgoers can wander among the 16 stages showcasing new genres and authors. Writers mingle at the author VIP lounge in the town square, but the writer-reader socializing happens after hours at Twain's, a local brewpub and billiard parlor. All events are free; tickets are required for venues that have limited capacity. (September 2-4, decaturbokfestival.com)



The **IOWA CITY BOOK FESTIVAL** began as a thank-you to local residents, who in 2008 showed up by the hundreds at the University of Iowa Library to rescue the collection from rising flood waters. Iowa City is home to so many influential literary institutions, it is known as the Athens of the Midwest. This year's presenters include authors Elizabeth Berg (*Open House*), Jane Hamilton (*The Book of Ruth, A Map of the World*), and Stephanie Kallos (*Sing Them Home*). On Saturday Gibson Square is packed with readings, panels, booksellers, and book arts demonstrations. On Sunday, "A Day in the City of Literature," local businesses host book-themed events. Except for the opening night authors' dinner, it's all free. (July 15-17, iowacitybookfestival.org)



The **31ST ANNUAL STEINBECK FESTIVAL**, held at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, California, has chosen as this year's theme "Friends and Foes." The event celebrates the author's creative and social vision, "using Steinbeck's lens to look at what's happening in the world," says festival codirector Lori Wood. Highlights include guided tours of Steinbeck's haunts and a production of *Of Mice and Men* by the Poetic Justice Project, a troupe of formerly incarcerated performers. Swiss artist Pierre Alain Bertola will discuss how he turned *Of Mice and Men* into a graphic novel and exhibit his original illustrations. Tickets available à la carte or as part of a package. (August 4-7, steinbeck.org)

