

Classic holiday films to enjoy with family



The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Few traditions may elicit more collective belly laughs than holiday movie night, a tradition in millions of households across the globe. Families can consider these classic holiday films as they plan family movie night this holiday season.

"Miracle on 34th Street" (1947): This classic is centered around a man named "Kris Kringle" (Edmund Gwenn) who claims to be the real Santa Claus after a successful stint as a department store Santa in midtown Manhattan.A trial to determine if Mr. Kringle is telling the truth soon follows. This version of the tale has earned a 96 percent rating on the popular film review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes.

"A Christmas Story" (1983): Though it airs all day long on Christmas on the cable television network TBS, families can get a head-start on that marathon and watch the film uninterrupted whenever they choose. Families can laugh together as 9-year-old Ralphie (Peter Billingsley) hopes to unwrap his official Red Ryder BB gun on Christmas morning. The film, which boasts an 89 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, includes a memorable performance by Darren McGavin, who plays Ralphie's father.

"Babes In Toyland" (1934): Also known as "March of the Wooden Soldiers," this nearly century-old classic stars the legendary comedy duo Laurel and Hardy as two helpful tenants living in Mother Peep's shoe in Toyland.

"How the Grinch Stole Christmas" (1967): An animated version of the Dr. Seuss classic, this film has entertained scores of children since it was first released more than 50 years ago.

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When Was The Last Time You Bought Something For The Last Time?

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Stock the pantry for holiday baking

Many holiday traditions begin with family and friends gathered in the kitchen or around the dinner table. Food is an integral part of celebrating Thanksgiving, Christmas and Chanukah, and key components of each holiday are tied exclusively to food.

Come the holiday season, many people gather to make delicious desserts for holiday dinners or even as gifts. The right ingredients are necessary to produce a bounty of baked goods. It's also essential to ensure those ingredients are fresh, as age can compromise the taste of some spices, and leavening ingredients like yeast, baking soda and baking powder may lose efficacy over time.

• **Flours:** All-purpose flour is versatile and useful in many recipes. In addition,

bread flour, cake flour and pastry flour have attributes that make them better suited for their respective jobs than all-purpose flour.

• **Baking soda:** This leavening agent is activated when it is combined with acid and heat. That is why it is often paired with citrus juice, buttermilk and sour cream.

• **Baking powder:** This leavening agent is baking

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soda mixed with a powdered acid and cornstarch. If baking soda is the only leavening agent, it will not require the addition of another acidic ingredient. "Double-acting" means carbon dioxide bubbles will form during mixing and again during heating.

 Yeast: Yeast takes more time to metabolize and cause doughs to rise than other leavening agents.
Sugar: Granulated sugar is the most common sugar found in recipes. Confectioner's sugar (powdered sugar) is used in frosting and icings. Brown sugar is refined sugar with molasses added, and is used in certain recipes, like gingerbread.

• **Salt:** Granulated table salt is used in everyday baking.

• Unsalted butter: Unsalted butter will be the default for baked goods unless the recipe specifically mentions salted butter.



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"Holiday Inn" (1942): Hollywood legends Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire star in this classic that is perhaps most remembered for introducing the Irving Berlin class "White Christmas" to the masses. The film boasts a 100 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes and has something for fans of song, dance and romance.

"Arthur Christmas" (2011): Not all Christmas films date back to the 20th century. This animated tale tells the story of Arthur (voiced by James McAvoy), Santa's youngest son who is thrust into the Christmas Eve business of delivering presents when his father fails to deliver a present to one child out of the hundreds of millions of kids on his list.

"A Christmas Carol" (1951): Many holiday season celebrants cannot imagine letting a season go by without watching at least one adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic tale. The 1951 version is widely considered the most faithful to Dickens' 1843 novella that recounts the story of Ebenezer Scrooge. Alastair Sim stars as Scrooge, and many consider his performance the best of any actor to take a turn as the notorious 19th century miser.



With joy and gratitude in our hearts, we wish you a most Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year to come!

Merry Christmas

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Try these go-to recipes to get you in and out of the kitchen fast!





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Easy Whipped Topping Cookies

1 box cake mix, flavor of your choice 1 egg 1 container (8 ounces) whipped topping Food color (optional)

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Heat oven to 350 degrees. Mix egg into cake mix. Add food color and blend. Fold in whipped topping gently, making sure not to overmix. Place by spoonfuls onto baking sheet and bake 10-12 minutes. Cool and enjoy!



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lla Truffles

20 chocolate sandwich cookies, like Oreo 5 tablespoons Nutella or other chocolate spread 6-8 ounces melting chocolate or almond bark

e cookies and Nutella in food processor, process until smooth ball starts to form. Chill 15 minutes. Drop by tablespoons onto wax lined cookie sheet. Chill one hour. chocolate using package instructions. Dip each truffle into the nocolate using a toothpick. Sprinkle, if desired, with candy sprinkles, powdered sugar or cocoa. Store in refrigerator.

Chocolate Kiss Powder Puffs

1 refrigerated pie crust dough, thawed 15 chocolate kisses (may substitute Rolo or mini peanut butter cups) 3/4 powdered sugar for dredging

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Line or grease cookie sheet. On floured surface using pizza wheel, slice dough into 16 2-inch squares. Place one chocolate into the center of each, using fingertips to seal dough. Flattten slightly into a mound. Repeat until all candies are used. Bake for 15-17 minutes or until done. Don't overbake. Cool and dredge each in sugar.

Pumpkin Cake Cookies

1 box spice cake mix 1 can pumpkin Sprinkle of sugar for each cookie (optional)

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Line or grease cookie sheet. Combine can of pumpkin and box of cake mix, mixing thoroughly. Scoop by tablespoons onto sheet and bake 10-15 minutes. Cool and enjoy!







year, and we wish you a bright and blessed Christmas!



