

Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire

Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire^[a] is a 2024 American monster film directed by Adam Wingard. Produced by Legendary Pictures and distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures, it is the sequel to *Godzilla vs. Kong* (2021) and the fifth film in the *Monsterverse* franchise, also serving as the 38th film of the *Godzilla* franchise and 13th in the *King Kong* franchise. The film stars Rebecca Hall, Brian Tyree Henry, Dan Stevens, Kaylee Hottle, Alex Ferns, and Fala Chen. Hall, Henry, and Hottle reprise their roles from the previous film. In the film, Kong encounters more of his species in the Hollow Earth and must unite again with Godzilla to stop their tyrannical leader and his frost-breathing monster from invading the Earth's surface.

Following the box office and streaming success of *Godzilla vs. Kong* during the COVID-19 pandemic, Legendary announced a sequel in March 2022 and that filming would commence later that year. In May 2022, it was announced that Wingard would return to direct and Stevens had been cast as a lead. Filming began in July 2022 in the Gold Coast, Australia, and finished in November 2022.

Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire premiered at Grauman's Chinese Theatre on March 25, 2024, and was released in the United States on March 29. The film received mixed reviews from critics, with many comparing it unfavorably to *Godzilla Minus One*. It has grossed under \$564 million worldwide on a \$135–150 million budget and achieved several milestones, including the second-highest-grossing film of 2024, second-highest-grossing film of the Monsterverse, and the highest-grossing *Godzilla* film of all time. A sequel is in development.

Plot

Three years after defeating Mechagodzilla,^[b] Kong has established his new territory in the Hollow Earth and searches for more of his kind. On Earth's surface, Godzilla continues to maintain order between humanity and giant monsters, known as "Titans" — killing Titan Scylla in Rome and resting in the Colosseum afterwards.

Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Adam Wingard
Screenplay by	Terry Rossio Simon Barrett Jeremy Slater
Story by	Terry Rossio Adam Wingard Simon Barrett
Based on	Godzilla and Mothra by Toho Co., Ltd.
Produced by	Thomas Tull Jon Jashni Brian Rogers Mary Parent Alex Garcia Eric McLeod
Starring	Rebecca Hall Brian Tyree Henry Dan Stevens

A Monarch observation outpost stationed in Hollow Earth picks up an unidentified signal. On the surface, the signal causes Jia, the last known survivor of the Iwi tribe from Skull Island, to experience hallucinations and visions, causing her adoptive mother and Kong expert, Dr. Ilene Andrews, to worry. Also sensing the signal, Godzilla leaves Rome and attacks a nuclear plant in France to absorb radiation. He then heads to the lair of the Titan Tiamat in the Arctic. Monarch believes Godzilla is strengthening himself for an oncoming threat.

When a sinkhole opens near his home, Kong discovers an uncharted realm where a tribe of his species has survived, including a juvenile named Suko. After a brief initial confrontation, Kong convinces Suko to lead him to the tribe's lair, and the two slowly bond on their journey. The tribe's tyrannical leader, Skar King, battles Kong with the aid of an ancient ice-powered Titan, Shimo, whom he controls with pain using a crystal. Shimo's ice breath injures Kong's right arm, causing frostbite, but with Suko's help, Kong manages to escape after losing his axe.

Andrews and Jia, alongside Titan veterinarian Trapper and conspiracy podcaster Bernie Hayes, travel to Hollow Earth to locate the source of the signal. They find the Monarch outpost destroyed. As the group follows the signal, they discover a temple that leads them to a subterranean section that houses a surviving Iwi tribe, who communicate telepathically with each other, living beneath portals to the surface. Inspecting some ruins, they surmise that the signal was a telepathic distress call sent by the Iwi.

While observing Jia socializing with the Iwi, Andrews voices her fears to Trapper that Jia may choose to stay with her people and that Andrews would have to accept it. Inside a temple, Andrews uncovers hieroglyphics displaying the past and future: Skar King once attempted to conquer the surface world, forced Shimo to trigger an ice age, and waged war against Godzilla's species, but Godzilla defeated him by trapping him and his tribe deep within Hollow Earth. The prophecy also indicates that Jia would be the key to reawakening Mothra. Sensing Jia, Kong locates the temple and is fitted by Trapper with a prototype exoskeletal glove to strengthen and heal his frostbitten limb. Unbeknownst to them, one of Skar King's loyalists follows them and informs him that the protective barrier leading to the surface portals has been opened. Jia successfully awakens the reborn Mothra.

