



# The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air

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*The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* is an American sitcom that originally aired on NBC from September 10, 1990, to May 20, 1996. The show stars Will Smith as a fictionalized version of himself, a street-smart teenager from West Philadelphia who is sent to move in with his wealthy aunt and uncle in their Bel Air mansion after getting into a fight on a local basketball court. In the series, his lifestyle often clashes with the lifestyle of his relatives in Bel Air. The series ran for six seasons and aired 148 episodes.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

## Development



The characters of *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. From top left: Hilary Banks, Geoffrey, Vivian Banks, Carlton Banks. From bottom left: Ashley Banks, Philip Banks, Will Smith.

In December 1989, NBC approached Will Smith, a popular rapper during the late 1980s.<sup>[3]</sup> The pilot episode began taping on May 1, 1990.<sup>[4]</sup> Season 1 first aired in September 1990, and ended in May 1991. The series finale was taped on Thursday, March 21, 1996.<sup>[5][6]</sup>

The theme song "Yo Home to Bel Air" was written and performed by Smith under his stage name, The Fresh Prince.

The music was composed by Quincy Jones, who is credited with Smith at the end of each episode. The music often used to bridge scenes together during the show is based on a similar chord structure.

### The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air



<b>Created by</b>	<u>Andy Borowitz</u> <u>Susan Borowitz</u>
<b>Starring</b>	<u>Will Smith</u> <u>James Avery</u> <u>Janet Hubert-Whitten</u> <u>Alfonso Ribeiro</u> <u>Karyn Parsons</u> <u>Tatyana M. Ali</u> <u>Joseph Marcell</u> <u>Daphne Maxwell Reid</u> <u>Ross Bagley</u>
<b>Theme music composer</b>	The Fresh Prince in association with A Touch of Jazz, Inc.
<b>Opening theme</b>	"Yo Home to Bel Air", performed by <u>The Fresh Prince</u>
<b>Composer</b>	<u>Quincy Jones</u>

In the second season, the kitchen and living room sets were rebuilt much larger with a more contemporary style (as opposed to the much more formal style of the first season) and were connected directly by an archway, allowing scenes to be shot continuously between the sets.

## Plot

The theme song and opening sequence set the premise of the show. Will Smith is a street smart teenager, born and raised in West Philadelphia. While playing basketball, Will misses a shot and the ball hits a group of people, causing a confrontation that frightens his mother, who sends him to live with his aunt and uncle in the opulent neighborhood of Bel Air, Los Angeles.

Will's working-class background ends up clashing in various humorous ways with the upper class world of the Banks family – Will's uncle Phil and aunt Vivian and their children, Will's cousins: Hilary, Carlton, and Ashley.

## Cast and characters

- Will Smith as Will Smith
- James Avery as Philip Banks
- Janet Hubert-Whitten (Season 1–3) and Daphne Maxwell Reid (Season 4–6) as Vivian Banks
- Alfonso Ribeiro as Carlton Banks
- Karyn Parsons as Hilary Banks
- Tatyana M. Ali as Ashley Banks
- Joseph Marcell as Geoffrey Butler
- Ross Bagley as Nicholas "Nicky" Banks (Seasons 5 & 6)

### Major supporting characters

- DJ Jazzy Jeff as Jazz
- Vernee Watson-Johnson as Viola "Vy" Smith
- Jenifer Lewis as Helen Smith (recurring)
- Nia Long as Lisa Wilkes (Season 5)
- Tyra Banks as Jacqueline "Jackie" Ames (Season 4)
- John Amos as Fred Wilkes (Lisa's father) (Season 5)

## Episodes

## Crossovers and other appearances

<b>Country of origin</b>	United States
<b>Original language</b>	English
<b>No. of seasons</b>	6
<b>No. of episodes</b>	148 <div> <div></div> <div>(list of episodes)</div> </div>
<b>Production</b>	
<b>Executive producers</b>	Quincy Jones <div> <div></div> <div>Andy Borowitz</div> <div>Susan Borowitz</div> <div>Kevin Wendle</div> <div>(Season 1)</div> <div><u>Winifred Hervey</u></div> <div>(Seasons 2–3)</div> <div>Gary H. Miller</div> <div>(Season 4–5)</div> <div>Cheryl Gard (Mid-Late Season 5)</div> <div><u>Jeff Pollack</u></div> <div>Will Smith (Season 6)</div> <div>Benny Medina</div> </div>
<b>Producers</b>	Werner Walian <div> <div></div> <div>Lisa Rosenthal</div> <div>Joel Madison</div> <div>Leilani Downer</div> <div>Joanne Curley-Kerner</div> <div>Joel Markowitz</div> </div>
<b>Production locations</b>	<u>Hollywood Center Studios</u> <div> <div></div> <div>Hollywood, California (1990–1991)</div> <div><u>Sunset Gower Studios</u></div> <div>Hollywood, California (1991–1993)</div> <div>NBC Studios</div> <div>Burbank, California (1993–1996)</div> </div>

During the fall 1991–1992 season, NBC gained two hit television shows to anchor their Monday night lineup (*Blossom* aired immediately after *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*). To gain popularity between the two shows, Will Smith appeared in the *Blossom* episode "I'm with the Band" as himself under his rap stage name, *The Fresh Prince*. That same season, Karyn Parsons appeared in the *Blossom* episode "Wake Up Little Suzy" as Hilary Banks. Parsons also appeared in the Patti LaBelle sitcom, *Out All Night* as Hilary.

