

Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget

Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget is a 2023 British animated comedy film directed by [Sam Fell](#) from a screenplay written by [Karey Kirkpatrick](#), [John O'Farrell](#), and [Rachel Tunnard](#), based on a story conceived by Kirkpatrick and O'Farrell.^[4] A sequel to *Chicken Run* (2000), the film was produced by [Aardman Animations](#) and stars the voices of [Thandiwe Newton](#), [Zachary Levi](#), [Bella Ramsey](#), [Romesh Ranganathan](#), [David Bradley](#), [Daniel Mays](#), [Jane Horrocks](#), [Imelda Staunton](#), [Lynn Ferguson](#), [Josie Sedgwick-Davies](#), [Peter Serafinowicz](#), [Nick Mohammed](#), and [Miranda Richardson](#). It tells the story of Rocky and Ginger who lead a rescue mission when their daughter has been abducted to a highly-advanced poultry farm run by their old enemy Mrs. Tweedy.

Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget had its world premiere at the [67th London Film Festival](#) on 14 October 2023, and was released by [Netflix](#) on 15 December 2023. The film received generally positive reviews from critics.

Plot

Since the chickens escaped from Mr. and Mrs. Tweedy's Farm,^[a] they have settled in an idyllic [sanctuary](#) on an island in a lake, where they can live happily, safe from humans. Ginger and Rocky start a family with a hatchling named Molly. The rats Nick and Fetcher visit periodically with supplies.

Molly grows into an adventurous 11-year-old, whom Ginger and Rocky try to protect from the outside world. The appearance of trucks and construction on the mainland concern Ginger that another chicken farm is being built, and with her more cautious perspective as a parent, she leads her community in better hiding themselves.

Molly's curiosity draws her to sneak away to the mainland, where she is saved from being run over by a teenage chicken named Frizzle. The two friends stow away on a truck full of chickens being taken to Fun-Land Farms, which looks appealing to them. Ginger and Rocky form a search party with chickens Babs, Bunty, Mac, and Fowler; they give chase and find that the "farm" is a highly-advanced [poultry processing plant](#) bristling with security systems.

Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget



Release poster

Directed by	Sam Fell
Screenplay by	Karey Kirkpatrick John O'Farrell Rachel Tunnard
Story by	Karey Kirkpatrick John O'Farrell
Produced by	Steve Pegram Leyla Hobart
Starring	Thandiwe Newton Zachary Levi Bella Ramsey Imelda Staunton Lynn Ferguson David Bradley Jane Horrocks Romesh Ranganathan Daniel Mays

Inside, Molly and Frizzle find an expansive amusement area, where the other chickens – all wearing numbered electronic collars – go on rides, play games, etc. Rocky impulsively catapults into the compound, inadvertently activating various security systems, giving Ginger and the others the info they need to infiltrate. They are joined by Nick and Fetcher, who are separated from the others, but meet up with Rocky.

Molly and Frizzle discover that the collars turn the other chickens into carefree idiots when activated. Frizzle is caught by the facility's scientist Dr Fry and given a collar; Molly leaves, promising to come back for her.

Ginger reunites with Molly, and learns in horror that her nemesis Mrs. Tweedy is running the operation alongside Dr. Fry, her new husband. The collars serve to suppress the chickens' fear, to make tastier chicken nuggets for Reginald Smith, a fast-food chain businessman looking for new food items. Mrs. Tweedy captures Ginger and puts a collar on her, which she resists unsuccessfully, but Rocky intervenes and Molly frees her. The hens, rooster, and rats are reunited in a corn silo, which they escape by turning it into popcorn. Molly mourns the fate of Frizzle, prompting Ginger and the others to turn back and help the other chickens as well.