Meanwhile, Godzilla kills Tiamat and absorbs cosmic radiation from her lair, which turns his dorsal plates magenta. Hoping to lure Godzilla to Hollow Earth to assist him, Kong surfaces in Cairo and calls out to Godzilla. Despite Kong's attempts to communicate, Godzilla attacks him, and a brief fight ensues until Mothra intervenes. Godzilla, Kong, and Mothra return to the Hollow Earth and engage Skar King and Shimo in battle. Skar King and Shimo manage to use one of the portals to escape to the surface, forcing Godzilla and Kong to chase them to Rio de Janeiro, and Shimo induces a second ice age at Skar King's command. The factions are evenly matched until Suko arrives with Kong's axe and destroys the crystal controlling Shimo. Shimo freezes Skar King before Kong shatters him to pieces.

	<u>Kaylee Hottle</u> <u>Alex Ferns</u> <u>Fala Chen</u>
Cinematography	<u>Ben Seresin</u>
Edited by	Josh Schaeffer
Music by	<u>Tom Holkenborg</u> Antonio Di Iorio
Production company	<u>Legendary Pictures</u>
Distributed by	<u>Warner Bros. Pictures</u> (Worldwide) Toho (Japan) ^[1]
Release dates	March 25, 2024 (<u>TCL Chinese Theatre</u>) March 29, 2024 (United States)
Running time	115 minutes ^[2]
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$135–150 million ^{[3][4]}
Box office	\$564 million ^{[5][6]}

After undoing Shimo's ice age with his atomic breath, Godzilla returns to rest in the Colosseum. Jia reunites with Andrews and alleviates her fears by choosing to stay with her adopted mother. Mothra restores the protective barrier of the Iwi's home and the portals. Kong returns with Shimo and Suko to Hollow Earth, where he becomes the ape tribe's new leader.

Cast

- [Rebecca Hall](#) as Dr. Ilene Andrews
- [Brian Tyree Henry](#) as Bernie Hayes
- [Dan Stevens](#) as Trapper
- [Kaylee Hottle](#) as Jia
- [Alex Ferns](#) as Mikael
- [Fala Chen](#) as Iwi Queen
- [Rachel House](#) as Hampton
- [Ron Smyck](#) as Harris
- [Chantelle Jamieson](#) as Jayne
- [Greg Hatton](#) as Lewis
- [Kevin Copeland](#) as Submarine Commander
- [Tess Dobré](#) as Submarine Officer
- [Tim Carroll](#) as Wilcox
- [Anthony Brandon Wong](#) as Talk Show Announcer
- [Godzilla](#) as Himself
- [Kong](#) as Himself
- [Mothra](#) as Herself
- [Skar King](#) as Himself
- [Shimo](#) as Herself
- [Suko](#) as Himself

Production

Development

In March 2019, producer Alex Garcia stated that [Legendary Pictures](#) hoped to produce more [MonsterVerse](#) films if they became successful, stating, "It's one brick at a time, each piece has to be as good as it can be, so right now it's all focused on this [*Godzilla: King of the Monsters* and *Godzilla vs. Kong*]. But could there be? Yeah, that's the hope if the movies turn out really well."^[9] In February 2021, Wingard commented on the future of the Monsterverse, "I know where we could go potentially with future films." However, he noted that the Monsterverse was created "to a certain degree" to lead towards *Godzilla vs. Kong*.^[10] He added that the Monsterverse is at a "crossroads", stating, "It's really at the point where audiences have to kind of step forward and vote for more of these things. If this movie is a success obviously they will continue forward."^[11]

Godzilla vs. Kong was released on March 24, 2021, and became a box office and streaming hit during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).^[12] The film grossed \$470 million worldwide against a break-even point of \$330 million,^{[12][13]} and became the most pirated film of 2021.^[14] On April 4, 2021, Legendary's CEO Josh Grode commented on potential sequels, "we have a number of ideas for more movies."^[15] That same day,

the hashtag *#ContinueTheMonsterverse* began trending on Twitter, which was acknowledged by Legendary and garnered support from Jordan Vogt-Roberts, director of *Kong: Skull Island* (2017).^{[16][17]} On April 27, 2021, *The Hollywood Reporter* stated that Legendary was "quietly taking steps to stretch the series into one or more installments" while negotiating with Wingard to potentially return to direct. Various ideas were considered, with *Son of Kong* being one potential title.^[18] In August 2021, Monsterverse writer Max Borenstein stated that "there will be some new, interesting installments coming" due to the success of *Godzilla vs. Kong*.^[19]

On March 20, 2022, it was announced that a sequel to *Godzilla vs. Kong* was scheduled to commence filming later in the year in the Gold Coast, Queensland, and other locations in South East Queensland.^[20] In May 2022, it was announced that Wingard would return to direct and that Dan Stevens had been cast as a lead. Wingard and Stevens had previously worked together on *The Guest* (2014).^[21] In May 2022, *Production Weekly* reported that the film's working title was *Origins*.^[22] On June 30, 2022, it was revealed that Mary Parent, Alex Garcia, Eric McLeod, Brian Rogers, Thomas Tull and Jon Jashni would return to produce.^{[23][24]} On July 1, 2022, Toho confirmed that the film would feature Godzilla.^[25]

