

# Cheaper by the Dozen (2022 film)

Cheaper by the Dozen is a 2022 American family-comedy film directed by Gail Lerner (in her feature directorial debut) from a screenplay written by Kenya Barris and Jenifer Rice-Genzuk Henry, with Shawn Levy serving as an executive producer. It is the third film adaptation of the 1948 semi-autobiographical novel of the same name by Frank Bunker Gilbreth Jr. and his sister Ernestine Gilbreth Carey following the 1950 and 2003 films. The film stars Gabrielle Union, Zach Braff, Erika Christensen, and Timon Kyle Durratt with supporting roles by Christian Cote, Sebastian Cote, Christina Anthony, Caylee Blosenski, Journey Brown, Brittany Daniel, Mykal-Michelle Harris, Cynthia Daniel Hauser in her first acting role since 2002, Abby Elliott, Ron Funches, Leo Abelo Perry, Luke Prael, June Diane Raphael, Andre Robinson, Kylie Rogers, and Aryan Simhadri. It tells the story of a restaurant proprietor and his second wife as they raise the kids from the restaurateur's previous marriage, the second wife's family, and the children they later conceived as their respective exes are still involved in their children's life.

Produced by Walt Disney Pictures, [a] Cheaper by the Dozen had its world premiere at the El Capitan Theatre on March 16, 2022, and was released on Disney+ on March 18. The film was met with mixed reviews.

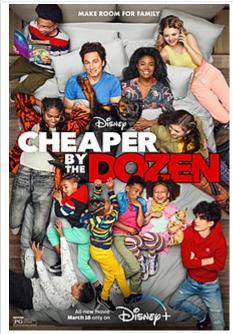
The film was removed from Disney+ on May 26, 2023, but was later made available digitally on September 26, 2023. [3][4]

### **Plot**

The Bakers are a blended family that began with Paul Baker and his wife Kate who together had daughters Ella and Harley. They had friends who died in a car accident causing them to take in their godson Haresh. Kate eventually divorced Paul, but they remained friends with Kate acting as an occasional, though slightly inattentive, babysitter.

Zoey married football player Dominic "Dom" Clayton and had daughter Deja and son DJ. Due to Dom's celebrity life, Zoey divorced him and took custody of the kids. Paul met Zoey after she visited his small restaurant and suggested that he make the entire

### Cheaper by the Dozen



Official release poster	
Directed by	Gail Lerner
Screenplay by	Kenya Barris
	Jenifer Rice-
	Genzuk Henry
Story by	Craig Titley
	Kenya Barris
	Jenifer Rice-
	Genzuk Henry
Based on	Cheaper by the
	Dozen
	1948 novel
	by Frank B.
	Gilbreth Jr.
	Ernestine
	Gilbreth Carey
Produced by	Kenya Barris
Starring	Gabrielle Union
	Zach Braff
	<u>Erika</u>
	Christensen

menu breakfast themed all day. The two eventually got married, expanded the restaurant, renamed it Baker's Breakfast and had two sets of twins: Luca and Luna, and Bronx and Bailey.

Dom continues to be active in Deja and DJ's lives which slightly intimidates Paul as he was rarely there to begin with. While Deja prepares for her basketball scholarship to the <u>University of Southern California</u>, DJ feels that he connects with Paul more than Dom and would rather speak with him. Paul gets a meeting with a large company to expand his restaurant. He succeeds and has his famous sauce sold on shelves. He decides to use the money to move the family and their dogs Bark Obama and Joe Bitin' from Los Angeles to Calabasas, in a bigger house in a gated community.

Upon arrival, Zoey begins to feel the effects of <u>racial profiling</u>, especially after meeting her neighbor Anne. Paul suddenly gets a call informing him that his sister Rachel has checked into rehab, forcing him to take in his nephew Seth, who Ella and Harley claim is a criminal. Seth bonds with Haresh when he discovers that he is being picked on at the new school because of his ethnicity and teaches him to defend himself while making monster spray for his younger cousins. While not being used a lot on the Calabasa Hornets basketball team, Deja begins seeing a boy named Chris and sneaks out of the house to see him.

