

## Fifth annual New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University announces 2026 schedule

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The New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University returns March 12-15, with four free days of programming on the uptown campus, including 100+ sessions and more than 250 authors, artists and storytellers, plus an expanded Family Day and conversations ranging from politics and history to music and food. (Photo by Jared Lyons)

The fifth annual [New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University](#) has unveiled its full 2026 schedule, featuring more than 250 authors, artists, storytellers and moderators across four days of programming. The free festival runs March 12-15 on Tulane's uptown campus and includes more than 100 sessions, an expanded Family Day and a dynamic mix of conversations spanning literature, history, music, food and politics.

All events are free and open to the public, with seating available on a first-come basis. [Registration](#) is encouraged but not required.

This year's festival brings together an extraordinary lineup of leading voices including Stacey Abrams, Tarriona "Tank" Ball, David Brooks, Ken Burns, Oren Cass, Kenny Chesney, Roxane Gay, Walter Isaacson, Ibram X. Kendi, Emeril and E.J. Lagasse, Erik Larson, Michael Lewis, Jon Meacham, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Imani Perry, Salman Rushdie, Dax Shepard and Clint Smith, among [many others](#).

The complete festival schedule of sessions is available [here](#). A printable PDF of the schedule will be available later in March.

Thursday's opening night program, presented in partnership with The Atlantic, will take place from 5 to 7 p.m. in McAlister Auditorium. The evening will bring together The Atlantic's Editor-in-Chief, Jeffrey Goldberg, who will moderate a sweeping conversation on America at 250 with acclaimed filmmaker Ken Burns, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Annette Gordon-Reed, biographer and festival co-chair Walter Isaacson and The Atlantic staff writer and bestselling author Clint Smith. The program sets the tone for a weekend of timely discussions examining the nation's past, present and future.

Beyond opening night, the 2026 festival will feature approximately a dozen sessions dedicated to the "America 250" theme, making the anniversary a central throughline of this year's programming. Through conversations on leadership, civil rights, public memory and cultural identity, authors and historians will explore how the nation's founding ideals have evolved and what they demand of us today.

Food lovers can look forward to "New New Orleans Cuisine, Then & Now," featuring renowned chef Emeril Lagasse alongside his son, rising culinary star E.J. Lagasse. The conversation will trace the evolution of Louisiana cuisine and its enduring cultural impact. Additional sessions throughout the weekend will explore food culture and culinary storytelling, with national and local chefs, writers and industry leaders examining how cuisine shapes community and identity.

Throughout the weekend, bestselling authors and cultural commentators will engage audiences in sessions including investigative journalism, presidential history, music, sports and contemporary fiction. Book signings will follow panel discussions, with official festival booksellers offering titles for purchase onsite.

Family Day moves to Sunday this year and expands to include two stages of programming, with additional panels geared toward middle-grade readers. Young readers and their families can enjoy author readings, interactive storytelling and opportunities to connect with favorite writers in a lively, welcoming setting designed especially for children.

“As we celebrate our fifth year, the festival continues to grow in both scope and ambition,” said Festival Co-Chair Cheryl Landrieu. “We’re proud to bring together voices from across disciplines to spark meaningful conversations in the heart of New Orleans.”

From thought-provoking literary discussions to culinary conversations and expanded family programming, the 2026 New Orleans Book Festival promises four days of ideas, inspiration and community — a true Mardi Gras for the mind.

For more information on the New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University, visit [bookfest.tulane.edu](http://bookfest.tulane.edu) or follow the festival on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#).



(Photo by Cheryl Gerber)