

# Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga

***Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga*** is a 2024 post-apocalyptic action adventure film co-produced and directed by George Miller, who co-wrote it with Nico Lathouris. It is the fifth installment in the *Mad Max* franchise, serving as both a spin-off and prequel to *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), focused on the character Imperator Furiosa, originally portrayed by Charlize Theron. The film stars Anya Taylor-Joy and Ayla Browne as younger versions of Furiosa, alongside Chris Hemsworth and Tom Burke.<sup>[2]</sup>

In March 2020, Miller conducted casting auditions for the title role of the film. In October, Taylor-Joy, Hemsworth, and Yahya Abdul-Mateen II were cast in starring roles, but due to a scheduling conflict, Abdul-Mateen was replaced by Burke in November. Several crew members from *Fury Road* returned for the film, including screenwriter Lathouris, film editor Margaret Sixel, costume designer Jenny Beavan, and composer Tom Holkenborg. Principal photography took place in Australia from June to October 2022.

*Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga* had its world premiere at the 77th Cannes Film Festival on 15 May 2024, and was released in theatres in Australia by Warner Bros. Pictures and Village Roadshow Pictures on 23 May 2024, and in the United States the following day. The film received highly positive reviews, with critics praising Miller's direction, screenplay, action sequences, musical score, cinematography, and the performances of the cast (particularly Taylor-Joy, Hemsworth, and Browne). However, some criticised its visual effects and pacing.

## Plot

Years after a global catastrophe, a young Furiosa and her sister notice a group of biker raiders have discovered their home, the Green Place of Many Mothers. As Furiosa attempts to sabotage their vehicles, she is spotted and taken captive. Her mother, Mary Jo Bassa, chases after them to rescue her daughter and protect the existence of the Green Place from the raiders, but she is unable to stop the raider carrying Furiosa from reaching the campsite of the Warlord Dementus and his Biker Horde. Though Furiosa is able to grievously injure the last raider before he can divulge the location of the Green Place, Dementus keeps her captive to attempt to have her guide him there.

### Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga



Theatrical release poster

<b>Directed by</b>	<u>George Miller</u>
<b>Written by</b>	<u>George Miller</u> <u>Nico Lathouris</u>
<b>Based on</b>	Characters by <u>George Miller</u> <u>Byron Kennedy</u>
<b>Produced by</b>	<u>Doug Mitchell</u> <u>George Miller</u>
<b>Starring</b>	<u>Anya Taylor-Joy</u> <u>Chris Hemsworth</u> <u>Tom Burke</u> <u>Ayla Browne</u>
<b>Cinematography</b>	<u>Simon Duggan</u>
<b>Edited by</b>	<u>Margaret Sixel</u> <u>Eliot Knapman</u>
<b>Music by</b>	<u>Tom Holkenborg</u>

Later that night, Mary sneaks into the camp and takes Furiosa back, but she is spotted and the Biker Horde gives chase. Mary stays back with a rifle to buy Furiosa enough time to escape, but after she is outnumbered and captured, Dementus ties her to a tree and burns her alive. When Furiosa returns to her mother instead of fleeing, Dementus forces her to watch her mother's execution and later takes her prisoner.

Dementus and the Biker Horde later arrive at the Citadel, an outpost in the Wasteland which is home to abundant fresh water and crops. When Dementus attempts to incite an uprising against the Citadel's leader, Immortan Joe, Joe's fanatical army, the War Boys, lead a devastating assault on Dementus's army, resulting in the losses of many men and vehicles. However, Dementus manages to lay a successful siege on the neighboring Gastown, the oil-rich outpost of the Wasteland, and returns to the Citadel. Dementus demands large quantities of food and water in exchange for not destroying Gastown. Immortan Joe agrees, but demands to take Furiosa as one of his wives; Dementus accepts.

Over the next several years, Furiosa, disguising herself as a man to escape the advances of Immortan Joe's son, Rictus Erectus, grows to adulthood and works as a mechanic, overseeing the construction of a "War Rig" capable of carrying supplies to the neighboring outposts while being able to withstand attacks by raiders. During one supply run, Furiosa and the War Rig's driver, Praetorian Jack, are the only survivors after a raid, and she attempts to steal the rig to return to the Green Place, but she is easily thwarted. However, Jack, recognizing her skills and abilities, decides to make her his second-in-command, and eventually, the two fall in love, one day resolving to run away with each other.

Dementus, since taking control of Gastown, has led it to near-ruin, threatening his already shaky relations with the Citadel and the Bullet Farm, a metal refinery used to make weapons and ammunition. During a supply run to the Bullet Farm, Furiosa and Jack are ambushed by Dementus and his horde and are forced to abandon the War Rig. Furiosa and Jack barely make it out, but Dementus eventually catches up with them and flips their escape vehicle, injuring Furiosa's left arm in the process. Jack is tortured and killed, but Furiosa manages to tear her injured arm off and return to the Citadel.