Pre-production

Wingard recalled that preproduction on the film began in January 2022.^[26] In August 2022, Warner Bros. Pictures and Legendary announced a new synopsis and that Rebecca Hall, Brian Tyree Henry and Kaylee Hottle would reprise their roles from *Godzilla vs Kong* while Fala Chen, Alex Ferns and Rachel House would join the cast as well. It was also revealed that Wingard would collaborate once more with production designer Tom Hammock, editor Josh Schaeffer, composer Tom Holkenborg, and that Terry Rossio had returned to write the script with Jeremy Slater and Wingard's frequent collaborator Simon Barrett.^{[27][24]} Ultimately, Rossio, Barrett, and Slater received "screenplay by" credit, while Rossio, Wingard, and Barrett received "story by" credit; Michael Dougherty and Zach Shields, both of whom co-wrote *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* and *Godzilla vs. Kong*, shared off-screen "additional literary material" credit with James Ashcroft, Eli Kent, and Nicole Perlman.^{[28][29]}

Filming

Principal photography commenced in the Gold Coast, Queensland, on July 29, 2022.^[30] At the start of production, Ben Seresin was confirmed to have returned as director of photography.^[31] In November 2022, it was reported that filming had finished in Australia and that crew gear revealed the film's potential title, at the time, as *Godzilla and Kong*.^[32]

Post-production

The film's visual effects were supervised by Alessandro Ongaro.^[33] Wingard confirmed that Mothra's inclusion was always part of the plan. However, Legendary did not have the rights to Mothra by the time that post-production began and used a placeholder character named "Phosphera" until the rights were secured. Wingard also refuted rumors that Phosphera was replaced with Mothra due to poor testing, iterating that Mothra was included as far back as the first draft.^[34]

Influences

After watching the trailer for *Godzilla Minus One* (2023), Wingard and Ongaro decided to pay tribute to that film by recreating a shot of the ground bursting beneath Godzilla's footfall for the film's Rome sequence.^[33] The Egyptian battle between Godzilla and Kong was inspired by the fight scene between Roddy Piper and Keith David from *They Live* (1988).^[35]

Music

In August 2022, Tom Holkenborg was announced to return to compose the film's score, after previously doing so for *Godzilla vs. Kong*.^[36] In December 2023, it was announced that Antonio Di Iorio would co-compose the score with Holkenborg.^[37] A single was released on March 13, 2024, by *WaterTower Music*, titled "Main Title Theme." The full soundtrack album was released on March 22, 2024.^[38]

For the Japanese release, artists *Ai*, *Yaffle*, and *OZworld* contributed to the track "*Rise Together*" as the film's theme and was released on April 17, 2024.^[39]

Release

Theatrical

Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire held its red carpet premiere at the *Grauman's Chinese Theatre* on March 25, 2024.^[40] Afterward, it was released internationally on March 27 and in the United States on March 29,^[41] and was released in Japan on April 26 via Toho.^[42] It was previously slated to be released on March 15 and April 12.^{[23][43]} Incidentally, Toho's *Godzilla Minus One* was withdrawn from U.S. theaters eight weeks before the release of *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire*.^[44]

Home media

The film was released on digital platforms on May 14, 2024, and is slated to be released on *Blu-ray*, *DVD* and *Ultra HD Blu-ray* on June 11, 2024.^[45]

Reception

Box office

As of May 22, 2024, *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* has grossed \$194.7 million in the United States and Canada and \$369.3 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$564 million.^{[5][6][46]} As of 2024, it holds the record for the highest-grossing *Godzilla* film ever.^[47]

In the United States and Canada, *Godzilla x Kong* was initially projected to gross \$50–55 million from 3,850 theaters in its opening weekend and an additional \$80–90 million from 63 international territories.^[3] After making \$37 million on its first day, including \$10 million from Thursday previews, the best-ever total for a Monsterverse film, estimates were raised to \$75 million over the domestic weekend. It went on to debut at \$80 million, topping the box office and becoming the second-best opening weekend of the series and the fifth-best Easter weekend of all time, behind *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016), *Furious 7* (2015), *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* (2023) and *The Fate of the Furious* (2017).^[48] In its second

weekend, the film made \$31.2 million (a drop of 61%), remaining in first.^[49] In its third weekend, the film made \$15.5 million, finishing second behind newcomer *Civil War*.^[50] Meanwhile, the film debuted at number two in Japan, behind *Detective Conan: The Million-dollar Pentagram*.^[46]

