

= The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel =

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel is a 2011 British comedy @-@ drama film , directed by John Madden . The screenplay , written by Ol Parker , is based on the 2004 novel These Foolish Things , by Deborah Moggach , and features an ensemble cast consisting of Judi Dench , Celia Imrie , Bill Nighy , Ronald Pickup , Maggie Smith , Tom Wilkinson and Penelope Wilton , as a group of British pensioners moving to a retirement hotel in India , run by the young and eager Sonny , played by Dev Patel . The movie was produced by Participant Media and Blueprint Pictures on a budget of \$ 10 million .

Producers Graham Broadbent and Peter Czernin first saw the potential for a film in Deborah Moggach 's novel with the idea of exploring the lives of the elderly beyond what one would expect of their age group . With the assistance of screenwriter Ol Parker , they came up with a script in which they take the older characters completely out of their element and involve them in a romantic comedy .

Principal photography began on 10 October 2010 in India , and most of the filming took place in the Indian state of Rajasthan , including the cities of Jaipur and Udaipur . Ravla Khempur , an equestrian hotel which was originally the palace of a tribal chieftain in the village of Khempur , was chosen as the site for the film hotel .

The film was released in the United Kingdom on 24 February 2012 and received critical acclaim ; The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel opened to strong box @-@ office business in the United Kingdom and continued to build worldwide . It became a surprise box @-@ office hit following its international release , eventually grossing nearly \$ 137 million worldwide .

It was ranked among the highest @-@ grossing 2012 releases in Australia , New Zealand and the United Kingdom , and as one of the highest @-@ grossing speciality releases of the year . A sequel , The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel , began production in India in January 2014 , and was released on 27 February 2015 .

= = Plot = =

Recently widowed housewife Evelyn (Judi Dench) must sell her home to cover huge debts left by her late husband . Graham (Tom Wilkinson) , a high @-@ court judge who had spent his first eighteen years in India , abruptly decides to retire and return there . Jean (Penelope Wilton) and Douglas (Bill Nighy) seek a retirement they can afford , having lost most of their savings through investing in their daughter 's internet business . Muriel (Maggie Smith) , a retired housekeeper prejudiced against Indians , needs a hip replacement operation which can be done far more quickly and inexpensively in India . Madge (Celia Imrie) is hunting for another husband , and Norman (Ronald Pickup) , an aging Lothario , is trying to recapture his youth . They each decide on a retirement hotel in India , based on pictures on its website .

When the group arrives at the picturesque hotel , they find an energetic young manager Sonny (Dev Patel) but a dilapidated facility , not yet what he had promised . Overwhelmed by the cultural changes , Jean often stays inside at the hotel , while her husband Douglas explores the sights . Graham finds that the area has greatly changed since his youth and disappears on long outings every day . Muriel , despite her xenophobia , starts to appreciate her doctor for his skill and the hotel maid for her good service . Evelyn gets a job advising the staff of a call centre on how to interact with older British customers . Sonny struggles to raise funds to renovate the hotel and sees his girlfriend Sunaina (Tena Desae) , despite his mother 's disapproval . Madge joins the Viceroy Club seeking a spouse , where she is surprised to find Norman . She introduces him to Carol (Diana Hardcastle) . He admits he is lonely and seeking a companion , and the two begin an affair .

Graham confides in Evelyn that he is trying to find the Indian lover he was forced to abandon as a youth . Social @-@ climber Jean is attracted to Graham , and makes a rare excursion to follow him , but is humiliated when he explains he is gay . Graham reunites with his former lover , who is in an arranged marriage of mutual trust and respect . Reconciled , the Englishman dies of an existing heart condition . Evelyn and Douglas grow increasingly close , angering his wife , which results in an

outburst from Douglas denouncing this marriage . Muriel reveals that she was once housekeeper to a family who had her train her younger replacement and now , having been forced out of the home and into retirement , she feels that she has lost any purpose in her life .

Sonny 's more successful brothers each own a third of the hotel and plan to demolish it . His mother (Lillete Dubey) agrees and wants him to return to Delhi for an arranged marriage . Jean and Douglas prepare to return to England after money is found through their daughter 's company . Jean eagerly awaits returning to England , but Douglas is more hesitant . Now that the hotel is closing against Sonny 's wishes and pleas , Madge prepares to return to England , and Norman agrees to move in with Carol . Madge , after encouragement from Carol and Muriel , decides to keep searching for another husband .

