

'Star Wars,' Smell-o-Vision and Sing-alongs: Unique Movie Experiences for December - ParentMap

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'Star Wars,' Smell-o-Vision and Sing-alongs: Unique Movie Experiences for December

Get Jedi training for your kids, show off your 'Princess Bride' knowledge, do a December drive-in and more,

By Gemma Alexander



When the weather starts to turn, nothing sounds better than a cozy evening at home watching movies on the couch with the whole family. But somewhere in the middle of winter break, "cozying up" starts to feel a lot like "cooped up." We've found some fun and unusual movie outings to help your family get their movie fix — and get out of the house — from joining the excitement around the release of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* to a sweet screening of *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* and a drive-in screening of two of the hottest movies of the year.

Special events and Screenings around *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*

Even if your child had the stamina to sit through one of the *Star Wars* Marathons at Cinerama and other Puget Sound-area theaters with you this weekend, tickets are long gone. Theaters everywhere are sold out through the weekend, but there are still tickets available to some special *Star Wars* screening options before school starts back up in January; try [Pacific Science Center's 3-D IMAX screening](#).

If you've already got a ticket to opening weekend at Pacific Science Center, expect flash light saber fights and special character appearances. Other theater chains have found ways to make their viewings special with collectible tickets and giveaways ([get details here](#)).

Pacific Science Center is also hosting a two-week [Star Wars invasion](#), including Padawan training by the Jet City Light Saber Guild (Dec. 26, 27, Jan. 2, 3) where kids can learn how to become a Jedi (first come, first serve, included with admission) and more themed activities.

If you're seeing the movie downtown, stop by the Sheraton Seattle afterwards to see its amazing [Star Wars-themed Gingerbread Village](#) and to get a free drink (house wine or beer for adults, hot chocolate, cider or soda for kids) from Friday, Dec. 18 through Sunday, Dec. 27. Just show your ticket stub.

On Friday, Dec. 18, you can also join the [Star Wars opening night party](#) at University Bookstore Mill Creek with crafts, games and contests for all ages starting at 4 p.m.

On Saturday, Dec. 19, bring your older kids to join a [Lightsaber Battle](#) at Seattle Center's Fisher Pavilion from 8–11 p.m. (organizers have already run out of lightsabers, but you can bring your own). Or throw a *Star Wars* party when the film comes out on DVD and hire [Jet City Saber Guild](#) to provide light saber training.





Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, SIFF Cinema

Willy Wonka in Smell-O-Vision at SIFF Cinema, Seattle

Or skip *Star Wars* altogether and head to a very sweet December screening of the 1971 classic *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* in Smell-O-Vision at SIFF Cinema. Viewers get a goodie bag filled with scene-specific scratch-n-sniff stickers, bubble wands and candies. Sing-along subtitles help out with the song lyrics and pop up on screen at appropriate moments with fun instructions like "Sniff Grandpa" and "Spit out your gobstopper." A bubble machine fills the theater with bubbles when Charlie and Grandpa sneak a taste of Fizzy Lifting Drinks. In addition to the free movie tie-in treats, the SIFF screening room has the best snack bar prices in Seattle (popcorn, box of candy and a soda for \$10) and beer and wine are available for the grownups. My kids had already seen the movie, but they liked it much better in Smell-O-Vision.

Details: *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* in Smell-O-Vision is playing at the SIFF Film Center at Seattle Center now through Jan. 3 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. [Buy tickets online](#). \$14-\$15.



The Princess Bride Quote Along at SIFF Cinema

The Princess Bride Quote Along at SIFF Cinema, Seattle

Perhaps you, like me, memorized *The Princess Bride* in middle school and drive your family crazy saying all the lines on top of the video when they are trying to watch it? Now you can show off your special talent at a quote-along screening of *The Princess Bride*, playing now through Jan. 3 at SIFF Cinema. Inflatable swords will be provided, and subtitles will provide prompts for all the best lines, in case you're a little rusty. What about the R.O.U.S.s you ask? I don't think they exist.

Details: Playing at SIFF Cinema now through January 3 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. [Buy tickets online](#). \$14-\$15.



Fiddler on the Roof sing-along at SIFF for Christmas day

Sing-along screening of *Fiddler on the Roof* at SIFF Cinema, Seattle

SIFF is celebrating the Jewish tradition of Chinese take-out on Christmas Day with a sing-along screening of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Enjoy live klezmer music before the show, and use subtitles to help you belt out the lyrics to "Tradition" in between bites of certified Kosher Chinese take-out (included in the price of admission). Buy your tickets now, because this fun event at the SIFF Film Center is likely to sell out.

