Presented by the Aspen Institute in partnership with The Atlantic magazine, the Aspen Ideas Festival is the nation’s preeminent gathering place for leaders from around the globe and across many disciplines to present and discuss the ideas and issues that both shape our lives and challenge our times.

A PUBLIC CONFERENCE Anyone may purchase a pass to attend — the Aspen Ideas Festival is open to all.

PROGRAMMING From sunup to sundown, Aspen Ideas packs hundreds of fascinating discussions into ten days. We tackle issues of the day as well as uncover ideas that spark wonder. Panels, interviews, lectures, and interactive sessions will delve into topics shaping the 2020 election, the promise and peril of capitalism, the role of art throughout all aspects of our lives, geopolitics, and much more. Some topics run across the week, while others are specific to dates within the Festival.

THE FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE Attendees have exceptional opportunities to interact with public officials, artists, scientists, authors, business executives, scholars, economists, foreign policy specialists, entrepreneurs, and leaders of all kinds — on footpaths and sidewalks, over lunch on the lawn or coffee at the espresso bar, in auditoriums and in small seminar rooms. The intimacy of Festival gatherings renders the experience unique and unforgettable.

DATES AND PASS OPTIONS

**HEALTH, June 24 – 27**

**FESTIVAL 1, June 27 – 30**

**FESTIVAL 2, June 30 – July 3**

A Health pass may be purchased in combination with a Festival 1 or Festival 2 pass. However, Festival 1 and Festival 2 passes may not be combined. President’s-level and Chairman’s-level supporters of the Aspen Institute may purchase a partially tax-deductible Patron Pass, which provides attendance to the entire ten days of Aspen Ideas, June 24 – July 3. Patrons play an immeasurable role at the Festival, as their generosity supports the convening of 300 individually selected scholars.

**CHOOSE YOUR FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE**

The following tracks are under development for 2020. The representation on the following pages reflects the spirit of the programming the Festival aims to present next summer.
• **GAME CHANGERS** Change, while often incremental, occasionally sweeps in with transformative force. From anesthesia to antibiotics, genomics to artificial intelligence, scientific breakthroughs have already upended health and medicine. But innovation keeps accelerating, and countless inventions on the horizon are certain to disrupt how we live, work, and play. Systems and structures are shifting, too, as the organization of medical care takes radically new forms, and public policy alters norms about who gets what, and how it is paid for. Change is a two-way street: as we shatter the frontiers of what is possible, we are being visited by the upheavals of a warming planet, demographic pressures, and growing inequities.

• **HEALTH 2020: POLICY AND POLITICS** As we usher in a new decade, countless pressing health policy issues are atop the global agenda, from vaccine access, universal health care, and pandemic preparedness to health workforce shortages and climate-related disease. These hot-button issues will likely have a big influence on the American presidential election and on legislation, policymaking, and advocacy everywhere. This is also a moment for milestones: the Affordable Care Act is celebrating its tenth anniversary, and the United Nations, with its many-health related activities, is marking its 75th. Meanwhile, initiatives like Healthy People 2020 in the US and Health 2020 in Europe are giving way to 2030-focused goals. All of that prompts us to glance backwards, and then don distance glasses for a vision of the future.

• **THE MEDICAL ENTERPRISE** Tensions between health care costs and quality, the need for huge investments in cutting-edge technology, the balance between efficiency and reach, and merger-and-acquisitions fever all complicate a core goal of any nation: the healthiest population possible. The public and private infrastructure erected to finance and administer health services isn’t always patient-friendly, and the complexity of medical systems can stymie even the savviest consumer. Nonetheless, health systems, in partnership with insurers, philanthropists, and regulators, are well-positioned to think big and promote patient and clinician satisfaction while producing better outcomes. To succeed, they’ll have to engage investors and venture capitalists; tackle workforce issues, structural racism, and access to care; and confront privacy concerns and resource shortfalls.

• **THE HEALTHY MIND** As neuroscience advances and mental health issues gain prominence, the Venn diagram of brain and mind is informing self-care, treatment, and public policy. By deepening our understanding of the cognitive and emotional pathways to health, we can rethink mindfulness, cultivate new opportunities to stave off dementia, depression, and anxiety, develop better coping strategies, and lift up the possibility of joy. The relative merits of drug treatment and talk therapy are generating vigorous discussion; the links between brain and gut suggest exciting treatment possibilities; and the therapeutic role of social networks, innovative apps, and community connections are all coming into sharper focus. Collaboration across many disciplines is the linchpin of a holistic approach to mental wellness around the world.
HEALTH | JUNE 24 – 27

• IMMUNITY AND RESILIENCE Building immunity is not simply a matter of having the right antibiotics or vaccines at hand, although these can certainly help. It is also about fostering the core strength to resist assault or recover quickly if one occurs. In that sense, the body’s ability to fight infection and a community’s capacity to sustain itself in the face of violence or natural disasters are primed in much the same way. The science of resilience tells us that the right prescription can influence how we deal with stress, combat microbes, avoid Alzheimer’s disease, and confront personal and collective trauma. What tools are best for bolstering immunity and making a rebound possible?