Mrs. Tweedy orders Dr. Fry to start production of chicken nuggets, beginning a struggle for the remote control that brainwashes the chickens, between Mrs. Tweedy and the team of Rocky, Ginger, and Molly, while the rest of the rescue squad try to hold back the chickens marching mindlessly into the processor. The chicken trio win the fight, sending Mrs. Tweedy into the machine to be breaded like a chicken nugget, while the whole population of chickens and the rats escape in a truck. Mrs. Tweedy tries to stop them, but Fowler knocks her into the compound's moat, where she is stopped by the facility's security, as the site explodes from the chickens' sabotage.

The chickens return to the island, and their life returns to normal, now with Molly and Frizzle doing aerial reconnaissance for chicken farms on the mainland, and the chicken crew liberating those they find.

	Josie Sedgwick-Davies <u>Peter Serafinowicz</u> <u>Nick Mohammed</u> <u>Miranda Richardson</u>
Cinematography	Charles Copping
Edited by	Stephen Perkins
Music by	<u>Harry Gregson-Williams</u>
Production companies	<u>Aardman Animations</u> ^[1] <u>Netflix Animation</u> ^[1]
Distributed by	<u>Netflix</u>
Release dates	14 October 2023 (BFI) 15 December 2023
Running time	101 minutes ^[2]
Country	United Kingdom ^[3] ^[1]
Language	English

Voice cast

- Thandiwe Newton as Ginger, a British chicken and Rocky's wife
 - Archive recordings of Julia Sawalha as Ginger in the first film are used in flashback sequences
- Zachary Levi as Rocky, an American former circus rooster and Ginger's husband
- Bella Ramsey as Molly, the daughter of Ginger and Rocky
- Imelda Staunton as Bunty, a cynical chicken and former champion egg-layer
- Lynn Ferguson as Mac, a Scottish nerdy chicken who is Ginger's assistant
- David Bradley as Fowler, an elderly rooster and former RAF mascot
- Jane Horrocks as Babs, a dimwitted chicken who is adept at knitting
- Romesh Ranganathan as Nick, a cynical scavenger rat

- Daniel Mays as Fetcher, a comical rat who is Nick's partner
- Josie Sedgwick-Davies as Frizzle, a chicken whom Molly befriends
- Peter Serafinowicz as Reginald Smith, the owner of the Sir Eat-a-Lot chain of restaurants
- Nick Mohammed as Dr. Fry, a scientist at Fun-Land Farms who is Mrs. Tweedy's second husband
- Miranda Richardson as Mrs. Melisha Tweedy, the chickens' former owner who now seeks revenge

Production

After completing *Chicken Run* in 2000, Jeffrey Katzenberg, the CEO of DreamWorks Animation and one of the film's executive producers, proposed to Aardman Animations the idea of making a sequel. However, Aardman declined as they felt unready to make a sequel as well as its employees feeling exhausted after completing the original film and instead moved on to different projects. Since then, ideas and talks of a sequel floated around for years until numerous crew members of the first film agreed to continue the story.^[5]

A sequel to *Chicken Run* was reported in April 2018 with Aardman Animations, StudioCanal and Pathé set to produce.^[6] DreamWorks had no involvement due to ending their partnership with Aardman after the release of *Flushed Away* in 2006.^[7] Sam Fell directed, with Paul Kewley producing.^{[8][9]} Fell was approached by the film's original co-director Peter Lord in 2016 at a party and convinced him to return to Aardman to direct the sequel.^[10] The original *Chicken Run* writers Karey Kirkpatrick and John O'Farrell returned to write for the sequel.^[11] Aardman co-founders Peter Lord and David Sproxton served as executive producers as well as the film's original co-director Nick Park.^{[12][13][14]}

