



**CREATING
CONVERSATIONS,
BUILDING
COMMUNITY.**

LitFest.

EDMONTON'S
**NONFICTION
FESTIVAL**

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LitFest, held in the heart of Edmonton's downtown, is Canada's original literary nonfiction festival. In just ten years of groundbreaking programming, LitFest has earned its reputation as the gathering place for excellence in nonfiction writing; an annual 11-day fall festival that connects authors and readers around the most important and interesting issues of the day.



LitFest creates conversations, debates, and celebrations around what's important today and what people will be talking about tomorrow.

People are seeking intellectual nourishment, something that will touch them, move them, and give new insights and connections to what is happening in the world. LitFest makes this happen.

Not everyone considers themselves a book person, but everyone is interested in something. With dozens of unique events over the festival—plus a few sprinkled throughout the rest of the year—LitFest has something for everyone. LitFest is proud to have sparked more conversations on nonfiction topics than any other literary gathering in the country.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Canada Council for the Arts, Edmonton Arts Council, Edmonton Downtown Business Association, and local businesses recognize the importance and impact of the festival and have been ongoing supporters. And now, to help grow the festival and to allow the organization to have a continued, year-round impact, we need your support.

LitFest leads the way in creating spaces where communities come together in public dialogue. We strongly believe that discourse and debate contribute to the development of creative learning and a healthy, engaged community. Headline and main events play to sold-out venues, and LitFest has seen a steep increase in year-over-year attendance.

We envision a future—a near future—where Edmonton is heralded for hosting the boldest, best, and most important nonfiction festival in the world.

We are looking for partners who share our dream.



Investing in the arts is not only an investment in the organization or event itself, but an investment in the community, its residents, and businesses. Join and support the conversation.



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LitFest has a special ambience because of its creative approach to events. I was lucky enough to do a session on Leonardo da Vinci and food. Such things really make books come to life while bringing authors and readers together.

– Ross King
Governor General award-winning author of *The Judgement of Paris* and *Leonardo* and the Last Supper.

LITFEST: OUR STORY

LitFest was born after the 20-year-old Alberta Book Fair Society recognized the field of literary festivals in Canada was crowded, yet not one was focused on the growing genre of literary nonfiction. We made the bold decision to be Canada's first and only nonfiction-focused literary festival.

With a bold, fresh, and unique focus, LitFest was perfectly positioned to be the epicentre for new conversations. Year after year, writers were excited to attend and to return. Publishers were eager to promote their authors. And audiences were transformed and energized by the festival.

Nonfiction is a place where everyone has a voice and, since the beginning, festival organizers have ensured accessibility. LitFest seeks out spaces that are safe for LGBTQ individuals and accessible for people with disabilities. Ticket prices are kept reasonable so affordability is not a barrier to information and engagement.

What started as a three-day event with 13 authors has grown to an 11-day extravaganza with over 50 local, national, and international authors attracting an audience of over 4,000 remarkable people. Over our first ten years, nonfiction has matured and developed into a genre that the public, publishers, literary prizes, and authors are getting behind and celebrating. Nonfiction now outsells every other genre in Canada. Edmonton's downtown core provides the trendy urban backdrop for the conversations around topics Canadians care about.

LitFest is known for punching about its weight class in creative partnerships and effective management. As a registered charity and nonprofit organization, the annual budget of approximately \$250,000 is stretched to see a local economic impact of nearly \$2 million.

Outside of our core festival dates, LitFest is gaining audiences and making an impact throughout the year. LitFest has collected books to be donated to correctional facility reading programs, partnered with the Edmonton Arts Council for Word on the Square, and has partnered on local auxiliary events touting big names in nonfiction, including David Sedaris, Margaret Atwood, and David Suzuki. Our dream is to program a series of events to keep the conversation going year-round.

CREATIVE NONFICTION
IS A MIX OF FACTUAL REPORTAGE
AND LITERARY LICENSE.
IT'S JOURNALISM WITH
A POETIC HEART,
OR REALITY-BASED FICTION.
IT'S A MEMOIR THAT EXPANDS BEYOND MEMORY.
IT'S THE TALK-SHOW OF
LITERATURE. – JOHN MACMILLAN



NOTABLE AUTHORS

NAOMI KLEIN
JOHN RALSTON SAUL
DAVID SUZUKI
JON RONSON
SIMON WINCHESTER
EZRA LEVANT
WILL FERGUSON
IVAN E. COYOTE
CHARLOTTE GILL
DAN SAVAGE
CAROL SHABEN
AMANDA LINDHOUT
LAWRENCE HILL
WAB KINEW
MG VASSANJI
ADRIENNE CLARKSON



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE THE LITFEST EXPERIENCE

The Festival isn't just a book event; we are known throughout the literary world for our experiential programming. Our unique, interactive events often provide multi-sensory experiences to engage and provoke audiences.