	Timon Kyle Durrett
Cinematography	Mitchell Amundsen
Edited by	Troy Takaki
Music by	John Paesano
Production companies	Walt Disney Pictures[a] Khalabo Ink Society[2]
Distributed by	Disney+
Release dates	March 16, 2022 (El Capitan Theatre)
	March 18, 2022 (United States)
Running time	107 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English

Paul finds himself having to travel to look for new places to expand his restaurant. The investors Melanie and Michele also insist on altering some of his business ideals to cut costs. He starts to miss out on being with his family which upsets Zoey as this was the reason she divorced Dom. Haresh and Seth are suspended from school for a week after starting a fight with the kids who bullied Haresh causing Zoey to ground them. On DJ's birthday, Paul rushes to get home. During the party, things start to get out of hand as DJ changes his look to impress a girl. Anne profiles Zoey's family for a series of recent break-ins. Upon Paul arriving, Deja reveals that she quit the basketball team and that the entire family has been unhappy since arriving in Calabasas. Feeling that Zoey and Paul are no longer capable of handling their kids, Dom announces that he's filing for full <u>custody</u> of Deja and DJ.

Harley and Ella accuse Seth of the break-ins after Haresh pointed out that he saw him stealing from the restaurant cash register, though he returned it and he angrily leaves. After telling Paul and Zoey they explain the money is from DCFS and they have been giving it to Seth and that someone broke into Anne house during the party while Seth was grounded. Upon realizing their mistake, the Bakers, Kate, and Dom all go out and find Seth. They apologize and admit that he is part of the family and he rejoins them.

Back at home, Paul and Dom discuss their different upbringings. While Paul will never know what it is like to be at a disadvantage, Dom understands that being away from his kids has made him distant and that he needs to be more attentive. Realizing how much his family means to him, Paul breaks his deal with the company so that he can run the restaurant himself. The Bakers move back to Los Angeles and buy a new house while the children return to their old schools as Deja returns to her old basketball team. While having breakfast for dinner at the newly named Baker's Dozen Breakfast, Paul reveals the design of the sauce bottle has changed to reflect the entire family, including Seth.

A postscript states that Dom, Paul, and Zoey were able to invest their sauce and went national, Kate invented bird yoga, Seth moved back in with his mom after she got out of rehab, but still spends lots of time with his cousins, Deja and Chris started their freshman year together, Ella became the social manager for Harley's punk band and became viral after a video of her playing at her school talent show broke the internet, Luna and Luca won the tennis national under 12 division becoming like Venus and Serena, DJ, Talia, and Dom went to Comic-Con and bonded while Dom realized he liked Thor.

#### Cast



The film stars Gabrielle Union, Zach Braff and Erika Christensen.

