

SpongeBob SquarePants (film series)

(Redirected from Saving Bikini Bottom: The Sandy Cheeks Movie)

The ***SpongeBob SquarePants*** film series consists of American animated/live-action children's-comedies, based on and a continuation of the animated television series of the same name. The films are produced by Nickelodeon Movies and distributed by Paramount Pictures (streaming by Netflix or Paramount+). The films feature the regular television voice cast: Tom Kenny, Bill Fagerbakke, Rodger Bumpass, Clancy Brown, Mr. Lawrence, Jill Talley, Carolyn Lawrence, Mary Jo Catlett, and Lori Alan.

Plans for a film based on the series began in 2001 when Nickelodeon and Paramount Pictures began approaching series creator Stephen Hillenburg for a theatrical feature. He initially refused their offers, but began developing it in 2002 upon completion of the show's third season. Hillenburg directed the film, titled *The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie*, which was theatrically released in the United States on November 19, 2004, to critical and commercial success. It was originally planned to act as the series finale, but the series success led to the production of more episodes. *Sponge Out of Water*, directed by former showrunner Paul Tibbitt, followed in 2015. A third film, *Sponge on the Run*, was directed by former show writer Tim Hill and released in 2020.

SpongeBob SquarePants films



Film collection for the series

Production company	<u>Nickelodeon Movies</u>
Distributed by	<u>Paramount Pictures</u> (theatrical) <u>Paramount+</u> <u>Netflix</u> (streaming)
Release date	2004 – present
Running time	270 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$164 million (<i>Total of 3 films</i>)
Box office	\$463.6 million (<i>Total of 3 films</i>)

As of February 2022, four additional films were announced to be in development, including a fourth theatrical film, titled *The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants*, set to be released in December 2025, and three spin-off films being developed for streaming release on Paramount+ and Netflix.

Films

Title	U.S. release date	Director(s)	Screenwriter(s)	Story by	Producer(s)
Main series					
<i>The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie</i>	November 19, 2004	<u>Stephen Hillenburg</u>	<u>Derek Drymon</u> , <u>Tim Hill</u> , <u>Stephen Hillenburg</u> , <u>Kent Osborne</u> , <u>Aaron Springer</u> & <u>Paul Tibbitt</u>	<u>Stephen Hillenburg</u>	<u>Stephen Hillenburg</u> and <u>Julia Pistor</u>
<i>The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water</i>	February 6, 2015	<u>Paul Tibbitt</u>	<u>Jonathan Aibel</u> & <u>Glenn Berger</u>	<u>Stephen Hillenburg</u> & <u>Paul Tibbitt</u>	<u>Paul Tibbitt</u> and <u>Mary Parent</u>
<i>The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge on the Run</i>	March 4, 2021	<u>Tim Hill</u>		<u>Tim Hill</u> and <u>Jonathan Aibel</u> & <u>Glenn Berger</u>	<u>Ryan Harris</u>
<i>The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants</i>	December 19, 2025 ^[1]	<u>Derek Drymon</u> ^[2]	<u>TBA</u>	<u>TBA</u>	<u>TBA</u>
Spin-offs					
<i>Saving Bikini Bottom: The Sandy Cheeks Movie</i>	August 2, 2024 ^[3]	<u>Liza Johnson</u> ^[4]	<u>Kaz</u> & <u>Tom Stern</u> ^[4]	<u>Kaz</u> ^[4]	<u>TBA</u>

Main Series

The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie (2004)

In this live-action animated comedy, Plankton's plan is to steal King Neptune's crown and send it to the dangerous Shell City, and then frame Mr. Krabs for the crime. SpongeBob and Patrick must journey to Shell City while facing several perils along the way to retrieve the crown to save Mr. Krabs from Neptune's wrath and Bikini Bottom from Plankton's tyranny.

The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water (2015)

The plot follows a pirate named Burger Beard (Antonio Banderas), who steals the Krabby Patty secret formula using a magical book that makes any text written upon it come true. After Bikini Bottom turns into an apocalyptic cesspool and the citizens turn against SpongeBob, he must team up with Plankton to find the formula and save Bikini Bottom. Later, SpongeBob, Patrick, Squidward, Mr. Krabs, Sandy and Plankton must travel to the surface to confront Burger Beard and get the formula back before Bikini Bottom is completely destroyed.