*In the House* and *Fresh Prince* were both executive produced by Winifred Hervey, David Salzman and Quincy Jones. During the second season's first episode, Alfonso Ribeiro and Tatyana Ali appeared as their *Fresh Prince* characters (Carlton and Ashley Banks) in the crossover episode "Dog Catchers". Later that season, James Avery (Phillip Banks) appeared as a mediator in the episode "Love on a One-Way Street".

In the Season 4 episode "My Pest Friend's Wedding", James Avery and Daphne Maxwell Reid (Vivian Banks) guest starred as Dr. Maxwell Stanton's parents (Stanton was played by Ribeiro). Both Avery and Reid portrayed the parents of Ribeiro's *Fresh Prince* character. Joseph Marcell, who played the wisecracking Geoffrey Butler on *Fresh Prince*, also appeared as an officiating minister in the same episode.

<b>Camera setup</b>	Videotape; <u>Multi-camera</u>
<b>Running time</b>	23 minutes
<b>Production companies</b>	The Stuffed Dog Company Quincy Jones Productions (Seasons 1–3) Quincy Jones/David Salzman Entertainment (Seasons 4–6) <u>NBC Productions</u>
<b>Original release</b>	
<b>Network</b>	<u>NBC</u>
<b>Release</b>	September 10, 1990 – May 20, 1996

## Syndication

The series was produced by NBC Productions in association with The Stuffed Dog Company and Quincy Jones Entertainment (later Quincy Jones-David Salzman Entertainment in 1993). After the show was released to syndication in 1994, the series has been distributed by Warner Bros. Television, which continues to distribute the show worldwide (although NBCUniversal does own the series' copyright). WGN America was the first cable channel to acquire the series in 1997, TBS acquired the series a year later in 1998; both channels carried the series until the fall of 2003, though TBS reacquired the series in 2007.

The theme song was shown in the original TBS run, but after TBS re-acquired *Fresh Prince* in 2007, the opening credits were truncated and the theme song removed and replaced with the instrumental version used as the show's closing theme; these versions also re added portions of scenes cut from the original syndicated prints for some episodes, particularly those from Seasons 3 to 6. TBS continues to air the series today, early in the morning. Reruns also aired on WPIX-TV back to back weeknights at 6 pm & 6:30 pm EST from 1994 until 2000, and as a weekday basis at 5 pm from 2000 to 2005, sometimes on weekends until 2007. But, the series was still rerunning on The WB's affiliation WPIX-TV until 2006.

While moving The WB to Nick at Nite, it was airing to 2006-2009 and moved to Disney XD.

In July 2009, Disney XD acquired the rights to the series, though it was quickly moved from prime time to late night airings, and only episodes from Seasons 1 to 3 are aired, mainly because those episodes are more appropriate for young viewers and does not contain as many mature themes, sexual content and strong language as later episodes. But in August 2010, Disney XD stopped airing the show.

ABC Family (now called Freeform) acquired the series in September 2008, though airing all 148 episodes; originally airing exclusively on Saturday nights, the series was added to ABC Family's weekday line up in late 2009. On September 29, 2014, Disney/ABC rights to the show expired. Viacom Media Networks got the series back.

In October 2014, Viacom Media Networks also gave the series to BET, it also will air on Centric. It was previously aired on MTV's retro block. Also, the series reruns on VH1. On November 2, 2015, the series started airing on the Family Channel in Canada. On January 1, 2017, the series was added to Netflix in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

In 2014, Fresh Prince Of Bel Air started airing again in Nickelodeon`s block night channel, Nick at Nite.

## Ratings

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Season		U.S. ratings	Network	Rank
1	1990–91	13.1 million	NBC	#39
2	1991–92	14.3 million	NBC	#22
3	1992–93	14.6 million	NBC	#18
4	1993–94	13.7 million	NBC	#21
5	1994–95	10.4 million	NBC	#49
6	1995–96	9.6 million	NBC	#55

## DVD releases

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Warner Home Video has released the complete series, seasons 1 to 6 on DVD in Region 1.<sup>[7]</sup> Seasons 1 to 4 have been released in Regions 2 and 4. Seasons 5 to 6 have been released in Region 2 in Germany, and in the complete series boxset in the United Kingdom. The episodes and DVD menus are in English; only the DVD packaging is in German.

