



Bay Area Book Fest

By Abbie Burgess

A major annual book event comes back to Berkeley on May 6-7. The 2023 Bay Area Book Fest spans a weekend and multiple venues across

Downtown Berkeley. Most events are free. The only ticketed events at the Festival are the two headliners on Saturday and Sunday nights.

A major attraction is the Festival's Outdoor Fair which takes place on Sunday, May 7th, in Berkeley's MLK, Jr. Civic Center Park. This immersive experience is where readers, writers and diverse communities gather to celebrate a love of books and reading. The fair features 150 literary exhibitors, free stages presenting acclaimed authors, performances, and fun activities for all ages.

Some of today's top authors attend the fair, from California and around the world. Join an audience of fellow readers as the writers discuss their new books, debate issues, and describe how they've spun their tales and arrived at their ideas. The authors will take your questions and sign your books! Also discover the literary marketplace in Berkeley's MLK, Jr. Civic Center Park where you can stroll scores of stalls featuring bookstores, publishers, writing programs, book art, individual authors, and more.

This year's festival features an expanded youth expo with stages dedicated to award-winning YA, middle-grade, and picture book authors and illustrators from here and around the world. A Family Fun Zone is brimming author booths, games, art activities, scavenger hunts, hands-on STEM experiments, and all-ages sessions on food, travel, magic and imagination.

Here are some of the new releases that will be highlighted at the Bay Area Book Fest.



Non-Fiction

Bay Area newcomers and old-timers alike love KQED's "Bay Curious" podcast, which reveals surprising secrets and stories about the place we call home. Host Olivia Allen-Price has compiled dozens of quirky tidbits, local landmarks, and little-known histories into a book.

Saturday night keynote speaker and Woodside resident Joan Baez has devoted herself to visual art after retiring from performing, and will take the stage to discuss the newly published compendium of her drawings, "Am I Pretty When I Fly?"

Max Miller, whose YouTube channel "Tasting History" has over 1 million followers, melds cooking and history. On the show, Miller recreates ancient recipes from around the world, served with a side dish of entertaining and enlightening historical anecdotes. At the festival, he'll present the gorgeous companion book to "Tasting History" with historical recipes for more than 60 dishes, along with modern interpretations.

Fiction

Atherton resident Susanne Pari's new release "In the Time of Our History" brings us inside the competing visions of womanhood for Iranian Americans. In her novel, which is at once a multi-generational Iranian-American saga and an intimate, moving story of mothers and daughters, she explores the entangled lives of an exiled family who are forging new lives in America.

Memoir

Looking for a survival strategy as the pandemic unraveled her life, journalist Peggy Orenstein embarked on a wild and literally wooly project. A lifelong knitter, she set out to make her own sweater from scratch—starting with shearing the sheep. Although she calls the results "the world's ugliest sweater," the much bigger success is "Unraveling," a memoir that explores other unravelings too: facing the death of a parent, an impending "empty nest," and aging itself.

The Fest also features other genres such as Poetry, Young Adult and more.

Tickets for the headliner events are priced at \$15 each.

To view a full schedule of events for the Bay Area Book Fest visit baybookfest.org.



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