The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge on the Run (2020)

The film centers on SpongeBob and Patrick traveling to the underwater Atlantic City to save Gary from King Poseidon. During the adventure, SpongeBob's friends reflect on their first meeting him at Kamp Koral. The film showcases stylized 3D animation, with most of the movie presented in full CGI and some parts featuring 3D characters interacting with live-action environments, all animated by Mikros Animation.^[5]

On January 23, 2019, it was confirmed that production on the film had officially begun.^[6] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the film released in Canadian theatres on August 14, 2020,^[7] followed by a limited video on demand release and Paramount+ release on March 4, 2021.^{[8][9]} The film was directed by Tim Hill, who also wrote the screenplay with Michael Kvamme^{[10][11]} from a story by Aaron Springer, Jonathan Aibel and Glenn Berger.^[12] The show's principal voice actors—Tom Kenny, Bill Fagerbakke, Rodger Bumpass, Clancy Brown, Mr. Lawrence, Jill Talley, Carolyn Lawrence, Mary Jo Catlett and Lori Alan—reprised their roles.^[13]

Future films

Main Series

The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants (2025)

In August 2021, Nickelodeon CEO Brian Robbins mentioned that "there's a new *SpongeBob* [film] in the works".^[14] A fourth film was officially confirmed in February 2022, with a targeted theatrical release of the film.^[15] On November 10, 2022, it was announced that the film will release in theaters on May 23, 2025.^[16] On April 27, 2023, during Paramount Pictures' CinemaCon panel, it was announced that the film would be titled *The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants*, with original series writer Derek Drymon set to return to write and direct the film. Touted as "the series' biggest film yet", it will follow SpongeBob as he travels to the depths of the ocean and faces off against the ghost of the Flying Dutchman.^[2] On October 23, 2023, the film's release date was pushed back to December 19, 2025, with the untitled eighth *Mission: Impossible* film taking the May 2025 slot due to the 2023 SAG-AFTRA strike.^[1]

Spin-offs

Saving Bikini Bottom: The Sandy Cheeks Movie (2024)

In May 2021, a spin-off *Sandy Cheeks* feature film was announced to be in development from Nickelodeon for streaming television, and described as a hybrid feature that will put the animated title character into a live-action setting.^[17] The film will be directed by Liza Johnson from a story by Kaz and a script written by Kaz and Tom Stern.^[4]

On August 12, 2021, the title of the movie was revealed as *Saving Bikini Bottom*.^[18] In August 2021, it was revealed that plans to film *Saving Bikini Bottom* in Los Alamos were scrapped due to rewrites of the script.^{[19][20]} On February 17, 2023, it was revealed that the film would be released on Netflix in 2023, now with the added subtitle *The Sandy Cheeks Movie*.^[21] On April 25, 2023, a first-look at the movie was released, as well as a changed release to 2024. In addition, it was revealed that Wanda Sykes and Johnny Knoxville joined the voice cast, in addition to Carolyn Lawrence and Tom Kenny, who are reprising their regular series roles.^[3] Others in the cast in undisclosed roles will include Craig Robinson, Grey DeLisle, Ilia Isorely's Paulino, and Matty Cardarople.^[22]

Prior to its release, the entire film was leaked on January 21, 2024, as a video upload on X.^[23] However, on May 1, 2024, it was announced that the film will be released on Netflix on August 2, 2024.

Untitled spin-off films

In addition, two character-focused spin-off films are in development with intended streaming releases exclusively on Paramount+.^[15]

Cast and characters

List indicator(s)

This section includes characters who will appear or have appeared in the franchise.

- An empty, dark grey cell indicates the character was not in the film, or that the character's official presence has not yet been confirmed.
- ^Y indicates a younger version of the character.