- Gabrielle Union as Zoey Baker, the matriarch of the Baker family.
- Zach Braff as Paul Baker, the patriarch of the Baker family and proprietor of the restaurant Baker's Breakfast.
- <u>Erika Christensen</u> as Kate Baker, the ex-wife of Paul and owner of a yoga studio who still watches her kids on occasion.
- Timon Kyle Durrett as Dom Clayton, a football player who is the ex-husband of Zoey.
- Journee Brown as Deja Clayton, the daughter of Zoey and Dom who is a basketball player with dreams of being a starting point guard for <u>USC</u>.
  - Kyrie McAlpin as 8-Year-Old Deja Baker
- Kylie Rogers as Ella Baker, the daughter of Paul and Kate who is a self-described future influencer.
- Andre Robinson as DJ Clayton, the son of Zoey and Dom who dreams of being the world's greatest Lego designer and comic book artist.
  - Elias Murphy as 3-Year-Old DJ Baker
- Caylee Blosenski as Harley Baker, the paraplegic daughter of Paul and Kate who is an expert musician in her punk band where she plans to have them go viral.
  - Annalyn Black as 4-Year-Old Harley Baker
- Aryan Simhadri as Haresh Baker, the godson of Paul and Kate who they adopted after his parents died in a car accident caused by a drunk driver and dreams of being a player. He later started styling his name with a \$ in place of an \$.
  - Mark Jirgis as Baby Haresh Baker
  - Niam Saharan as 3-Year-Old Haresh Baker
- Leo Abelo Perry as Luca Baker, the son of Paul and Zoey, fraternal twin brother of Luna, and the half-brother of Deja, Ella, DJ, Harley, and Haresh.
- Mykal-Michelle Harris as Luna Baker, the daughter of Paul and Zoey, fraternal twin sister of Luca, and the half-sister of Deja, Ella, DJ, Harley, and Haresh.
- Christian Cote as Bailey Baker, the son of Paul and Zoey, identical twin brother of the Bronx, brother of Luca and Luna, and the half-brother of Deja, Ella, DJ, Harley, and Haresh.

- Sebastian Cote as Bronx Baker, the son of Paul and Zoey, identical twin brother of Bailey, brother of Luca and Luna, and the half-brother of Deja, Ella, DJ, Harley, and Haresh.
- Luke Prael as Seth Baker, the nephew of Paul.
- Cynthia Murell as Rachel Baker, the sister of Paul and mother of Seth who has Paul watch over Seth while she is in rehab.
- Brittany Daniel and Cynthia Daniel Hauser as Melanie and Michele, twin sisters and workers at Cynax who are investors for Baker's Breakfast.
- June Diane Raphael as Anne Vaughn, an inhabitant of a Calabasas gated community who becomes the neighbor of the Baker family.
- Simeon Daise as Chris, an inhabitant of a Calabasas gated community that Deja likes.
- Ron Funches as Seth's neighbor
- Lola Raie as Thalia, a goth girl and inhabitant of a Calabasas gated community who is DJ's love interest.
- Sierra Swartz as Kimmy Baron, an inhabitant of a Calabasa gated community and member of the Calabasa Hornets basketball team whose parents donated a gym to the school.
- Matthew Bellows as the Calabasa Hornets Coach
- Abby Elliott as Tricia, an inhabitant of a Calabasas gated community that befriends Zoey.
- John O'Brien as Principal
- Christina Anthony as an Airline Attendant that Paul tries to bribe into letting him on an airplane back to Calabasas.

Also in the film are the Baker family's pet <u>Rottweiler</u> Bark Obama and the <u>chihuahua</u> Joe Bitin' who are named after <u>Barack Obama</u> and <u>Joe Biden</u> where they are portrayed by two uncredited dog actors. <u>Clifton</u> Webb and Myrna Loy briefly appear through archival audio from the 1950 film.

# **Production**

In 2016, it was reported that <u>Kenya Barris</u> would work with <u>20th Century Fox</u> on a remake of *Cheaper by the Dozen*. On August 6, 2019, following the <u>acquisition of 21st Century Fox by Disney</u>, <u>Disney CEO Bob Iger</u> announced that a reboot of *Cheaper by the Dozen* was in development and that it would premiere on the company's streaming service, <u>Disney+</u>. Gail Lerner was set to direct the film with a script cowritten by Kenya Barris and <u>Jenifer Rice-Genzuk Henry</u>. Lerner had worked for Barris as a writer on the television series <u>Black-ish</u> and appreciated that he saw her not only as a writer but also a director. Principal photography was scheduled to commence on July 13, 2020, in <u>Los Angeles, California</u>. After filming was halted due to the <u>COVID-19 pandemic</u>, Disney's new CEO <u>Bob Chapek</u> announced that filming had resumed in November 2020. The film was revealed at the Disney Investors Day, along with the casting of Gabrielle Union.

