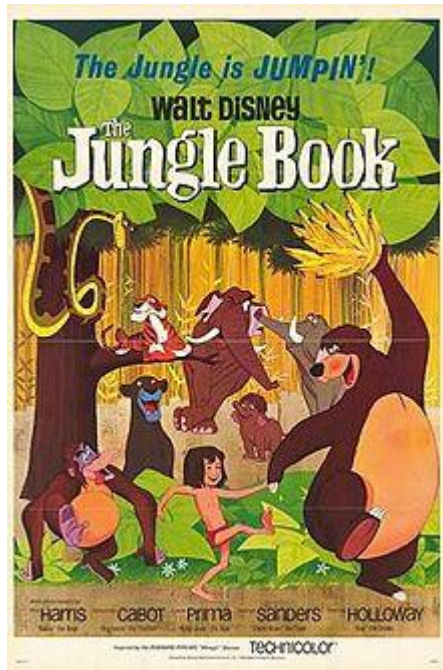


The Jungle Book (1967 film)

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The Jungle Book



Original theatrical release poster

Directed by	Wolfgang Reitherman
Produced by	Walt Disney Larry Clemmons Ralph Wright Ken Anderson
Screenplay by	Vance Gerry Floyd Norman (uncredited) ^[1] Bill Peet (uncredited) ^[2]
Based on	<i>The Jungle Book</i> by Rudyard Kipling
Narrated by	Sebastian Cabot Bruce Reitherman Phil Harris
Starring	Sebastian Cabot Louis Prima George Sanders Sterling Holloway George Bruns (Score) Terry Gilkyson Richard M. Sherman Robert B. Sherman (Songs)
Music by	Terry Gilkyson Richard M. Sherman Robert B. Sherman (Songs)
Studio	Walt Disney Productions
Distributed by	Buena Vista Distribution

Release date(s)	October 18, 1967
Running time	78 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English
Box office	\$205,843,612 ^[3]

The Jungle Book is a 1967 American [animated film](#) produced by [Walt Disney Productions](#). Released on October 18, 1967, it is the 19th animated feature in the [Walt Disney Animated Classics series](#). It was inspired by the stories about the [feral child Mowgli](#) from the book [of the same name](#) by [Rudyard Kipling](#). Directed by [Wolfgang Reitherman](#), it was the last to be produced by [Walt Disney](#), who died during its production.

The early versions of both the screenplay and the soundtrack followed Kipling's work more closely, with a dramatic, dark, and sinister tone which Disney did not want in his family film, leading to writer [Bill Peet](#) and composer [Terry Gilkyson](#) being replaced. The casting employed famous actors and musicians [Phil Harris](#), [Sebastian Cabot](#), [George Sanders](#) and [Louis Prima](#), as well as Disney regulars such as [Sterling Holloway](#), and the director's son, [Bruce Reitherman](#), as Mowgli. *The Jungle Book* was released to positive reception, with much acclaim to its soundtrack, featuring five songs by the [Sherman Brothers](#) and one by Gilkyson, "[The Bare Necessities](#)". The film grossed over \$73 million in the United States in its first release, and as much again from two re-releases.

After the film's success, Disney later released [a live-action remake](#) and a theatrical sequel, *[The Jungle Book 2](#)*.

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Plot

[Mowgli](#), a young [orphan](#) boy, is found in a basket in the deep jungles of [Madhya Pradesh, India](#). [Bagheera](#), a [black panther](#) who discovers the baby, promptly takes him to a mother [Indian Wolf](#) who has just had cubs. She raises him along with her own cubs and Mowgli soon becomes well acquainted with jungle life. Mowgli is shown ten years later, playing with his wolf siblings.

One night, when the wolf tribe learns that [Shere Khan](#), a man-eating [Bengal tiger](#), has returned to the jungle, they realize that Mowgli must be taken to the "man village" for his own safety. Bagheera volunteers to escort him back.

They leave that very night, but Mowgli is determined to stay in the jungle. He and Bagheera rest in a tree for the night, when [Kaa](#), a hungry [Indian Python](#), appears and hypnotizes Mowgli into a deep and peaceful sleep, traps him tightly in his coils and tries to devour him, but fails. The next morning, Mowgli tries to join the elephant patrol led by [Colonel Hathi](#) and his wife Winifred. Bagheera finds Mowgli and they argue which results in Bagheera leaving Mowgli on his own. Mowgli soon meets up with the laid-back, fun-loving [sloth bear Baloo](#), who shows Mowgli the fun of having a care-free life and promises to raise Mowgli himself and never take him back to the Man-Village.

Mowgli now wants to stay in the jungle more than ever. Shortly afterwards, Baloo is tricked and outsmarted by a gang of monkeys who kidnap Mowgli and take him to their leader, [King Louie](#) the [orangutan](#), who makes a deal with Mowgli that if he tells him the secret of making [fire](#) like a human, then he will make it so he can stay in the jungle. However, since he was not raised by humans, Mowgli does not know how to make fire. Mowgli is rescued from King Louie and his monkeys by Bagheera and Baloo just before King Louie's palace crumbles to the ground. Mowgli soon runs away from them after Baloo reluctantly explains that the man village is best for the boy and breaks his promise. As Baloo sets off on foot in search of Mowgli, Bagheera rallies the help of Hathi and his patrol to make a search party. However, Shere Khan himself, who was eavesdropping on Bagheera and Hathi's conversation, is now determined to hunt and kill Mowgli himself. Meanwhile, Mowgli has encountered Kaa once again in a different tree and the hungry python exacts his revenge by hypnotizing Mowgli again, and tries to eat him, but thanks to the intervention of the suspicious Shere Khan, Mowgli awakens again, tricks the snake again, and escapes.