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with DIY decor

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Decorating is one of the joys of the holiday season. Families often decorate together, and such traditions may include dressing the Christmas tree and hanging holiday lights around the house.

A day spent making homemade ornaments is another great way to decorate and spend quality time together as a family during the holiday season. Though families can let their imaginations run wild when making ornaments at home, the following are some great starting points that can serve as springboards for holiday crafting sessions.

SNOWMEN

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The holiday season simply wouldn't be the same without snowmen. Homemade snowmen can be made out of ping pong balls, which are the ideal size when making ornaments for the Christmas tree. Those who want to go a little bigger can glue wiffle balls or large polystyrene balls together or create their own papier mâché snowmen to display on mantles or on console tables in a foyer or hallway.



Another staple of holiday decor, Santa Claus has inspired many a DIY holiday ornament over the years. A paper plate Santa Claus with a cotton ball beard glued on can make for a fun Christmas craft, especially for young children who can't wait for the big guy to appear on Christmas Eve.



Though they might not have a direct link to the holiday season, penguins evoke feelings of cold weather, making them an ideal addition to holiday decor schemes. Make your own penguin family using polystyrene craft balls in assorted sizes and then hang them on the tree or place them around the house. RENDEER

Santa would not be able to get the job done each Christmas Eve without his trustworthy team of reindeer. Popsicle stick reindeer projects can be fun for kids of all ages and a great way for youngsters to recognize the efforts of Dasher, Dancer, Comet, Cupid, and, of course, Rudolph, among others.

COOKIE CUTTERS

Family baking sessions are a holiday tradition for millions of people. Though that often leads to batches upon batches of tasty cookies, it also means families tend to have a surplus of holiday cookie cutters around the house. Surplus cookie cutters tend to be discarded or relegated to the miscellaneous items drawer in kitchens, but a more awe-inspiring fate can await them. A coat of paint, some glitter and a little bit of string or twine is all families need to transform their extra cookie cutters into colorful tree ornaments.



Christmas Scavenger Hunt fun for older kids

This Christmas, turn present opening into present finding. These Christmas Scavenger Hunt ideas are a great family Christmas tradition!

Kids love finding clues that lead to gifts – and it's a way to make present time last longer. Holiday Scavenger Hunts are good for older kids who typically receive fewer gifts.

Try placing the first clue on the tree, and the remaining clues on gifts as they are found. Here are some examples of fun clues for Christmas morning:

"Mom and Dad love you so much. Your next clue is on the hutch!" "Want to find your last present? Go look where you take a bath!"

"One last gift before it's done.We'll make sure this is lots of fun! Your next clue is under the place where you eat dinner."

"You found this clue with all the pens. Your next clue is in the den. Look up high.Are you hot?"

"I want to make breakfast, but can't turn on the heat! If I do, I'll melt your treat!"

"Back inside the house you go!

Coins always get under me and if you find some, you'll be rich!"

"Your next clue can be found by the sidewalk on the ground."

"Santa doesn't want brothers to fight,

For your next clue, look where the fire is bright."

"Go find your gift in the best hiding place in the house... if you can fit in there!"

" I wonder if the mailman brought anything fun today!"







Hope your holiday sparkles and shines, bringing joy and contentment to your heart and home.

Mayor Tony Laughlin & The Town Council Invite You To Elton, La

Keep road trips safe and stress-free

After a 2020 holiday season in which the pandemic forced the postponement or cancellation of festivities, families are planning to get together once again in 2021. Many people will head home for the holidays this year, and the vast majority will take to the highway to do so.

The U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics says the Thanksgiving and Christmas/New Year's holiday periods are among the busiest for long-distance travel. Holiday travel may require covering a long distance in a limited amount of time. Finding ways to be efficient in regard to time management can reduce stress and improve safety.

Travel at night

If you can safely manage it, you may experience considerably less traffic in the evening hours than during other times of day. In addition, if kids are in tow, they may sleep much of the way, helping to reduce the number of times they ask, "Are we there yet?" Share driving responsibilities with another person so that each driver can take a break to prevent drowsy driving.

Get a vehicle maintenance check

No one wants to get stranded on the side of the road with a car filled with gifts and treats. It's well worth the investment to have a mechanic give a vehicle a checkup prior to leaving. Get an oil change even if it's a little early to do so. Look at tire tread wear and ensure that you have the right tires for the road conditions where you'll be headed.

Plan your route

People often rely on mobile phone or dashboard GPS systems to get where they need to go. However, it helps to have a general idea of the route so that if service drops out you can still find your way. Scout out rest stops or acceptable restaurants online prior to leaving so you have a plan for making stops in safe areas.

Stock the car

While presents may be taking up valuable real estate, pack a cooler with snacks and beverages to help reduce how many times you need to get off the highway. Also, games or other forms of entertainment can keep children occupied on long trips. 1. The Christmas Song Nat King Cole

2. It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year Andy Williams

3. A Holly Jolly Christmas Burl Ives

> 4. Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Dean Martin

5. Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree Brenda Lee

6. It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas Perry Como

7. Here Comes Santa Claus Elvis Presley

> 8. White Christmas Bing Crosby

9. All I Want For Christmas is You Mariah Carey

10. Run Rudolph Run Chuck Berry



11. Carol of the Bells Mykola Leontovych

12. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas Judy Garland

13. Christmas (Baby Please Come Home) Michael Bublé

14. The Christmas Waltz Johnny Mathis

> 15. I'll Be Home for Christmas Amy Grant

16. I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus Jackson 5

17. I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm Frank Sinatra

18. (There's No Place Like) Home for the Holidays Carpenters

> **19. Sleigh Ride** Ella Fitzgerald

20. Last Christmas Wham!



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