On 16 October 2019, the film officially began pre-production.^{[15][16][17]} Because very few props and models from the original film survived after being destroyed in a warehouse fire in 2005, Fell and his team resorted to use reference photos from the original film's making of book.^[18] Aardman said that Mel Gibson was not asked to return as Rocky.^[19] In June 2020, Fell released more details about the sequel, which would follow from the ending of the first film, where the chickens have settled into their new safe area. Molly, the chick of Ginger and Rocky, begins to outgrow the area, just as word of a new threat to the chickens arrives.^[20] In July 2020, Julia Sawalha, the voice of Ginger in the first film, revealed Aardman's intention to recast her role, saying her voice now sounded too old, and commented "I have officially been plucked, stuffed & roasted". The decision was met with widespread criticism with some finding the decision ageist.^{[21][22]}

Principal photography commenced in early 2021.^{[23][24][25]} In January 2022, Zachary Levi, Thandiwe Newton, David Bradley, Romesh Ranganathan and Daniel Mays replaced Gibson, Sawalha, Benjamin Whitrow, Timothy Spall and Phil Daniels as the voices of Rocky, Ginger, Fowler, Nick and Fetcher, while Jane Horrocks, Imelda Staunton and Lynn Ferguson reprised their roles as Babs, Bunty and Mac from the first film, with the film's title revealed as *Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget*.^[26] Bella Ramsey, Nick Mohammed and Josie Sedgwick-Davies voiced three new characters, Molly, Dr. Fry and Frizzle, respectively.^[26] In September 2023, it was announced that Miranda Richardson would reprise her role as the voice of Mrs. Tweedy and that Peter Serafinowicz also joined the cast as Reginald Smith, a "slightly bemused businessman".^[27]

Music

Harry Gregson-Williams, who previously scored the predecessor with John Powell, returned to score the film, marking his fifth collaboration with Aardman. It is also the second time Gregson-Williams scored a sequel to a film solely by himself after he composed its predecessor with Powell, the first being DreamWorks Animation's *Shrek 2* (2004).^[28] *Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget — Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* was released digitally on the day of the movie's worldwide release.^[29]

Release

Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget premiered at the 67th BFI London Film Festival on 14 October 2023, with none of the cast in attendance due to the 2023 SAG-AFTRA strike, with the film's characters walking the red carpet in their place.^[30] It was released on Netflix on 15 December 2023.^{[31][32][33]} The film had a preview at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival on 11 June 2023.^[34] Netflix purchased the worldwide distribution rights to the film, excluding China.^[20]

Reception

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 81% of 108 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 6.7/10. The website's consensus reads: "*Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget* offers more of the easy laughs and eye-catching animation that fans of the original enjoyed, although there's a general feeling of diminishing returns."^[35] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 63 out of 100, based on 30 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.^[36]

John Nugent for *Empire* magazine wrote, "the ambition and technical scope are markedly bolder" than its predecessor *Chicken Run*, adding it is "silly, witty, extremely British — this is a family film made with a very Aardman-y kind of craft and care".^[37]

Accolades

Award	Date of ceremony	Category	Recipient(s)	Result	Ref.
<u>Hollywood Music in Media Awards</u>	<u>15 November 2023</u>	<u>Best Original Score — Animated Film</u>	Harry Gregson-Williams	Nominated	^[38]
<u>San Diego Film Critics Society</u>	<u>19 December 2023</u>	<u>Best Animated Picture</u>	<i>Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget</i>	Nominated	^[39]
<u>Visual Effects Society Awards</u>	<u>February 21, 2024</u>	<u>Outstanding Visual Effects in an Animated Feature</u>	Jon Biggins, Jim Lewis, Charles Copping, Matthew Perry	Nominated	^[40]
		<u>Outstanding Created Environment in an Animated Feature</u>	Charles Copping, Matthew Perry, Jim Lewis, Jon Biggins (for Chicken Island)	Nominated	
<u>British Academy Film Awards</u>	<u>February 18, 2024</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	Sam Fell, Leyla Hobart and Steve Pegram	Nominated	

Notes

- a. As depicted in *Chicken Run* (2000).

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External links

- *Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget* (<https://www.netflix.com/title/81223025>) on Netflix
 - *Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8337264/>) at IMDb
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