Sonny , encouraged by Evelyn , finally tells Sunaina that he loves her . He confronts his mother , who first forbids the match but then is persuaded by Young Wasim , who speaks no English . He explains that he once knew another man who wanted to marry a smart beautiful woman against his family 's wishes . Sonny 's mother interprets for Young Wasim , realizing he is talking about her , and she finally gives the couple her blessing . She asks Sunaina to take good care of her " favourite son " . Before the remaining guests can leave , Muriel reveals that her experience running the family 's household gave her the knowledge how to balance a budget and that the hotel can make a profit . She approaches Sonny 's investor privately and then invites him to visit the hotel to discuss matters with Sonny . The investor agrees to fund Sonny 's plans for renovation so long as Muriel stays on as an assistant manager .

All the guests agree to stay ? except Jean and Douglas . Due to their daughter 's long @-@ awaited success , they decide to return home but on the way to the airport , their taxi gets caught in a traffic jam . A rickshaw driver says that he can take only one of them . Jean sees it as a sign that it is time to split with Douglas ; she bids him farewell and departs . He winds up at another hotel , discovering that it 's nothing more than a brothel and drug den , and spends the rest of the night wandering the streets . He returns to the hotel just as Evelyn is leaving for work , and asks when she 'll be back . A closing montage with a voiceover shows Muriel checking in customers in an elegant renovated lobby , Madge dining with a handsome older Indian man , and Norman and Carol living happily together . Sonny and Sunaina are shown riding a motorbike and passing Douglas and Evelyn on another bike .

= = Cast = =

Judi Dench as Evelyn Greenslade , a recently widowed housewife whose house must be sold to pay off her husband 's debts . Like his father , her son wants to " care " for her , without her input . At Sonny 's home for the " elderly and beautiful " , she keeps a blog of her activities . She narrates throughout the film , from bookend to bookend , from the opening sequence to the Day 51 moral " We get up in the morning , we do our best " .

Bill Nighy as optimist Douglas Ainslie , husband of Jean for 39 years . His loyalty has kept them together when she sees they both " deserve better " . He enjoys the food and sights , going out every day .

Penelope Wilton as pessimist Jean Ainslie . After Douglas invested ? and seemingly lost ? all their savings in their daughter 's internet business , they can afford only a " beige bungalow " installed with a panic button and hand rails " for the future " . She hates everything about India ; the perceived noise , poverty , and smells . It is for this reason that she stays indoors often , and wishes to return to the UK .

Maggie Smith as Muriel Donnelly , an ex @-@ nanny with a head for figures , is deemed surplus to requirements by her lifelong employers after she unwittingly trains her own replacement . She has no family of her own , having devoted her life to her employers . Although racist , she chooses not to wait six months for a hip replacement , and rather be " outsourced " to India .

Tom Wilkinson as Graham Dashwood , a High Court judge who has , for many years , been retiring " any day now " . During the retirement speech of a colleague , he decides that " today 's the day " . Having lived in India for his first 18 years , he returns to seek out the love of his early life , a man .

Ronald Pickup as Norman Cousins , an aged lothario , unable to face up to his own age and consequent undesirability by younger women ; he hopes for a new start with new possibilities in India .

Celia Imrie as Madge Hardcastle , who has had several unsuccessful marriages . Like Norman , she wants fun , adventure and a new mate . Tired of her daughter 's attempts to keep her as unpaid babysitter , she flees for anywhere , choosing India .

Dev Patel as Sonny Kapoor , manager of the hotel , and one @-@ third owner with his older , more favoured brothers . Sonny is a dreamer eager for a first success , but his determination makes him unwilling to ask for help until the end .

Tina Desai as Sunaina , call centre worker , Sonny 's " modern " girlfriend . She befriends Evelyn when Evelyn gets a job at the same call centre (see below) .

Sid Makkar as Jay , Sunaina 's brother , manager of a call centre , hires Evelyn to teach workers British culture .

Lillete Dubey as Mrs. Kapoor , widowed mother of Sonny . She admits that Sonny is not her favourite son , and wants him to move back with her to Delhi for an arranged marriage , not to Sunaina .

Diana Hardcastle as Carol , an Englishwoman but lifelong resident of Jaipur , who asks Norman to enter into cohabitation , according to his perception , impetuously .

Seema Azmi as Anokhi , a Dalit (lowest @-@ caste) maid at the hotel who takes Muriel 's acknowledgement for friendship . Via an interpreter , Muriel reveals that her bitterness was caused by her employers having tossed her aside as obsolete after having devoted her life as a nanny and housekeeper , and having unwittingly prepared her replacement .

Paul Bhattacharjee as Dr. Ghujarapartidar ; this was Bhattacharjee 's final feature film appearance before his death in 2013 .

Liza Tarbuck as head nurse Karen .

Denzil Smith as Mr Dhurana , the Viceroy Club Secretary

Honey Chhaya as Young Wasim .