Details: Sing-along screening begins Dec. 25 at noon, door open at 11 a.m., with music. [Buy tickets online](#). \$25. 181 minutes.



Watch *Elf* at Central Cinema in Seattle

Dinner and movie at Central Cinema, Seattle

Dinner and a movie go together like chocolate and peanut butter, so why enjoy them in sequence when you can have both at the same time? Central Cinema in Seattle's Central District is a dine-in theater where all screenings are all ages (although the movie selections aren't always family-friendly). The theater features couch seating and full-table service. Order organic popcorn or an entire meal from the menu that features appetizers, burgers, sandwiches and pizzas. There is a full bar for the adults. Café Noir in the lobby offers dessert after the show.

Details: Family-friendly screenings at Central Cinema in December include *Gremlins*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Elf*, an original *Star Wars* trivia night and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Some showings are already sold out. Tip: You get a \$2 discount if you [order tickets online](#) more than 24 hours in advance. You can also go to [Cartoon Happy Hour](#) every Thursday, starting at 5:30 p.m.



See *The Good Dinosaur* at the drive-in, Bremerton

[Star Wars and The Good Dinosaur at the Rodeo Drive-In, Bremerton](#)

For obvious reasons, drive-in movies tend to be limited to the summer season, but the Rodeo Drive-in in Bremerton is opening up Dec. 17, 18 and 19 for a family double feature of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and *The Good Dinosaur*. Bring lots of blankets and thermoses full of hot drinks (they do have concessions, but will you want to get out of the car to go get them?) and hope it doesn't rain too hard.

Details: Reserve a space for your car in advance online; the non-refundable pre-sale charge is \$18.



[Bollywood films at Roxy Cinema, Renton](#)

If your kids are old enough for subtitles, take a trip to India for a few hours by visiting Roxy Cinema, the only Puget Sound theater that shows Bollywood movies. With elaborate make-up and costumes, shoulder-bouncing musical numbers and runtimes that require intermissions, Bollywood movies have an aesthetic that's quite different from Hollywood's, but the quality in recent years has begun to rival the output of more familiar studios. In December, look for the epic historical romance *Bajirao Mastani and Dilwale*, starring one of India's most famous actors, Shah Rukh Khan, with leading lady-of-the-moment Kajol (in Hindi with English subtitles). Roxy Cinema also shows Indian movies in the Telugu, Malayalam and Tamil languages, but these are not subtitled.

Details: Tickets can only be purchased in person at Roxy Cinema, 25 S. Grady Way, Renton. Call 425-988-2111 for showtimes.



See *Millions* at a free Scarecrow Video screening

Free Scarecrow Video screenings, Seattle

Can't decide between watching a video and going out? How about watching a movie at the video store? Scarecrow Video in Seattle's University District, famous as the world's largest video store, puts on free screenings almost every night of the week. Not all of their choices are family friendly, but in December they are screening the 1978 animation *The Stingiest Man in Town* (Sunday, Dec. 20, 2 p.m.), Mystery Science Theater-worthy *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* (Monday, Dec. 21, 2 p.m.), Bill Murray's 1988 take on *A Christmas Carol*, *Scrooged* (Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2 p.m.), and *Millions* (Sunday, Dec. 27, 2 p.m.). Watch a movie and stock up on videos for the rest of winter break.



Planning ahead: Trader Joe's Silent Movie Mondays at the Paramount Theatre, Seattle

As winter drags, you can plan ahead for another special cinema treat: Trader Joe's Silent Movie Mondays series in February at Paramount Theatre. On Feb. 8, watch Charlie Chaplin suffer through an even harder winter than we face in *The Gold Rush*. (My kids are big fans of Charlie Chaplin, and this is their favorite of his movies.) Second in the series is *The Big Parade* (Feb. 15). (Note: Even though it's silent, this film, which deals with World War I, might be too intense for younger children.) Playing Feb. 22, *Lime Kiln Club Field Day* was rediscovered in the MOMA vaults 100 years after the film was made. It was the first full-length film featuring African-American actors. Closing the series on Feb. 29 is the 1925 silent original, *Ben Hur: A Tale of the Christ*. It will show with a score composed and performed by original The Police drummer Stewart Copeland together with the Seattle Rock Orchestra. Other films in the series will be accompanied by live organ music, as they were when they debuted roughly a century ago.

Details: Feb. 8, 15, 22 and 29; shows at 7 p.m. \$11-\$14

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