Think a roving cocktail party with more than 50 of the hottest authors in attendance, the spontaneity of a story slam, or pairing literature with the city's best chefs and food purveyors for a delicious culinary book event.

And we're keen to provide a space for tough conversations. Sparks flew in 2010 when Ezra Levant, author of *Ethical Oil*, went head-to-head against Satya Das, author of *Green Oil*. In 2015, there was a difficult but essential discussion on Canada's murdered and missing indigenous women, and Ivan E. Coyote led a discussion around gender identity at a time where LGBTQ issues were at the forefront for Alberta school boards. Internationally best-selling provocateur Jon Ronson addressed the issue of online bullying in his book *So You've Been Publicly Shamed* at a time when the Supreme Court was discussing the Cyber-Safety Act.

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The jury supports this festival and acknowledges its wide variety of programming and inclusion of underrepresented and socially relevant topics. They note that the festival is well attended and that it is programmed at a variety of venues, helping make it accessible and appealing to a wide audience.

– Edmonton Arts Council

LITFEST IS A #YEG INCUBATOR

LitFest shines a bright light on the work of Edmonton's nonfiction writers and brings them together with great or important authors from across Canada and the world to exchange ideas and elevate important conversations. By strategically placing headliners on the same stage as local authors in panel discussions, presentations, and events, our emerging authors gain exposure to audiences they otherwise may not have.

Award winners and nominees of the Charles Taylor Prize, Hilary Weston Writers Trust, Giller Prize, and Governor General Award attend the festival. Local authors have shared the spotlight with prize-winning authors, such as Charlotte Gill, Will Ferguson, Andrew Westoll, JJ Lee, Rosemary Sullivan, and historian Tim Cook. Their expertise would not be possible for many of Edmonton's local authors without the festival.

EDMONTON ON THE LITERARY MAP

Edmonton leads the country in nonfiction with LitFest. We set the discussion agenda for the year and bring in authors that everyone will be reading. Events take over downtown businesses and festival attendees meet and engage in hundreds of literary conversations in Edmonton's core each year. And every year the conversation grows.

In addition to the 4,000 paid festival attendees, many more take part through no cost, open-space events in highly visible venues like CBC's Centre Stage in City Centre Mall and in Churchill Square. Offering a range of events that are free to the public or pay-what-you-can-allows audiences to get a taste of the festival. Ticketed events remain affordable, and through collaborations with other artists and organizations in fields like dance, theatre, music, and the culinary arts, LitFest continues to expand our reach into Edmonton's diverse communities.

Edmonton is *the place* where nonfiction comes alive. LitFest plays a key role in increasing the footprint of Edmonton on the literary world. But to keep growing the conversation around important issues, the Festival needs partners. This is where you come in.



YOUR SUPPORT
WILL SUSTAIN AND PROMOTE
CONVERSATIONS
THAT MATTER.



Edmonton's downtown core provides the trendy urban backdrop for the conversations around topics Canadians care about.

LitFest. *is*
CANADA'S
ORIGINAL
nonfiction festival

BOOKS & AUTHORS
THAT ADDRESS
**CURRENT
EVENTS**

WHAT STARTED AS A
... 3-day event ...
has grown to an
11-DAY FESTIVAL

On Amazon's list of
Canadian Cities that
LOVE TO READ,

**EDMONTON
RANKS #4**



LITFEST HAS HOSTED
OVER **300** BEST-SELLING,
AWARD-WINNING,
AND EMERGING
NONFICTION AUTHORS

OUR **FREE EVENTS**
create vibrant
conversations in
THE DOWNTOWN CORE

LitFest generates an
estimated economic
spinoff of

**\$ 2 MILLION
ANNUALLY**

More than
20,000 READERS
have attended LitFest



LITFEST BRINGS
INTERNATIONAL
AUTHORS TO THE
YEG STAGE

HOW TO MAKE YOUR IMPACT

We envision LitFest as the world's destination for transformative, educational, provocative, and entertaining conversation.

For this to happen, we need to bring in the biggest authors and the most important thinkers, broaden audiences, and program in larger venues to serve more Edmontonians. We want to do all this while still providing events that are accessible for audiences of diverse income levels and backgrounds.

Currently, LitFest relies on government and community grants for slightly more than one third of its annual budget. While this percentage is relatively low within the arts nonprofit sector, the funding model leaves the organization operating on a year-to-year basis, and limits the ability to plan creatively. By securing long-term, sustainable partnerships, LitFest will draw top-level authors—who often come with hefty speaking fees—and entice national and international audiences.

We cannot facilitate the conversations our society is demanding without you. We rely on the financial and voluntary support of individuals, corporations, and foundations to carry out our work. Your support will sustain and promote conversations that matter.

Please contact us at 780-498-2500 or visit www.litfestalberta.org today for more information on how you can be part of the conversation.



*Arts and culture make
considerable and necessary
contributions to the well-being
of communities.*

– Creative City Network
of Canada



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