= = Production = =

= = = Background and script = = =

Producers Graham Broadbent and Peter Czernin were the ones who first saw the potential for a film in Deborah Moggach 's novel . The concept of outsourcing retirement , " taking our outsourcing of everyday tasks like banking and customer service one step further " , appealed to them , and they commissioned screenwriter Ol Parker to formulate this concept into a screenplay .

Parker wanted to take the older characters completely out of their element and involve them in a romantic comedy . They initially encountered difficulties finding a studio ; Working Title Films rejected their proposals , considering it unmarketable , but they eventually aligned with Participant Media , Imagination Abu Dhabi FZ , and Blueprint Pictures .

= = = Casting = = =

To helm the project , the producers Broadbent and Czernin approached John Madden , who was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Director for Shakespeare in Love in 1998 . Madden considered the characters in The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel to be of " an analogous kind of geographical suspension " , which have " entered a strange world removed from their former reality , cut off from their past , where they have to invent a new life for themselves " . Dench and fellow cast members Maggie Smith , Penelope Wilton , Celia Imrie , Bill Nighy , Ronald Pickup , Tom Wilkinson , and director John Madden jumped at the opportunity to all work together for the first time in one film . Producer Broadbent considers Dench 's character to be central to the story , and that Evelyn is much like Dench herself , being " the most wonderfully sympathetic person " . John Madden

considers Maggie Smith 's character Muriel to be " instinctively xenophobic , never stepping out of her comfort zone in any way " , which is not uncommon in England .

The filmmakers determined early on that the role of Sonny was crucial to the outcome of the picture , and they selected Dev Patel , who at the time was still revelling in the success of Slumdog Millionaire . Dench described Patel as a " born comedian " , and Madden considered him to be a " comic natural ? a sort of Jacques Tati figure , with amazing physical presence and fantastic instincts " . Patel had personal experience of watching the elderly through his mother who had been a carer , and he was " enticed by how vivid these characters are , by their sarcasm and their wisdom " , confessing that he " fell in love with the script because every character shines in his or her own different way and you believe in each of them . " Lilette Dubey was cast as Sonny 's mother , and English @-@ language debutante Tina Desai portrayed Sunaina , Sonny 's call @-@ centre @-@ operator girlfriend .

= = = Filming = = =

Principal photography began on 10 October 2010 in India . Most of the filming took place in the Indian state of Rajasthan , including the cities of Jaipur and Udaipur . In Jaipur , filming took place around the City Palace , the Marigold market , and on crowded buses . Other scenes were shot in Kishangarh , and on the outskirts of Jaipur , footage was shot at Kanota Fort , which stood in for the Viceroy Club . The place where Sonny and Sunaina meet in the film was shot nearby at the Step Well near Amer Fort , a 10th @-@ century establishment noted for its " ten stories of pale golden stone steps . " Ravla Khempur was chosen as the site for the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel ; it is an equestrian hotel that was originally the palace of a tribal chieftain , located about an hour and a half outside of Udaipur in the village of Khempur . Madden considered the building to have a magical quality and unmistakable charm , remarking that it had " something special that could ultimately draw the characters in . It had these wonderful cool dark interiors , with glimpses of saturated light and the teeming life outside its walls . " Production designer Alan MacDonald , who won Best Art Direction in a Contemporary Film from the Art Directors Guild for his work , was brought in to embellish the interiors , intentionally making it clash with " interesting furniture inspired by colonial India , mismatched local textiles , all mixed together with modern plastic bits and pieces , with everything distressed and weather beaten . " Footage was also shot at the Lake Palace Hotel at Lake Pichola .

Madden said that challenges of filming in India included the street noise , as well as the people 's curiosity and hospitality when they saw him producing a camera . The cast and crew were well received by the locals , as was the director who , along with the cast , was invited by Arvind Singh Mewar , the Maharaja of Udaipur , to attend his lavish Diwali celebrations and firework display , as well as attend a royal wedding held at the Rambagh Palace Hotel in Jaipur . Chris Gill was the editor of the picture .

A sequel , The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel , began production in India in January 2014 and was released in February 2015 . Most of the cast returned , with additions including American actor Richard Gere .

= = Soundtrack = =

The soundtrack , composed by Thomas Newman , was released in the CD format in 2012 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Box office = = =

The film was first shown at the Italian cinema trade show Le Giornate Professionali di Cinema (" The Professional Days of Cinema ") in Sorrento on 30 November 2011 and at the Glasgow Film

Festival on 17 February 2012 , before being released widely in the United Kingdom and Ireland on 24 February 2012 . This was followed by release in a further 26 countries in March and April . From May to August , more and more nations saw the release of the film , before Japan 's February 2013 release capped off the film 's theatrical debut calendar .

