

Navigation

- [Home](#)
- [Prequel Trilogy](#)
- [Original Trilogy](#)
- [Sequel Trilogy](#)
- [The Holiday Special](#)

The Star Wars Saga

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...

[image]

Everything in Star Wars has a story. Every character, every weapon, every planet, and every ship helps form one of the most involved taxonomies of any cinematic universe.

However, for someone unfamiliar with the series, this can make enjoying the franchise feel like an intimidating or impossible task. This website is a brief primer for anyone who would like to enjoy the films, but isn't sure where or how to start.

The Three Trilogies

Over the past 40 years, Star Wars has spawned countless comic books, audio dramas, television series, novelisations, video games, and more. Instead of cataloguing all of these titles here, we will focus on nine of the major films.

Prequel Trilogy

[image]

The Prequel Trilogy is the second trilogy of the saga to be released.

1. Episode I: The Phantom Menace (1999)
2. Episode II: Attack of the Clones (2002)
3. Episode III: Revenge of the Sith (2005)

Read more on the [Prequel Trilogy page](#).

Original Trilogy

[image]

The Original Trilogy is the first trilogy of the saga to be released.

1. Episode IV: A New Hope (1977)
2. Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back (1980)
3. Episode VI: Return of the Jedi (1983)

Read more on the [Original Trilogy](#) page.

Sequel Trilogy

[image]

The Sequel Trilogy is the third trilogy of the saga to be released. It is also the first trilogy to be produced after Walt Disney's acquisition of Lucasfilm Ltd.

1. Episode VII: The Force Awakens (2015)
2. Episode VIII: The Last Jedi (2017)
3. Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker (2019)

Read more on the [Sequel Trilogy](#) page.

Episode Viewing Order

There is a lot of debate surrounding what the best viewing order is. This is due to the fact that the series was theatrically released in media res, or 'in the middle 'of the story.

We suggest starting with Episode IV: A New Hope as a litmus test for whether or not you will enjoy Star Wars. This is because it closely follows the monomyth, or Joseph Campbell's the hero's journey, and woks as a self-contained story.

The Holiday Special

The Star Wars Holiday Special is a 97 minute television variety show that has achieved a certain cult status with fans. While the special was never officially released on video, bootleg version have been in circulation for years.

George Lucas, the original creator and director for the series, famously tried (and failed) to buy all of the master copies in an attempt to make sure that the special was never broadcast again.

Speaking at a convention, Lucas famously remarked, "If I had the time and a sledgehammer, I would track down every bootlegged copy of that programme and smash it."

Read more about the special on our [Star Wars Holiday Special page](#).

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Navigation

- [Home](#)
- [Prequel Trilogy](#)
- [Original Trilogy](#)
- [Sequel Trilogy](#)
- [The Holiday Special](#)

The Prequel Trilogy

Episode I: The Phantom Menace

[image]

Theatrical release poster for Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace.

Two Jedi escape a hostile blockade to find allies and come across a young boy who may bring balance to the Force, but the long dormant Sith resurface to claim their old glory.

Episode II: Attack of the Clones

[image]

Theatrical release poster for Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones.

Ten years after initially meeting, Anakin Skywalker shares a forbidden romance with Padmé Amidala, while Obi-Wan Kenobi investigates an assassination attempt on the senator and discovers a secret clone army crafted for the Jedi.

Episode III: Revenge of the Sith

[image]

Theatrical release poster for Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith.

Three years into the Clone Wars, the Jedi rescue Palpatine from Count Dooku. As Obi-Wan pursues a new threat, Anakin acts as a double agent between the Jedi Council and Palpatine and is lured into a sinister plan to rule the galaxy.

Facts at a Glance

Film	The Phantom Menace	Attack of the Clones	Revenge of the Sith
Release Date	15 July 1999	16 May 2002	19 May 2005
Budget	\$155M	\$115M	\$113M
Box Office Gross	\$1,027,082,707	\$653,779,970	\$868,390,560
IMDB Rating	6.5	6.5	7.5

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Navigation

- [Home](#)
- [Prequel Trilogy](#)
- [Original Trilogy](#)
- [Sequel Trilogy](#)
- [The Holiday Special](#)

The Original Trilogy

Episode IV: A New Hope

[image]

Theatrical release poster for Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope.