• THE MILLENNIAL WAY Millennials, defined as those born between 1981 and 1996, are America’s largest generation. Youth populations are surging worldwide, especially in developing countries, and these young adults are redefining wellness and doing health care their own way. Efficient technology is assumed—they want to research their medical options and manage appointments online and they favor telemedicine and wearable tracking devices. Often lacking a primary care doctor, and sometimes health insurance, millennials insist on knowing what services will cost and may be willing to forgo them if the price is too steep. They demand convenience and consider wellness practices at least as useful as mainstream medicine. Health care systems will have to shake up core clinical and business practices to respond.

• FOOD REVOLUTION Food is pleasure and a pathway to health; food is addictive and a cause of chronic disease. Red meat is bad; no, red meat is okay. Plant-based meat substitutes are a wedge against carbon emissions; yes, but these highly processed alternatives are packed with saturated fat and sodium. Food insecurity is a global crisis and agriculture is being transformed by climate change at the very moment that celebrity chefs are gifting us with their craft, and personalized nutrition is gaining enthusiasts. With so many conflicting messages out there, and almost eight billion mouths to feed, it’s hard to know what we should really be eating. What tradeoffs in the field and on our plates can maximize better health for all?

• ART AS MEDICINE Whether we experience art as a maker or an observer, its power is evident not only in the pleasure it affords, but in the healing it makes possible. Science increasingly reveals the therapeutic value of creative pursuits, which can improve mobility, memory and speech; relieve pain and the after-effects of trauma; enhance mental health and learning outcomes; and build personal and community power. Imaging technologies are showing us what happens to the brain on art, pop culture icons are seizing on their celebrity to spread the message of health, and forward-thinking communities are weaving art into their public spaces and problem-solving venues. What is the role of art in individual and community well-being and how do we use it most effectively?
FESTIVAL 1 AND FESTIVAL 2  Three main tracks span all days of Festival 1 and 2:

- **THE AMERICAN IDEA** Forged in deeply considered ideals of justice, equality, and freedom to pursue individual goals, the American experiment continues to evolve. But the flourishing of this democracy requires constant vigilance on behalf of educational opportunity, equal protection under the law, and such freedoms enunciated by the Bill of Rights as speech and press, due process, and religious belief. As we consider the “American Idea” today, where are we on this arc towards justice and liberty for all? Across the week we highlight the scholars, artists, politicians, innovators and even humorists who  share perspectives on the history, future, and present success of an idea so formidable, yet so novel, that it has been the envy of many across the globe. And in a time when our national conversations are fraught with deep divisions, we have to ask: will the American Idea survive?

- **A NEW CAPITALISM** Fifty years after economist Milton Friedman famously argued that a firm’s main responsibility is to maximize returns for shareholders, boardrooms across America are rethinking the role of purpose. Many argue that corporations have broader responsibilities and must demonstrate the value they create for employees, the environment, and the society in which they exist. Beyond platitudes, will investors allow such a shift in corporate purpose and practice — after the decades-long supremacy of profits and share price? How do firms and investors measure success apart from financials and design long-term strategic goals that embrace the complexity of now? We will listen to scholars, leaders, and activists who are assessing the risks and defining what this new capitalism could look like.

- **ARTS IN ACTION** How do artists and cultural leaders impact the way we see the world and our role in it? Artists across all genres are creating new narratives that challenge the way we understand our past and current identity — urging empathy, civic responsibility, and action. Arts in Action will explore these themes across the week, from Rebels to Women 2020, Beauty to Technology, China Rising to the idea that is “America.”
THE AMERICAN IDEA (See above.)

A NEW CAPITALISM (See above.)

ARTS IN ACTION (See above.)

GEOPOLITICS NOW Twenty years into the 21st century, the contours of a new global order have emerged. The geopolitics of this new era are defined less and less by global institutions, strong alliances, and expanding democracy, and more and more by ascendant nationalism, dwindling diplomacy, and the reemergence of strongmen leadership. As the world reorients around a rising China, the West must contend with a set of competing values which will drive a rebalancing of our global politics. Meanwhile, many of the most vexing challenges that will define our era — the climate crisis, the emergence of artificial intelligence, large scale human migration — are borderless. When the people of the future look back on 2020, how will their world be shaped by geopolitics, now?

GIMME SHELTER: HOW WE’LL LIVE While struggling American families face the stresses of housing insecurity, 70 million refugees around the world are on the move and in need of shelter. The concept of home is changing, and so are the qualities we seek in our shelter. What do our kids want that we didn’t, and how are the economic conditions of today informing those desires? Housing experts are responding to these evolving needs — creative architects are reengineering living spaces, whether temporary, smart, or tiny. Public, private, and non-profit partners are working together to develop solutions to the affordable housing crisis. In this track, we’ll reconsider how “home is where the heart is” as we adapt to changing realities and consider what matters most for the roof over our head.