In the United Kingdom , The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel came in second to The Woman in Black at the box office during its first week , earning £ 2 @. @ 2 million . It eventually topped the UK box office , with £ 2 @. @ 3 million , in its second weekend on release . By the end of its UK run , the film had grossed around US \$ 31 million . Prior to its United States debut , the comedy had already grossed US \$ 69 million worldwide and passed both The Queen (2006) and Calendar Girls (2003) in total international grosses . After three months of release , it was ranked the third highest @- @ grossing 2012 release in Australia and New Zealand , behind only The Avengers and The Hunger Games , and the fourth @- @ highest @- @ grossing 2012 title in the UK .

In the US and Canada , the film initially opened in 16 theatres in its first week . In its second week of release , it expanded from 16 to 178 screens in North America and grossed US \$ 2 @. @ 7 million for the weekend , ending eighth on the week 's top hits . By the end of the month , Best Exotic Marigold Hotel had grossed US \$ 100 million worldwide . The film had a worldwide gross of US \$ 136 @, @ 836 @, @ 156 . It ranks among the highest @- @ grossing international films released by Fox Searchlight Pictures behind Black Swan (2010) , The Full Monty (1997) , and The Descendants (2011) , and among the highest @- @ grossing specialty releases of the year along with Moonrise Kingdom and To Rome with Love .

Elsewhere , The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel took in less than 58 million USD . Nations contributing sizable box office returns aside from the UK and North America included Australia (21 @. @ 2 million USD) , Germany (6 million USD) , New Zealand (4 @. @ 4 million USD) , Spain (4 @. @ 3 million USD) , France (1 @. @ 9 million USD) , Sweden (1 @. @ 3 million USD) , Italy (1 @. @ 1 million USD) , South Africa (1 million USD) , and Norway (797 thousand USD) .

= = = Reception = = =

The film received positive reviews from critics . The review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes reported that 78 % of critics gave the film a positive rating , based on 148 reviews , with an average score of 6 @. @ 6 / 10 . Its consensus states " The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel isn 't groundbreaking storytelling , but it 's a sweet story about the senior set featuring a top @- @ notch cast of veteran actors . " On Metacritic , which uses a normalized rating system , the film holds a 62 / 100 rating , based on 35 reviews , indicating " generally favourable reviews " .

Mick LaSalle of the San Francisco Chronicle remarked that the film was " a rare reminder from movies that the grand emotions are not only for the young and the middle @- @ aged " , citing it " too well made to be dismissed and contains too much truth to be scorned . " Roger Ebert , writing for the Chicago Sun @- @ Times , gave The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel three and a half out of four stars . He declared the film " a charming , funny and heartwarming movie [and] a smoothly crafted entertainment that makes good use of seven superb veterans . " Claudia Puig from USA Today called it " a refreshing , mature fairy tale with a top @- @ notch ensemble cast . " While she felt the film was " about 15 minutes too long " , she summarized it as " a delightful , droll and entertaining comedy of manners with an estimable cast " and an " ideal low @- @ tech alternative to the special @- @ effects laden " film projects of 2012 .

Peter Travers from Rolling Stone rated the comedy three out of four stars . He found that " with a lesser cast , the movie would be a lineup of TV @- @ movie clichés . But this is a cast that never makes a false move even when the script settles for formula . " Chicago Tribune critic Michael Phillips wrote that " as two @- @ hour tours go , The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel goes smoothly . " While he felt that the film focused on " pleasantly predictable story " , he noted that the project was one of those films which " are better off concentrating on a reassuring level of actorly craft [than] going easy on the surprises . "

Lisa Schwarzbaum of Entertainment Weekly graded the film with a ' B ? ' rating , summarizing it as a " lulling , happy @- @ face story of retirement @- @ age self @- @ renewal , set in a shimmering ,

weltering , jewel @-@ colored India " , and that it succeeded in selling " something safe and sweet , in a vivid foreign setting , to an underserved share of the moviegoing market . " Peter Bradshaw , writing for The Guardian , was more igneous in his 2 / 5 star review , saying that the film " needs a Stannah chairlift to get it up to any level of watchability , and it is not exactly concerned to do away with condescending stereotypes about old people , or Indian people of any age . " Noting the luminous , prolific resumes of the cast he noted " nothing in this insipid story does anything like justice to the cast 's combined potential . " He went on to opine that the film appeared " oddly like an Agatha Christie thriller with all the pasteboard characters , 2D backstories and foreign locale , but no murder . " In further negative reviews , critics from The Guardian and the blog Marshall and the Movies criticized the film for having a colonialist and orientalist point of view towards India .

= = = Accolades = = =

At the Cinema Scapes Awards , organised on the sidelines of the 2012 Mumbai Film Festival , the film was honoured with the Best International Film accolade for showcasing Indian filming locations . The film and its cast earned five nominations from the British Independent Film Awards .