DVD Name	Ep #	Release dates		
		Region 1	Region 2	Region 4
The Complete First Season	25	February 8, 2005 <sup>[8]</sup>	February 21, 2005 <sup>[9]</sup>	April 13, 2005 <sup>[10]</sup>
The Complete Second Season	24	October 11, 2005 <sup>[11]</sup>	November 21, 2005 <sup>[12]</sup>	March 1, 2006 <sup>[13]</sup>
The Complete Third Season	24	February 14, 2006 <sup>[14]</sup>	June 26, 2006 <sup>[15]</sup>	August 9, 2006 <sup>[16]</sup>
The Complete Fourth Season	26	August 8, 2006 <sup>[17]</sup>	January 22, 2007 <sup>[18]</sup>	December 6, 2006 <sup>[19]</sup>
The Complete Fifth Season	25	May 11, 2010 <sup>[20]</sup>	June 18, 2010	TBA
The Complete Sixth Season	24	April 19, 2011	May 6, 2011	TBA

## Awards and nominations

Awards	Outcome	Recipient(s)	Year
<u>ASCAP Film and Television Music Awards:</u>			
Top TV Series	Won	<u>Quincy Jones</u> <u>Will Smith</u> <u>DJ Jazzy Jeff</u>	1994
<u>Emmy Awards:</u>			
Outstanding Individual Achievement in Lighting Direction for a Comedy Series	Nominated	Art Busch	1996
<u>Golden Globe Awards:</u>			
Best Performance by an Actor in a TV-Series – Comedy/Musical	Nominated	Will Smith	1994
Best Performance by an Actor in a TV-Series – Comedy/Musical	Nominated <sup>[21]</sup>	Will Smith	1993
<u>Image Award:</u>			
Outstanding Comedy Series	Nominated		1997
Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series	Won	<u>Alfonso Ribeiro</u>	1996
Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series	Nominated	Will Smith	1997
Outstanding Youth Actor/Actress	Won	<u>Tatyana M. Ali</u>	1997
Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series	Nominated	<u>Janet Hubert-Whitten</u>	1991
Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series	Nominated	<u>Nia Long</u>	1996
Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series	Nominated	<u>Daphne Maxwell Reid</u>	1996
<u>Kids' Choice Awards:</u>			
Favorite Television Actor	Nominated	Will Smith	1996
Favorite Television Show	Nominated		1996
Favorite TV Actress	Won	Tatyana M. Ali	1996
<u>NCLR Bravo Awards:</u>			
Outstanding Television Series Actor in a Crossover Role	Nominated	Alfonso Ribeiro	1996

Awards	Outcome	Recipient(s)	Year
TP de Oro:			
Best Foreign Series (Mejor Serie Extranjera)	Nominated		1996
Best Foreign Series (Mejor Serie Extranjera)	Won		1994
TV Land Awards:			
Best Broadcast Butler	Nominated	<u>Joseph Marcell</u>	2004
Favorite "Fish Out of Water"	Nominated	Will Smith	2004
Young Artist Awards:			
Best Performance by an Actor Under Ten – Television	Won	<u>Ross Bagley</u>	1996
Best Performance by an Actor Under Ten in a TV Series	Won	Ross Bagley	1995
Best Youth Comedienne	Nominated	Tatyana M. Ali	1994
Best Young Actor Guest Starring in a Television Series	Nominated	<u>Larenz Tate</u>	1993
Best Young Actor Guest Starring or Recurring Role in a TV Series	Nominated	<u>Tevin Campbell</u>	1992
Best New Family Television Comedy Series	Won		1991
YoungStar Award:			
Best Performance by a Young Actress in a Comedy TV Series	Won	Tatyana M. Ali	1997

## Possible reboot

On August 13, 2015, it was reported that a reboot of the show was in development by Overbrook Entertainment, with Will Smith serving as a producer.<sup>[22][23]</sup> While the original aired on NBC, a network for the reboot has yet to be determined.<sup>[24]</sup> In August 2016, during a promotional interview with the E! television network, for his then upcoming film *Suicide Squad*, Smith had denied that a reboot was in development, saying that it would happen "...pretty close to when Hell freezes over."<sup>[25]</sup>

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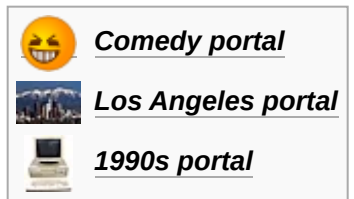
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## External links

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- *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* (<http://epguides.com/FreshPrinceofBelAir>) at [epguides.com](http://epguides.com)
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