Culture



Helen Mirren and Kate Winslet star in "Goodbye June," a holiday film about grief, love and humor as four adult children and their father navigate the heartbreak of losing their mother. (Netflix)



by Princess Jones

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It's the most wonderful time of the year, filled with the warmth of family, gratitude and quality time with loved ones. While the clock ticks until Santa comes down the chimney, gather around the fireplace and enjoy a good movie with milk and cookies — or head to the theaters with your crew. No matter where, or what, you want to watch, here are the best movies to get the holiday started.

Christmas Karma

"Christmas Karma" is a fresh reimagining of the classic story of "A Christmas Carol," told through the lens of British Asian filmmaker Gurinder Chadha. Kunal Nayyar stars as Mr. Sood, a modern Scrooge, alongside an impressive ensemble: Eva Longoria, Billy Porter and Boy George play the three Ghosts of Christmas.

This vibrant retelling weaves together themes of immigration, cultural adaptation, music and Sikh philosophy. The soundtrack fuses Bhangra, gospel, rap, classic pop and Christmas carols, creating a unique blend that honors both Western and Eastern traditions. "Christmas Karma" offers first-generation families the chance to see themselves represented in a holiday classic. The film was released in select theaters Nov. 14.

The Family Plan 2

"The Family Plan 2" promises a relaxing European holiday for Dan Morgan and his family — until a dangerous enemy crashes the party. What follows is an explosive mix of Christmas chaos, jaw-dropping action sequences and genuinely funny moments. Mark Wahlberg and Michelle Monaghan lead this explosive blend of holiday warmth and high-octane comedy. If you're looking for a Christmas film with thrilling fight sequences and plenty of laughs, this is the perfect pick. Stream it now on Apple TV.

A Royal Christmas Tail

A small town; an animal shelter owner; a prince; and, of course, romantic love. "A Royal Christmas Tail" has all the classic makings of a Hallmark movie. The film, starring Jonathan Stoddard and Brittany Underwood, premiered on the network Dec.

14.

Jingle Bell Heist

Who would've thought crime, romance and a beautiful department store could deliver the Christmas spirit? "Jingle Bell Heist" proves that an unlikely blend works perfectly. Olivia Holt and Connor Swindells star as two struggling workers who plan to rob the store where they work. This hilarious Christmas comedy is ideal for romance lovers seeking a fun twist on the holiday genre. You can stream it on Netflix.

Goodbye, June

"I've never died before. I wanna look nice when it happens," says Helen Mirren as June, a dying mother hoping to unite her family for one final Christmas. While it addresses serious themes, "Goodbye, June," directed by and starring Kate Winslet, offers humor and love as four adult children and their father navigate the heartbreak of losing a loved one. The ensemble also includes Toni Collette, Johnny Flynn, Andrea Riseborough and Timothy Spall. "Goodbye, June" is showing in select theaters now and available on Netflix starting Dec. 24.

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My Secret Santa

Moms will do anything for their kids, and "My Secret Santa" proves it. Directed by Michael Rohl, this rom-com follows a single mother desperate for work after her daughter gets accepted into an elite snowboarding camp. Her solution? A hilariously outrageous disguise as a man to land a job as Santa Claus. She finds love along the way, but the unexpected romance puts her in a complicated position. Alexandra Breckenridge and Ryan Eggold star in this heartwarming holiday comedy now streaming on Netflix.

Christmas Every Day

It's a family affair as mother and daughter star in the Lifetime movie Christmas Every Day. R&B superstar Brandy Norwood and her daughter, Sy'rai Smith, play a busy mother juggling family and career obligations while her bridezilla sister adds to the chaos. All the while, they're working to keep Christmas traditions alive. The film celebrates faith, family, and romance. Catch it on Lifetime.

A Very Jonas Christmas Movie

Millennial fans of The Jonas Brothers, Santa has given you an early Christmas gift. "A Very Jonas Christmas Movie" follows the antics of the nostalgic boyband as they race to make their way home from London to New York in time for Christmas, all while reclaiming their brotherly bond. Stream it now on Hulu.

Oh. What. Fun.

She did what many moms only dream about: walk away from carrying all the Christmas duties. Michelle Pfeiffer stars as an underappreciated, overworked mom who reaches her breaking point and decides to abandon her family responsibilities for a wild, hilarious adventure of self-discovery during the holidays. Joined by Felicity Jones, Chloë Grace Moretz, and Jason Schwartzman, this unexpected comedy flips the holiday script. Stream it on Prime Video.

Silent Night, Deadly Night

Christmas doesn't always have to be heartwarming — sometimes it can be downright deadly. Horror fans, this one's for you: a reboot of the 1984 cult classic by the same name. Rohan Campbell stars as Billy, a young man traumatized by witnessing his parents' murder at Santa's hands. Twisted and vengeful, he sets out to spread terror during the holidays, targeting those he deems naughty. Ruby Modine and David Brown co-star in this chilling film, directed by Mike P. Nelson. Catch the horror in theaters now.