REBELS: THE CASE FOR BREAKING THE RULES From a young age, most of us are taught to follow, and rewarded for following the rules. But rebels are celebrated and immortalized for challenging the status quo. Where would progress originate if we settled comfortably into the daily march of our established conventions? From the Founding Fathers to Civil War heroes, whistleblowers to protest leaders, scientists to counter-culture musicians, rebels conceive of creative solutions and new ways of doing things that many can’t imagine or don’t pursue. Objectors are often integral to the advancement of societies around the world. We’ll celebrate and explore the influential movements and individuals today and throughout history who remind us why rule breakers rule.
FESTIVAL 1 | JUNE 27 – 30

• FINDING BEAUTY The nature of beauty, and whether it is objective or subjective, is one of the most enduring and debated themes in Western philosophy. Should beauty be the goal of art, or is the conveyance of emotion between the artist and observer the more defining outcome? When we are overcome by natural beauty — majestic mountains, fiery sunsets — is it part social conditioning? Globally, are the standards of beauty always being reset or is beauty a biological adaptation? And what of our fraught relationship with body image? Messages celebrating body diversity are hitting the mainstream, yet 60 percent of teenage girls will stop doing something they love, like a sport, because they don’t like how they look doing it. Why can’t we just love the skin we’re in? Philosophers, fashion and beauty icons, artists, and cognitive psychologists will weigh in on whether beauty truly is in the eye of the beholder.

• PLANET IN PERIL: SOLVE FOR X As populations expand and economies steadily grow, the human footprint on this planet becomes increasingly consequential on the natural systems that support life. The air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water on which we rely is all at risk. We know we cannot have a prosperous future with a depleted natural world, so how can we repair and replenish Earth? Conservation experts are hell-bent on solving the very problems we create, and they’re making gains. From fossil fuel mitigation to energy innovation, habitat preservation to plastic substitutions, food products to agricultural integrity, what projects and innovations are changing the trajectory for the better? Hear from the practitioners and problem solvers facing head-on the greatest issue of our time.
FESTIVAL 2 | JUNE 30 – JULY 3

• **THE AMERICAN IDEA** (See above.)

• **A NEW CAPITALISM** (See above.)

• **ARTS IN ACTION** (See above.)

• **CHINA RISING** Trade disputes with the United States notwithstanding, China is on course to become the world's largest economy, a fact alone that has broad economic implications on a global scale. Its policies and programs have successfully lifted millions of its own people out of poverty. At 1.4 billion, China has more college-educated citizens than any country on the planet. Its advanced technology development is extraordinarily competitive. Against this seemingly rosy scenario, pro-democracy students in Hong Kong are protesting against intensifying Communist party control; the country's air pollution annually spikes to life-threatening levels; and dissidents share stories of massive human rights violations. From global trade to online freedoms, technological leaps to rural hardship, remarkable culture to widespread censure, consider this a deep dive into one country — whose expanding posture abroad and tightening grip at home — is changing...everything.

• **WOMEN 2020** Despite exciting gains (first all-female spacewalk, more women heads of state than ever), and meaningful anniversaries (100 years of suffrage, for some), there isn't a country on Earth where women have achieved gender equality. Political participation across the globe is stronger than ever, companies with women in C-suites have comparatively higher profits, and opportunities for young women abound. Yet the dumbfounding forecast that it will take 208 years to reach gender equality in the United States is beyond dismal. How can we move the needle faster? How will we lift up all women — across racial and socioeconomic differences? As we celebrate victories and examine disparities, we will look in on and learn from contemporary movements, and take stock of the state of feminism.

• **LIFE HAPPENS** As almost anyone who's been through something terrible can tell you, our cultural conversations and personal skills around suffering are less than robust. And yet, everyone is going through something. This set of conversations will explore what we can learn in the dark corners of life. What does hardship teach us about humanity? What do grief, fragility, and even tragedy have to do with grit, love, and beauty? How do we strengthen the emotional muscles we need for life after things come apart and summon the resilience to embrace something that might be better than being perfect — being human?
FESTIVAL 2 | JUNE 30 – JULY 3

- **THE EDGE OF WHAT WE KNOW** Science is an engine of human prosperity that's a driving force in not only our wellbeing but the survival of our species. Seeking to understand truth and what's provable is an expression of the very human urge to constantly redefine who we are and how to improve the world around us. With some of the world’s most daring explorers and researchers leading the way, we’ll learn about the latest findings in many fields — from gene editing to cancer research to breakthroughs in neuroscience, from the biodiversity on the depths of the ocean floor to new planets in the outer reaches of space. Who are the trailblazers and what are the most exciting discoveries pushing the very edges of what we know?

- **TOTALLY WIRED: OUR LIVES ON TECH** Technology is ingrained in our everyday lives. Giant tech companies are reckoning with their creations, and we the users are grappling with the costs and benefits of our devices. How has technology changed our culture and what impacts are around the corner? Are we too connected? Are the promises of advancement paying off? With artificial intelligence and quantum computing, is technology becoming too powerful? Or will technology help unleash human potential beyond what we can imagine? How will humans adapt as technology evolves? Technologists, futurists, industry leaders, sociologists, and ethicists will gather to dissect these questions and explore humankind’s complex relationship with technology.