Luke Skywalker joins forces with a Jedi Knight, a cocky pilot, a Wookiee and two droids to save the galaxy from the Empire's world-destroying battle station, while also attempting to rescue Princess Leia from the mysterious Darth Vader.

Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back

[image]

Theatrical release poster for Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back.

After the Rebels are brutally overpowered by the Empire on the ice planet Hoth, Luke Skywalker begins Jedi training with Yoda, while his friends are pursued by Darth Vader and a bounty hunter named Boba Fett all over the galaxy.

Episode VI: Return of the Jedi

[image]

Theatrical release poster for Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi.

After a daring mission to rescue Han Solo from Jabba the Hutt, the Rebels dispatch to Endor to destroy the second Death Star. Meanwhile, Luke struggles to help Darth Vader back from the dark side without falling into the Emperor's trap.

Facts at a Glance

Film	A New Hope	The Empire Strikes Back	Return of the Jedi
Release Date	29 January 1978	21 May 1980	2 June 1983
Budget	\$11M	\$18M	\$32.5M
Box Office Gross	\$775,512,064	\$547,897,454	\$475,347,111
IMDB Rating	8.6	8.7	8.3

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Navigation

- [Home](#)
- [Prequel Trilogy](#)
- [Original Trilogy](#)
- [Sequel Trilogy](#)
- [The Holiday Special](#)

The Sequel Trilogy

Episode VII: The Force Awakens

[image]

Theatrical release poster for Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens.

Three decades after the Empire's defeat, a new threat arises in the militant First Order. Defected stormtrooper Finn and the scavenger Rey are caught up in the Resistance's search for the missing Luke Skywalker.

Episode VIII: The Last Jedi

[image]

Theatrical release poster for Star Wars Episode VIII: The Last Jedi.

Rey develops her newly discovered abilities with the guidance of Luke Skywalker, who is unsettled by the strength of her powers. Meanwhile, the Resistance prepares for battle with the First Order.

Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker

[image]

Theatrical release poster for Star Wars Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker.

The surviving members of the resistance face the First Order once again, and the legendary conflict between the Jedi and the Sith reaches its peak, bringing the Skywalker saga to its end.

Facts at a Glance

Film	The Force Awakens	The Last Jedi	The Rise of Skywalker
Release Date	17 December 2015	14 December 2017	19 December 2019
Budget	\$245M	\$317M	\$200M
Box Office Gross	\$2,068,223,624	\$1,332,539,889	\$1,058,031,674
IMDB Rating	7.9	7	6.9

More Star Wars

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Navigation

- [Home](#)
- [Prequel Trilogy](#)
- [Original Trilogy](#)
- [Sequel Trilogy](#)
- [The Holiday Special](#)

The Holiday Special

I Have A Bad Feeling About This

The Star Wars Holiday Special is a television variety show that aired on CBS on 17 November 1978. On the surface, it tells the story of Chewbacca's journey back home in order to celebrate a holiday called Life Day; while waiting for him to arrive, his family entertains themselves in a number of ways.

However, the premise isn't what makes the Star Wars Holiday Special so notably infamous amongst fans.

What Makes a Star Wars Story?

[image]

With so much content spanning so many different mediums, it may feel as if Star Wars always had a distinct look, feel, and sound. However, when the franchise was still in its infancy, there was an unmistakable lack of overall direction, lore, and vision.

The Star Wars Holiday Special is a prime example of this. As result, it has gained a certain cult status over the years for its campy inconsistencies and for being so universally maligned by critics.

The comparatively low budget to the sprawling space opera's films and the variety show format certainly doesn't help the Special feel like it belongs in the Star Wars universe. Some of the segments include:

- Chewbacca's father watching a sensual virtual reality video in the family sitting room, starring singer Diahann Carroll.
- Golden Girls actress Bea Arthur playing a cantankerous cantina bartender.
- American rock band, Jefferson Starship, performing in a hologram music video.
- The Carol Burnett Show's Harvey Korman playing a crossdressing cooking show host.

To say that the Star Wars Holiday Special is a rocky first foray into what the Star Wars universe might look like outside of the feature films is an understatement; therefore, we whole-heartedly endorse it as essential viewing.

Legal Standing

In 2020, Mark Hamill reached out to former President Donald Trump, asking him to pardon the Holiday Special after issuing a series of high-profile pardons and commutations.

To date, the Star Wars Holiday Special has yet to receive a presidential pardon.

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