Characters	Films		
	<i><u>The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie</u></i>	<i><u>Sponge Out of Water</u></i>	<i><u>Sponge on the Run</u></i>
<u>SpongeBob SquarePants</u>	<u>Tom Kenny</u>		<u>Tom Kenny</u> <u>Antonio Raul Corbo</u> ^Y
<u>Patrick Star</u>	<u>Bill Fagerbakke</u>		<u>Bill Fagerbakke</u> <u>Jack Gore</u> ^Y
<u>Squidward Tentacles</u>	<u>Rodger Bumpass</u>		<u>Rodger Bumpass</u> <u>Jason Maybaum</u> ^Y
<u>Mr. Eugene Krabs</u>	<u>Clancy Brown</u>		
<u>Sheldon Plankton</u>	<u>Mr. Lawrence</u>		
<u>Karen Plankton</u>	<u>Jill Talley</u>		
<u>Sandy Cheeks</u>	<u>Carolyn Lawrence</u>		<u>Carolyn Lawrence</u> <u>Presley Williams</u> ^Y
<u>Mrs. Puff</u>	<u>Mary Jo Catlett</u>		
<u>Pearl Krabs</u>	<u>Lori Alan</u>		Deleted scene ^[24]
<u>Gary the Snail</u>	<u>Tom Kenny</u>		
<u>King Neptune</u>	<u>Jeffrey Tambor</u>		
<u>Princess Mindy</u>	<u>Scarlett Johansson</u>		
<u>Dennis</u>	<u>Alec Baldwin</u>		
<u>Cyclops</u>	<u>Aaron Hendry</u> <u>Neil Ross</u>		
<u>David Hasselhoff</u>	<u>Himself</u>		
<u>Burger Beard</u>		<u>Antonio Banderas</u>	
<u>Bubbles</u>		<u>Matt Berry</u>	
<u>King Poseidon</u>			<u>Matt Berry</u> ^[25]
<u>Sage</u>			<u>Keanu Reeves</u>
<u>Otto</u>			<u>Awkwafina</u>
<u>Chancellor</u>			<u>Reggie Watts</u>

- A dark grey cell indicates that the character does not appear in the film.

Production

The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie

[Nickelodeon](#) and [Paramount Pictures](#) had approached *SpongeBob SquarePants* creator Stephen Hillenburg for a film based on the show as early as 2001, but he refused for more than a year.^[26] He was concerned, after watching *The Iron Giant* and *Toy Story* with his son, about the challenge of SpongeBob and Patrick doing something more cinematically consequential and inspiring without losing what he called the *SpongeBob*

"cadence."^[26] He said, on a break from season four post-production, "To do a 75-minute movie about SpongeBob wanting to make some jellyfish jelly would be a mistake, I think [...] This had to be SpongeBob in a great adventure. That's where the comedy's coming from, having these two naïve characters, SpongeBob and Patrick, a doofus and an idiot, on this incredibly dangerous heroic odyssey with all the odds against them."^[26] The writers decided to write a mythical hero's quest for the 2004 film: the search for a stolen crown, which brings SpongeBob and Patrick to the surface.^[27] Of the plot, Bill Fagerbakke (the voice of Patrick) said, "It's just nuts. I'm continually dazzled and delighted with what these guys came up with."^[28]

Production on the first film began in 2002 after Hillenburg and the show's staff completed the third season.^[29] A tongue-in-cheek announcement of the film's plot from early on stated that it would feature SpongeBob rescuing Patrick from a fisherman in Florida.^[29] This was intended as a humorous reference to *Finding Nemo* and was later confirmed by Tom Kenny (the voice of SpongeBob) to be a "joke" plot to keep fans busy.^[29] Hillenburg wrote the film with five other writer-animators from the show (Paul Tibbitt, Derek Drymon, Aaron Springer, Kent Osborne and Tim Hill) over a three-month period in a room of a former Glendale, California, bank, and also directed and produced the film.^[26] Osborne said, "It was hugely fun [...] although it did get kind of gamy in there."^[26]

The first film was intended to be the series finale; Hillenburg wanted to end the franchise after the movie was completed so it "wouldn't jump the shark". However, Nickelodeon desired more episodes due to the franchise's growing popularity.^[30] Hillenburg stated: "Well, there was concern when we did the movie [in 2004] that the show had peaked. There were concerns among executives at Nickelodeon."^{[31][32]} As a result, Hillenburg resigned as the series' showrunner,^[33] appointing writer, director, and storyboard artist Paul Tibbitt to succeed him.^[34] Hillenburg still remained involved with the series, reviewing each episode and submitting suggestions.^{[33][35]}

