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Hay Festival Arequipa: 12 Years of Great Conversations, 5-8 November 2026

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Hay Festival has today announced the full programme for its twelfth edition in Arequipa, Peru, taking place 5-8 November 2026.

Discover the full programme and book tickets now at [hayfestival.com/arequipa](https://www.hayfestival.com/arequipa)

Launching the best new fiction and non-fiction, the Festival brings together leading writers, thinkers, artists and cultural figures from Peru and around the world. The programme explores literature, politics, society, the environment, art, technology and new forms of storytelling, in a series of conversations with the Peruvian public.

More than 156 artists from 20 countries include the following: South African novelist **JM Coetzee**, Romanian novelist and poet **Mircea Cărtărescu**, Mexican writer **Alma Delia Murillo**, Italian-Egyptian writer **Andre Aciman**, French writer **Sophie Demange**, Mexican novelist **Elma Correa**, Argentine writer and literary critic **Patricio Pron**, Mexican short-story writer **Liliana Blum**, Bolivian writer **Edmundo Paz Soldán**, British-Nigerian novelist **Irenosen Okojie**, French author **Vidya Narine**, Colombian writers **Juan Esteban Constaín** and **Cristina Bendek**, Puerto-Rican author **Mayra Santos-Febres** and Peruvian journalist **Rosa Chávez Yacila**; philosophers **Renata Salecl** and **Carlos Peña**; writer and screenwriter **Santiago Roncagliolo**; social scientist **Gerald Bronner**; illustrator **Quan Zhou**; journalist **Sara Babiker**; literary scholars **Claudia Apablaza** and **Álvaro Bisama**; singer-songwriter **Elisa Tokeshi**; science and tech communicators **Aldo Bartra** and **Philip Chu Joy**; former Peruvian Finance Minister **Toni Alva**; historian **Cecilia Bákula**, and an opening concert by the KNM Ensemble Berlin.

Major Hay Festival Global projects, including the South to North conversations and Eccles Institute partnership, are woven through the programme, forging essential global connections across borders.

Outreach and education programmes across the region, including Hay Festival Joven for young people, plus Hay Festival Comunitario in communities and Socabaya Prison, open access to Festival inspiration more widely, while some sessions will be broadcast live online, maintaining Hay Festival Global's commitment to digital accessibility.

Hay Festival CEO Julie Finch said:

“Hay Festival Arequipa is a space where literature and ideas travel in every direction. This year’s programme brings together extraordinary writers, artists and thinkers with the people of Arequipa, creating opportunities to imagine a world of different possibilities. With a range of talks covering everything from nature and poetry to democracy and AI, we hope these conversations stay with audiences long after the Festival ends. See you there!”

Hay Festival International Director, Cristina Fuentes La Roche said:

“We are delighted to present another year of a high-quality and diverse programme for the 12th edition of Hay Festival Arequipa with a new stop in Tacna. This programme reflects the diversity and curiosity of the city, connecting Peruvian voices with thinkers from around the world. Thanks to the support of our partners, we are able to continue this important work of maintaining spaces for listening, exchanging ideas with the world, and celebrating culture.”

Programme in detail

Literature and poetry take centre stage as Arequipa hosts some of today's most brilliant writers including Nobel laureate **J M Coetzee** with *Mariano Melgar: Poetry of Love and Rebellion*, the bilingual edition he compiled with **Valerie Miles**, plus an evening where the two recite Melgar's poems to traditional and contemporary music; while **Mircea Cărtărescu** (Romania) will discuss his dreamlike universe, from the *Blinding* trilogy to *Solenoid*; **André Aciman** (*Idyll*); **Patricio Pron** (*There is a Crack in Everything, That's how the Light gets in*); and **Irenosen Okojie** (*Healer*); as well as **Álvaro Bisama** (Chile); **Liliana Blum**, **Alma Delia Murillo** and **Elma Correa** (Mexico); **Sophie Demange** and **Vidya Narine** (France); **Catherine Fletcher** and **Cal Flynn** (UK); **Greta García** and **Nerea Pallares** (Spain); **Juan Esteban Constaín** (Colombia); and **Melanie Pérez Arias** (Venezuela).

Peruvian literary highlights include the centenary of Blanca Varela's birth, with **Fietta Jarque** and **Alonso Ruiz Rosas** on her life and work; while **Ximena López Bustamante** and **Giovanna Pollarolo** stage an imagined conversation between Ferrer and Varela; and **Mayra Santos-Febres**, **Morella Petrozzi** and **Romina Silman** share their poetry; writer **Elisa Tokeschi** presents her debut novel *Borderline Sagrada*; and we hear from **Rosa Chávez Yacila**, **Ulises Gutiérrez Llantoy**, **Karina Pacheco**, **Alessandra Pinasco** and **David Silva Rojas**. **Claudia Apablaza** and **Santiago Roncagliolo** lead the conversation on *Cuadernos hispanoamericanos*; and Talento Editorial features panels with **Enrique Redel**, **Valerie Miles**, **Soledad Cunliffe** and **Ruhuan Huarca**.

Peru's political, social and economic challenges are dissected as former ministers **Toni Alva** and **Patricia Salas O'Brien**, along with historian **Cecilia Bákula** and lawyer **Maria Emilia Ladrón de Guevara**, seek a common vision for the country; while **Julio Arbizu**, **Cecilia Bákula**, **Javier Ciurlizza**, and **José Luis Ramos** discuss the challenges the country faces regarding truth and memory.

