

# 10 Classic Christmas Movies



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For those of you who celebrate Christmas, it is undoubtedly a time of year that can be filled with fun, family and an almost magical feeling that dates back to the nostalgia of our childhoods. It can also be stressful, commercialistic, and expensive. It seems every year at least a few people I know become full-blown Scrooges, bah humbugging about the lines at the malls and the never-ending commercials.

If you have found that the Christmas spirit has become a bit drained from you, I think there is no better way to restore your interest in the holiday season than sitting down with a hot cup of cocoa, some fresh baked cookies and one of these Christmas classics. If these films don't get you in a festive mood, maybe you will require more drastic measures (perhaps a visit from the ghost of Christmas past?).

While this list could have been far longer, I tried to stick to some of my all-time favorites. If you have a Christmas Classic that isn't listed here, we'd love to hear about it in the comments box at the end of the article!

## 1. The Snowman

As with many holiday classics, "The Snowman" was a book before it was turned into a 26 minute animated film. As with the original children's book, there are no words in this film, but it is artfully drawn and the music, composed by Howard Blake, is beautiful. It is no surprise that this short movie was

nominated for an Academy Award.

If you've never seen "The Snowman", I should warn you that it is quite sad in a way, and almost haunting in how the story is portrayed and the music is written. However, as a child I was addicted to watching this short film every winter and can still remember the theme music by heart. Still, I just suggest that you follow this holiday classic up with a comedy, which brings me to movie #2.

## **2. Elf**

Will Ferrell stars in this undeniably ridiculous comedy as Buddy, a man who was raised by Elves in the North Pole before discovering that he was adopted and his biological father lives in New York City. Buddy takes a journey to meet his father, and hilarity ensues. The movie also features Zooey Deschanel as a romantic interest of the jovial man-elf, Buddy. While some people find Ferrell to be over the top, his role in this movie guarantees some laughs, and has quickly made "Elf" a Christmas favorite.

## **3. A Christmas Story**



Although it was filmed in 1983, "A Christmas Story" is still one of those holiday classics that is inescapable. Whether it's the TBS 24 hour marathon, or people quoting "You'll shoot your eye out!", this movie has secured a spot in Christmas

culture. The story is told from 9 year old Ralphie's point of view, as he attempts to obtain his dream Christmas gift; a Red Ryder BB Gun. I love this movie, not only for it's strange humor, but also because it really carries a sense of nostalgia for what it was like to be a kid during the holidays.

#### **4. How the Grinch Stole Christmas**

Based on yet another children's book, you would have to be living under a rock to never had heard of, read, or seen Dr. Seuss', "How the Grinch Stole Christmas". Of course, there are two adaptations of this movie, both of which I enjoy for different reasons.

The 1966 animated special can be attributed for the song "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch" which takes me straight back to my childhood in an instant. This 26 minute animated classic is still considered to still be one of the best holiday specials out there.

Then of course, there is the 2000 big budget remake of this tale, which stars Jim Carey as the Grinch. The remake has mixed reviews, especially since it had to take many liberties with the plot in order to make it a feature length film. Still, I've found that it's grown on me, and Carey makes a pretty good Grinch.

#### **5. Miracle on 34th Street**

Originally filmed in 1947, this Christmas Classic has undergone numerous remakes in the past. The original film won multiple Academy Awards, but it is really the festive tone of the story that makes it a classic. "Miracle of 34th Street" is about the real Santa Claus ending up as the Santa at a Macy's department store in NYC.



If watching old films isn't really your thing, there is also a great family friendly version that was made in 1994. This is the version of "Miracle on 34th Street" I watched every holiday season with my family, as it really draws upon the magic of the season. Additionally, much was changed from the original film line, making it more modern and easier to follow.

## **6. The Santa Clause**

Unlike many Christmas classics that became more popular over time, "The Santa Clause" was an instant box office hit when it was released in 1994. This movie is very family friendly, and I fondly remember it as one of my father's favorites as it had humor everyone in the household could enjoy. The movie stars Tim Allen as Scott Calvin, a regular guy until one Christmas Eve Santa falls from his rooftop and he is stuck replacing him.

The movie is both humorous and heartwarming as it features the themes of family and believing in the spirit of Christmas.

## **7. The Polar Express**

I feel iffy about listing "The Polar Express" here because as a film I was never very into it, but as a children's book by Chris Van Allsburg, reading it was a family tradition that I will never forget.

Still, my personal reservations about the movie aside, it has certainly adapted a cult following and had earned itself the name of Christmas Classic. The story of "The Polar Express" is truly a magical one that can capture any child's imagination. The movie follows a little boy who boards a train called the "Polar Express" which takes him to the North Pole on Christmas Eve. The film was done with motion-capture computer animation technology, which gives it a very distinct look and makes this a good family Christmas film.

## 8. A Christmas Carol

Written originally as a novella by Charles Dickens, this Christmas tale is by far the most well known and beloved. It has been portrayed in numerous films, plays, musicals and even as an opera. Most people already know the plot of this tale, so I won't bore you with the details;



the story of Scrooge and the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come have become part of our culture!

If you're considering renting or buying some version of A Christmas Carol, you'll find yourself faced with quite a bizarre variety of options. There is the classic, kid friendly, "Mickey's Christmas Carol" from 1983. There is also "The Muppet Christmas Carol", which is one of my absolute favorites but hard to find.

There are also numerous live filmed adaptations and made for TV versions, such as TNT's 1999 "A Christmas Carol" which starred Patrick Stewart. Of course, at this point in time, the most popular version of "A Christmas Carol" is Disney's animated version from 2009. While it has gotten mixed reviews, I find the visuals to be exhilarating and like that it's both funny and frightening at different points.

Whichever version you choose to watch, "A Christmas Carol" is a yuletide must!

## 9. The Nightmare Before Christmas

I have gotten into many arguments about whether “The Nightmare Before Christmas” is a Halloween movie or a Christmas movie. I’d like to contend that it’s both, and it is hands down my favorite movie to watch around the holidays. Created by



Tim Burton, this stop motion film is dark and certainly not jovial in the way most holiday films are. When Jack Skellington of Halloween Town discovers Christmas Town, he is fascinated by the holiday and decides to try his hand at being Santa Claus. It’s strange story line with creepy visuals, but all these things make it a great pick for those of you who don’t love uplifting, heartwarming tales.

Despite the dark cinematography and twisted Tim Burton touch, “The Nightmare Before Christmas” is both funny, visually stunning and largely entertaining, with a great soundtrack and musical numbers written by Danny Elfman.

## **10. It’s a Wonderful Life**

Released in 1946, this holiday film is certainly a classic in the length of time it’s endured. While it’s admittedly a bit sappy, it’s a timeless tale of a man who is down on his luck and wants to die, when an angel intervenes and shows him the importance of his life.



It’s a touching tale that takes place on Christmas Eve, and if you’ve never seen it I suggest overcoming any issues you may have with black and white films and checking it out. You’ll be glad to finally know what people are talking about when they say, “every time a bell rings an angel gets his wings”!