Critical response

Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire received mixed reviews from critics.^{[51][52]} On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 54% of 235 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 5.6/10. The website's consensus reads: "Come to *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* for the sheer monster-mashing spectacle -- and stay for that too, because the movie doesn't have much else to offer."^[53] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 47 out of 100, based on 51 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[54] Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "A−" on an A+ to F scale, while PostTrak reported 96% of audience members said the film "met or exceeded their expectations."^[48]

Several critics compared the film negatively to Toho's *Godzilla Minus One* (2023).^[c] Owen Gleiberman of *Variety* found *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* mediocre, likening it more to a superhero film, but felt that it was unfortunate that the film was released too soon after *Godzilla Minus One*, comparing that film with "lyrical majesty" and *Godzilla x Kong* more like a "product", but admitted that the film delivers on the monster battles, praising the Rome battle.^[55] Pete Hammond from *Deadline Hollywood* likened the scenes with the Ape tribe to *Planet of the Apes* and noted that Godzilla, despite getting top billing and referenced repeatedly in the film, mostly plays a supporting role. He felt the human characters were the same "one dimensional caricatures" typically found in monster films, but admitted that they had a "nice rapport" regardless. Like Gleiberman, Hammond compared the film to *Godzilla Minus One*, calling it "far more impressive" than *Godzilla x Kong* and suggested that Legendary hire that film's team next.^[56] James Berardinelli also expressed dissatisfaction for the film and suggested that *Godzilla Minus One* writer-director Takashi Yamazaki make the next Monsterverse film.^[57] The *Sioux City Journal* criticized the film's visual effects as inferior to those in *Godzilla Minus One*.^[58]

The Guardian praised the choreography and cited Rebecca Hall's performance as "ever luminous", but felt that Dan Stevens and Brian Tyree Henry struggled to convey the comedy they were entrusted with for their parts.^[63] The film's journey to the climax was a "mixed bag," wrote *Empire*, and its characters were "shallow but fun".^[64] *IndieWire* attacked the CGI for being dull and not taking full advantage of its potential, suggesting that the filmmakers should have used *Godzilla* (2014) as a reference point to emphasize the gravitas of the monster scenes.^[65] The *Los Angeles Times* described the film as a "roaring headache" but cited "two impressively goopy moments" in the beginning and the horror-like approach brought by the director "with a penchant for gleeful experimentation and over-the-top style".^[66]

Beyond the main cast, the humans in this movie exist only to get squashed like ants by falling debris and mangled buildings. They are expendable, but it doesn't matter. The meaning of these films isn't in metaphor at all. It's in punching.

—Alissa Wilkinson, *The New York Times*^[62]

Sequel

Director Adam Wingard has expressed interest in making a third film featuring both *Godzilla* and *Kong*, but noted that "it just depends on how *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* does and how things kind of shape out."^[7] Wingard iterated that ideas have been discussed as to where to take the franchise onward and that

he would take a "different approach" on the next film if he's invited back to direct.^{[67][68]} He also suggested that the next film could potentially follow *Godzilla* and explore his perspective in the same way that *The New Empire* followed Kong.^[69]

Commenting on the film's box office success, producer and Legendary's chairman of worldwide production Mary Parent said, "This is certainly an exciting result. We are in a good position to continue the journey, but let's see how *Godzilla x Kong* unfolds."^[70]

On May 10, 2024, Legendary announced that David Callaham, who wrote the early drafts to *Godzilla* (2014), will write a follow-up to *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire*.^[71] The following week, Legendary announced that Wingard would not return to direct due to scheduling conflicts, but had expressed interest in having Wingard return.^[72]

Notes

- a. According to Wingard, the "x" in the film's title is silent.^[7] The "x" is meant by Legendary Pictures to indicate more of a collaboration than a fight rematch.^[8] In many translated versions of the title, it is rendered with the conjunction "and" as *Godzilla and Kong: The New Empire* (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish, Polish, etc.).
- b. As depicted in *Godzilla vs. Kong* (2021)
- c. Attributed to multiple references:^{[55][56][57][58][59][60][61]}

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External links

- Official website (<https://www.godzillaxkongmovie.com/>) 
- Japanese website (<https://godzilla-movie.jp/>) (in Japanese)
- *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* (<https://godzilla.com/blogs/movies/Godzilla-x-kong-the-new-w-empire>) on the official *Godzilla* website
- *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* (<https://www.legendary.com/film/godzilla-x-kong-the-new-empire/>) at *Legendary*
- *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* (<https://www.warnerbros.com/movies/godzilla-x-kong-new-empire>) at *Warner Bros.*
- *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* (https://www.toho.co.jp/movie/lineup?modal_open=godzilla-a-movie2) at *Toho* (in Japanese)
- *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14539740/>) at *IMDb*
- *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* (<https://www.boxofficemojo.com/title/tt14539740/>) at *Box Office Mojo*
- *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/godzilla_x_kong_the_new_empire) at *Rotten Tomatoes*

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