The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water

In 2010, *The New York Times* reported that Nickelodeon had approached the show's crew to make a second film.^[36] The network hoped to give itself and the global franchise "a boost" by releasing another film.^[37] The *Los Angeles Times* reported that Paramount had "another *SpongeBob* picture" in development in March 2011.^[38] Philippe Dauman, then president and CEO of Paramount and Viacom, announced on February 28, 2012, that a sequel film was in development and slated for a late 2014 release.^{[39][40][41]} Dauman added that the film "will serve to start off or be one of our films that starts off our new animation effort."^[39] Nickelodeon expected the film to do much better in foreign box office than the 2004 feature, given its increasingly global reach.^{[37][42]} Dauman said, "This will continue to propel *SpongeBob* internationally."^[37] Production on the second movie was announced on June 10, 2014. Stephen Hillenburg returned to act as the film's executive producer, and contributed to the story of the film.^[43]

The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge on the Run

In a February 2015 interview discussing *The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water*'s success at the box office, Megan Colligan, president of worldwide distribution and marketing at Paramount Pictures, stated the possibility of a third film was "a good bet."^[44] In another interview, Paramount vice-chairman Rob Moore remarked, "Hopefully, it won't take 10 years to make another film," in reference to the time passed between *The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie* (2004) and its 2015 sequel.^[45] Later in 2015, it was revealed that Paramount was developing sequels to its franchises, including another *SpongeBob* film.^[46]

The film was initially scheduled for release theatrically in 2019,^{[47][48]} before being delayed to 2020.^[49] The film later had its theatrical run cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and instead released on video on demand and Paramount+.^[8] The film had an exclusive theatrical run in Canada on August 14, 2020, and premiered on Netflix three months later in international countries. By January 2016, Jonathan Aibel and Glenn Berger had been hired to write the film.^[50] In April 2018, the film's official title was revealed as *The SpongeBob Movie: It's a Wonderful Sponge*, and *SpongeBob* co-developer Tim Hill was announced as director and writer for the film.^{[51][52]} On November 12, 2019, it was revealed that the film's title was changed from *It's a Wonderful Sponge* to *Sponge on the Run*.^[53]

Reception

Box office performance

Film	Release date	Box office				Budget	Ref.
		Opening weekend North America	North America	Other territories	Worldwide		
<i>The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie</i>	November 19, 2004	\$32,018,216	\$85,417,988	\$54,775,005	\$140,192,993	\$30 million	[54]
<i>The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water</i>	February 6, 2015	\$55,365,012	\$162,994,032	\$162,192,000	\$325,186,032	\$74 million	[55]
<i>The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge on the Run</i>	August 14, 2020	\$865,824	\$4,810,790	—	\$4,810,790	\$60 million	[56]
Total		\$88,249,052	\$253,222,810	\$216,967,005	\$470,189,815	\$164 million	

Critical and public reception

Film	Critical		Public
	<u>Rotten Tomatoes</u>	<u>Metacritic</u>	<u>CinemaScore</u> ^[57]
<i>The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie</i>	68% (128 reviews) ^[58]	66 (32 reviews) ^[59]	B+
<i>The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water</i>	81% (105 reviews) ^[60]	62 (27 reviews) ^[61]	B
<i>The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge on the Run</i>	67% (73 reviews) ^[62]	65 (20 reviews) ^[63]	—

Additional crew and production details

Title	Crew/Detail					
	Composer(s)	Cinematographer	Editor(s)	Production companies	Distributing company	Running time

<i>The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie</i>	Gregor Narholz	<u>Jerzy Zieliński</u>	Lynn Hobson	Nickelodeon Movies, United Plankton Pictures Inc.		87 minutes
<i>The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water</i>	<u>John Debney</u>	<u>Phil Méheux</u>	<u>David Ian Salter</u>	Paramount Animation, Nickelodeon Movies, United Plankton Pictures Inc.	Paramount Pictures	92 minutes
<i>The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge on the Run</i>	<u>Hans Zimmer & Steve Mazzaro</u>	<u>Peter Lyons Collister</u>	Michael W. Andrews	Paramount Animation, Nickelodeon Movies, United Plankton Pictures Inc., MRC	Paramount Pictures (Canada) Paramount+ (USA)	91 minutes
<i>Saving Bikini Bottom: The Sandy Cheeks Movie</i>	TBA	TBA	TBA	Paramount Animation, Nickelodeon Movies, United Plankton Pictures Inc.	Netflix	TBA
<i>The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants</i>	TBA	TBA	TBA		Paramount Pictures	TBA

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