Global politics are reimagined as **Farid Kahhat** presents *The World has Become a Strange Place*; **Renata Salecl** (Slovenia) and **Sarah Babiker Moreno** (Spain) will explore critical thinking to arrive at fairer forms of co-existence; while **Farid Kahhat**, **Josefina Townsend** and **Alberto Vergara** examine our disenchantment with politics; **Branko Soban** (Slovenia) and **Townsend** discuss challenges threatening democracies; while **Gerald Bronner** (France) addresses truth, propaganda, and democracy in the digital age; and **Carlos Granés** (Colombia) and **Fietta Jarque** (Peru) explore Latin American politics through art.

Music takes centre-stage as **The KNM Berlin Ensemble**, one of Europe's most prestigious contemporary music groups, opens the Festival; **Miguel Rubio**, **Luis Nieto Degregori**, and **Karina Pacheco** will discuss 50 years of Yuyachkani, Peru's leading independent theatre collective; while **Miguel Almeyda Morales**, **Greta García** and **Morella Petrozzi** explore theatre, dance, and cultural management; British-Peruvian filmmaker **Rose Lowder** discusses experimental cinema in her first public appearance in Arequipa; and **Rember Yahuarcani** will discuss Amazonian art with the Peruvian-German researcher **Katherina Valdivia**.

The art of the podcast is dissected by some of the world's best audio creators including **Javier Peña**, creator of *Grandes infelices* (*Great Unhappy People*), one of the most listened-to literary podcasts in Spanish; while **Eliezer Budasoff** will interview **Phillip Chu Joy** in a live recording for *El hilo* (*The Thread*), from Radio Ambulante Estudios; **Quan Zhou**, creator of *Mi familia española* (*My Spanish Family*), will discuss identity and racist discrimination; and **Serge Barbet** and **Carlos Rivadeneyra** will look at podcasts as a tool for critical thinking and informed citizenship.

Five episodes of the Festival's own podcast, *Hay Festival en Español*, will be recorded live at Casa Moral on Friday 6 November and Saturday 7 November, with free admission thanks to Credicorp. Guests include **Carlos Caamaño**, **Rossana Díaz Costa**, **Xabier Díaz de Cerio**, **Alma Delia Murillo**, **Edmundo Paz Soldán**, **Alessandra Pinasco**, **Giovanna Pollarolo**, **Patricio Pron**, **Mayra Santos-Febres** and **Rosa Vásquez Espinoza**.

There is a focus on science and nature as environmental journalist **Xabier Díaz de Cerio** and explorer and chemical biologist **Rosa Vásquez Espinosa** discuss listening to nature and sharing its stories as we become more climate-aware; **Aldo Bartra**, of the YouTube channel *El Robot de Platón* (*Plato's Robot*), will argue that science is for everyone; **Claudia Apablaza**, **Cal Flynn** and **Frank Steinhof** invite us to see the world differently; while **Mariana Matija** (Colombia) and **Micaela Chirif** (Peru) will explore our relationship with nature through literature.

Hay Festival Global's South to North conversations continue to present voices from the Global South, as writers of a new Hay Festival publication – **Cristina Bendek, Carlos Fonseca, Carlos Granés, Karina Pacheco, Edmundo Paz Soldán** and **Mayra Santos-Febres** – come together for three special events to discuss the General Archive of the Indies in Seville. The project, *Unveiling Stories*, developed by Hay Festival, Anagrama and Charco Press, invited contemporary Latin American writers to explore the Archive as a starting point for new writing.

The importance of community and inclusivity are central to Hay Festival Arequipa's Comunitario projects. Its most diverse programme yet includes sessions at the men's and women's prisons, the COAR (High-Performance Schools), Plaza San Francisco, Santa Catalina Street, and the Mario Vargas Llosa Library. Events range from readings, workshops, and the Book Tent to sound experiences, the 2026 Outstanding Award, concerts, film screenings, improv, plays, and even a mini marathon.

University students also take part thanks to Universidad Continental, partner of Hay Festival Joven (Youth) – a free programme exclusively for the university community, featuring **Javier Calvo Pérez, Daniel Sacro, Mariana Matija, Serge Barbet, Toni Alva, Quan Zhou** and **Luis Carlos Arias Schreiber**.

Senior citizens and university students from Arequipa and Peru can request up to ten free tickets to the general programme, subject to availability, through a form on the Festival website.

The Festival's activities in Peru will again extend beyond Arequipa, through the **Hay Festival Presents Tacna** and **Hay Festival Presents Lima** programmes. In Tacna, with sponsorship from Southern and support from the Regional Directorate of Culture, six events will take place on Wednesday 4 November with **Xabier Díaz de Cerio, Alessandra Pinasco, Rosa Chávez Yacila, Fietta Jarque, Alberto Vergara** and **Santiago Roncagliolo**.

The Festival is also strengthening its ties with the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP). In Arequipa, it will hold a continuous reading of *A World for Julius* and a screening of the 2021 film, among other community activities. In Lima, three free talks at the university's Cultural Centre, open to the public, will feature **Quan Zhou** on Tuesday 3 November; **Mircea Cărtărescu** on Wednesday 4 November and **Renata Salecl** on Monday 9 November.

Find out more [here](#).



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