After amputating her arm and replacing it with a mechanical prosthetic, Furiosa leads a one-woman assault on Dementus and some of his men, eventually isolating him and demanding the life and years he took from her. Furiosa kills Dementus, but the exact circumstances of it are unknown. For her services, Furiosa becomes Joe's Imperator, and the new driver of a new War Rig. She eventually comes to meet Joe's five current wives, The Splendid Angharad, Toast, Cheedo, Capable, and The Dag, and later stows them away inside her War Rig the night before another supply run.

<b>Production companies</b>	<u>Kennedy Miller Mitchell</u> <u>Village Roadshow Pictures</u>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>Warner Bros. Pictures</u>
<b>Release dates</b>	15 May 2024 ( <u>Cannes</u> ) 23 May 2024 (Australia) 24 May 2024 (United States)
<b>Running time</b>	148 minutes
<b>Countries</b>	Australia United States
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Budget</b>	\$168 million <sup>[1]</sup>

## Cast

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- Anya Taylor-Joy as Imperator Furiosa<sup>[3]</sup>
  - Ayla Browne as young Furiosa

- Chris Hemsworth as Dementus, the warlord leader of the Biker Horde which abducted Furiosa
- Tom Burke as Praetorian Jack, principal commander of the Citadel's military forces<sup>[4]</sup>
- Lachy Hulme as Immortan Joe / Rizzdale Pell, leader of the Citadel and enemy of the Biker Horde
- Nathan Jones as Rictus Erectus, Joe's muscular but dim-witted son.
- Josh Helman as Scabrous Scrotus, Joe's intellectually disabled youngest son<sup>[5]</sup>
- John Howard as The People Eater, an ally of Joe's who formerly controlled the fuel reserves of Gas Town
- Angus Sampson as The Organic Mechanic, Joe's personal physician
- Charlee Fraser as Mary Jo Bassa, Furiosa's mother<sup>[6]</sup>
- Quaden Bayles as War Boy
- Daniel Webber as War Boy
- Jacob Tomuri as Max Rockatansky
- Elsa Pataky as the Vulvalini General<sup>[7]</sup>

## Production

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### Pre-production

Director George Miller and co-writer Nico Lathouris spent over 15 years writing the script for *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), and developed backstories for every character, particularly focusing on protagonist Imperator Furiosa.<sup>[8]</sup> This eventually culminated in a screenplay centered around Furiosa, which actress Charlize Theron, who portrayed Furiosa in *Fury Road*, used as reference for her performance in the film.<sup>[9]</sup> In July 2010, Miller announced plans to shoot *Fury Road* back-to-back with a prequel film entitled *Mad Max: Furiosa* but it was decided to only shoot the former during pre-production.<sup>[10]</sup> In November 2017, Miller's production company filed a lawsuit against Warner Bros. over unpaid salaries which delayed the production of any additional entries in the franchise.<sup>[11]</sup> In July 2019, Miller revealed that a *Furiosa* film was still being planned in addition to two *Mad Max* sequels.<sup>[12]</sup>

By May 2020, Miller planned to develop a prequel *Furiosa* film after completing his other film *Three Thousand Years of Longing* (2022). At the same time, he also began the casting process for the role after resolving legal disputes with Warner Bros. Miller sought to cast a younger actress for the role rather than using de-aging technology for Theron.<sup>[8]</sup> The setting of the film occurs across a timeframe of 15 years, depicting Furiosa's backstory of how she was displaced from her home and spent her life "trying to get back".<sup>[9]</sup>

In March 2020, amid COVID-19 lockdown, Miller used Skype to conduct casting auditions for the title role of Furiosa.<sup>[13]</sup> He chose Anya Taylor-Joy after seeing her performance in an early cut of the film *Last Night in Soho* (2021) and auditioning her with the "Mad as Hell" monologue from Sidney Lumet's *Network* (1976).<sup>[14]</sup> Taylor-Joy received advice from Nicholas Hoult, who had previously portrayed Nux in *Fury Road*.<sup>[15][16]</sup> Tom Burke joined the cast in autumn of 2021, replacing Yahya Abdul-Mateen II for the same role due to a scheduling conflict.<sup>[17]</sup> Multiple *Fury Road* crew members agreed to return for the film, including film editor Margaret Sixel, production designer Colin Gibson,<sup>[18]</sup> composer Tom Holkenborg, sound mixer Ben Osmo, costume designer Jenny Beavan, and makeup designer Lesley Vanderwalt.<sup>[19][20][21]</sup>

In 2021, Ayla Browne was cast as a young Furiosa after Miller saw her doing the splits while filming *Three Thousand Years of Longing*. Miller said that she reminded him of a young Furiosa.<sup>[22]</sup>

In January 2022, it was reported that Simon Duggan would be serving as cinematographer.<sup>[23]</sup> In June 2022, it was reported Nathan Jones and Angus Sampson were set to reprise their roles from *Fury Road*.<sup>[24]</sup> In August, Quaden Bayles, who worked on *Three Thousand Years of Longing* after a video about his mistreatment at school went viral, was announced to be appearing in *Furiosa* in a small role.<sup>[25]</sup>

## Filming



*Furiosa* was shot in the New South Wales towns of Hay (left) and Silverton (right), which is often considered a ghost town,<sup>[26]</sup> though it has a small population of 48 people.