In January 2021, Zach Braff joined the cast. [12][13][14][15][16] In February 2021, Journee Brown, Kylie Rogers, Andre Robinson, Caylee Blosenski, Aryan Simhaldri, Leo Abelo Perry, Mykal-Michelle Harris, Christian Cote, Sebastian Cote, and Luke Prael joined the cast as the pair's children. [17] Erika Christensen would be added to the cast in April. [18] Filming had begun in Los Angeles by April 2021. [19]

Shawn Levy, who previously directed the  $\underline{2003}$  film adaptation, was confirmed in 2021 to be an executive producer on the film. $\underline{^{[20]}}$ 

Lerner thought it was important to adjust the film to accommodate the actors, and not have young performers speaking lines or expressions that did not come across as natural for them. Lerner said Zoey is the heart of the film, she praised Union for not falling into tropes or stereotypes, and not wanting to be

pigeonholed as the stern mom and the finger-wagger. Union also served as an executive producer. [7]

#### Music

John Paesano composed the musical score. The soundtrack was released on March 18, 2022, by Hollywood Records and Walt Disney Records. [21]

Also, <u>Brandy</u> and her daughter, Sy'Rai, recorded an original song "Nothing Without You" for the film. It was played during the end credits.

# Release

On November 12, 2021, the film was revealed to be released in March 2022. On February 7, 2022, with the release of the official trailer, it was revealed that it would be digitally released on March 18, 2022, on Disney+. The film had its world premiere at the El Capitan Theatre on March 16. Following its removal from Disney+, it was made available on other streaming platforms, including Amazon Prime Video, Vudu and Google Play, on September 26, 2023.

# Reception

### **Audience viewership**

According to <u>Whip Media</u>, *Cheaper by the Dozen* was the 5th-most-streamed movie across all platforms in the United States during the week of March 18, 2022, to March 20, 2022. [26]

# **Critical response**

On the <u>review aggregator</u> website <u>Rotten Tomatoes</u>, 35% of 37 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 5.1/10. The website's consensus reads: "*Cheaper by the Dozen* adds some modern twists to its oftadapted story, but fresh laughs are few and far between." [27] <u>Metacritic</u>, which uses a <u>weighted average</u>, assigned the film a score of 42 out of 100, based on 11 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews. [28]

<u>Variety</u> stated: "Despite some of this movie's missteps, the heart behind its messages is in the right place. Sentiments dealing with co-parenting after divorce and prioritizing family above monetary success may seem old fashioned on the surface. Yet it goes deeper, exploring and challenging our societal system's gross inequities and injustices in a thoughtful, meaningful manner." [29] <u>IGN</u> rated the movie 6 out of 10, stating, "Disney's latest reboot of <u>Cheaper by the Dozen</u>, starring Zach Braff and Gabrielle Union, can be as haphazard as its premise." [30] <u>The Guardian</u> rated the movie 3 out of 5 stars, stating, "As with the 2003 film, the gist of Disney Plus's remake is cheerful domestic chaos molded into light didacticism: the importance of the nuclear family (albeit a blended one, in this update) with reminders to not get blinded by financial success or the lure of growth." [31] <u>Screen Rant</u> gave the movie 2.5 out of 5 stars, saying "Cheaper by the Dozen is a fluffy family drama that ultimately doesn't amount to anything. [...] It is great that this blended family is so diverse, but if there is no thoughtful integration of their stories, they remain merely set dressing." [32]

#### **Accolades**

The film received a nomination for Outstanding Makeup (Television or Film) at the <u>2023 NAACP Image</u> Awards. [33][34]

### **Notes**

a. The film was produced by Walt Disney Pictures but the copyright is registered with  $\underline{20th}$  Century Studios, the latter who originally produced the film.  $\underline{^{[1]}}$ 

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# **External links**

- Official website (https://disneyplusoriginals.disney.com/movie/cheaper-by-the-dozen) ✓
- Cheaper by the Dozen (https://www.disneyplus.com/movies/wp/7F8hhifxhR37) on Disney+
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