After multiple different dates were reported for the start of filming, *Deadline Hollywood* confirmed in a May 2022 interview with Miller that second unit filming was underway in Australia in advance of principal photography.<sup>[27]</sup> The film was awarded a AU\$175 million filming incentive,<sup>[28]</sup> and spent a total of US\$233 million (AU\$343.2 million) in Australia, the most-ever for a film production in the country.<sup>[29]</sup> Chris Hemsworth stated that Miller had hired ex-convicts as supporting artists for the film.<sup>[30]</sup> In May 2022, second unit filming moved to Hay with more scheduled to take place in Silverton.<sup>[31]</sup> Principal photography began on 1 June 2022, in Australia, and was expected to wrap by September.<sup>[32][33]</sup> Filming officially wrapped by October 2022.<sup>[34]</sup> Following production, Taylor-Joy declared the film to have been an unpleasant working endeavor, stating: "I've never been more alone than making that movie... I don't want to go too deep into it, but everything that I thought was going to be easy was hard."<sup>[35]</sup>

## Post-production

In March 2024, it was revealed that Lachy Hulme would portray a younger Immortan Joe in the film,<sup>[36]</sup> taking over the role from Hugh Keays-Byrne, who had died in 2020 after portraying him in *Mad Max: Fury Road*.

*Fury Road* production VFX supervisor Andrew Jackson returns for duty on *Furiosa* working with visual effects studios DNEG, Framestore, Rising Sun Pictures, and slatevfx.<sup>[37][38][39]</sup>

## Release

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*Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga* premiered at the Cannes Film Festival on 15 May 2024,<sup>[40]</sup> and was released theatrically in Australia on 23 May 2024, and in the United States on 24 May 2024, by Warner Bros. Pictures and Village Roadshow Pictures.<sup>[41]</sup> It was originally scheduled to be released on 23 June 2023.<sup>[42]</sup>

## Reception

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### Box office projection

In the United States and Canada, *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga* is scheduled to be released alongside *The Garfield Movie* and *Sight*, and is projected to gross around \$40 million from 3,750 theaters in its four-day opening weekend. The film releases in 71 additional territories, where it is projected to gross \$40–45 million.<sup>[43]</sup>

### Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 88% of 163 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 8/10. The website's consensus reads: "Retroactively enriching *Fury Road* with greater emotional heft if not quite matching it in propulsive throttle, *Furiosa* is another glorious swerve in mastermind George Miller's breathless race towards cinematic Valhalla."<sup>[44]</sup> Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 80 out of 100, based on 52 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.<sup>[45]</sup>

Writing for *RogerEbert.com*, Robert Daniels awarded the film 4 out of 4 stars, and called it "one of the best prequels ever made". He praised the storyline, action sequences, and performances.<sup>[46]</sup> Pete Hammond of *Deadline Hollywood* viewed the movie as possessing "the best screenplay of any *Mad Max* film".<sup>[47]</sup> Other reviewers lauded the acting, with *The Guardian's* Peter Bradshaw calling Anya Taylor-Joy "an overwhelmingly convincing action heroine".<sup>[48]</sup> Writing for *Empire*, John Nugent awarded the film 5 out of 5 stars, and described Taylor-Joy as "phenomenal", finding the "right balance of steeliness and fractured humanity that Theron instilled".<sup>[49]</sup> Chris Hemsworth also received acclaim for his portrayal of Dementus, with Jada Yuan writing in *The Washington Post* that Hemsworth had "created one of the all-time-great screen villains".<sup>[50]</sup>

In a critical review, Owen Gleiberman of *Variety* perceived *Furiosa* as filled with "pretension" and as "franchise overkill".<sup>[51]</sup> Nicholas Barber of BBC also disliked some aspects of the movie and gave it 3 out of 5 stars. He viewed the plot as meandering and as draining, writing: "You soon reach the point where you're sick of sand, sick of explosions, sick of off-puttingly sadistic violence."<sup>[52]</sup> Stephanie Zacharek's review in *Time* similarly criticized the film as "a slog that's working hard to persuade us we're having a good time".<sup>[53]</sup>

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## External links

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- [Official website](https://www.warnerbros.com/movies/furiosa-mad-max-saga) (<https://www.warnerbros.com/movies/furiosa-mad-max-saga>) 
  - *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12037194/>) at IMDb
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