As a storm gathers, a depressed Mowgli encounters a group of puckish but friendly vultures who closely resemble [The Beatles](#), and they agree to be his friends as they feel that they too are outcasts, and feel that everyone has to have friends. Shere Khan appears shortly after, scaring off the Vultures and confronting Mowgli. Baloo rushes to the rescue, and together they manage to get rid of the ruthless tiger. After lightning strikes a tree, Mowgli ties a flaming stick to Shere Khan's tail, as [pyrophobia](#) is his only fear.

Bagheera and Baloo take Mowgli to the edge of the Man-Village, but Mowgli is still hesitant to go there. His mind soon changes when he is smitten by a beautiful young girl from the village who is coming down by the riverside to fetch water. After noticing Mowgli, she "accidentally" drops her water pot, and Mowgli retrieves it for her and follows her into the man village. After Mowgli chooses to stay in the man village, Baloo and Bagheera decide to head home while singing a reprise of "[The Bare Necessities](#)".

Cast

Main article: [The Jungle Book characters](#)

- [Bruce Reitherman](#) as [Mowgli](#), an orphaned boy, commonly referred to as "man-cub" by the other characters.
- [Phil Harris](#) as [Baloo](#), a [sloth bear](#) who leads a carefree life and believes in letting the good things in life come by themselves.
- [Sebastian Cabot](#) as [Bagheera](#), a serious [black panther](#) (melanistic [leopard](#)) who is determined to take Mowgli back to the village and disapproves of Baloo's carefree approach to life.
- [Louis Prima](#) as [King Louie](#), an [ape](#) who wants to be a human, and offers to let Mowgli stay in the jungle (by bribing him with [bananas](#)) if Mowgli shows him the secret of "Man's Red Flower" (fire).
- [George Sanders](#) as [Shere Khan](#), an intelligent and sophisticated yet merciless [Bengal tiger](#) who wants to kill Mowgli.
- [Sterling Holloway](#) as [Kaa](#), an [Indian python](#) who also seeks Mowgli as prey, but comically fails each time he attempts to eat him.
- [J. Pat O'Malley](#) as [Colonel Hathi](#) the [Indian elephant](#)/Buzzie the [Vulture](#)
- [Verna Felton](#) as Winifred, Colonel Hathi's wife. It was Felton's last film role, with her dying one day before the death of [Walt Disney](#), during the film's production.
- [Clint Howard](#) as Junior, Colonel Hathi's son.
- [Chad Stuart](#) as Flaps the [Vulture](#)
- [Lord Tim Hudson](#) as Dizzie the [Vulture](#)
- [John Abbott](#) as [Akela](#) the [Indian Wolf](#)
- [Ben Wright](#) as Father Wolf
- [Darleen Carr](#) as Shanti
- [Leo De Lyon](#) as Flunkey the [Baboon](#)*
- [Hal Smith](#) as The Slob [Elephant](#)*
- [Ralph Wright](#) as The Gloomy [Elephant](#)*
- [Digby Wolfe](#) as Ziggy the [Vulture](#)*
- [Bill Skiles and Pete Henderson](#) as Monkeys*

Asterisks mark actors listed in the opening credits as "Additional Voices".^{[4][5] [6]}

Production

Development and writing

After *The Sword in the Stone* was released, storyman [Bill Peet](#) claimed to Walt Disney that "we [The animation department] can do more interesting animal characters" and suggested that [Rudyard Kipling](#)'s "*The Jungle Book*" would be used for the studio's next film.^[7] Walt agreed and Bill created an original treatment all by himself, with little supervision of Walt, as he had done with *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* and *The Sword in the Stone*. However, after the disappointing reaction to *The Sword in the Stone*, Walt Disney decided to become more involved in the story than he had been with the past two films,^[8] with his nephew [Roy Disney](#) saying that "[he] certainly influenced everything about it. (...) With *Jungle Book*, he obviously got hooked on the jungle and the characters that lived there."^[9]

Peet decided to follow closely the dramatic, dark, and sinister tone of Kipling's book, which is about the struggles between animals and man. However, the writer decided make the story

more straightforward, as the novel is very episodic, with Mowgli going back and forth from the jungle to the man village, and Peet felt that Mowgli returning to the man village should be the ending for the film. Following suggestions, Peet also created two original characters: Shanti, the human girl for which Mowgli falls, as the animators considered that falling in love would be the best excuse for Mowgli to leave the jungle; and Louie, king of the monkeys. Louie was less comical character, enslaving Mowgli trying to get the boy to teach him to make fire. The orangutan would also show a plot point borrowed from [The Second Jungle Book](#), gold and jewels under his ruins - after Mowgli got to the man village, a poacher would drag the boy back to the ruins in search for the treasure.^{[8][21]} Disney was not pleased with how the story was turning out, as he felt it was too dark for family viewing and insisted on script changes. Peet refused, and after a long argument, Peet left the Disney studio in January 1964.^[10]

Disney then assigned Larry Clemmons as his new writer and one of the four story men for the film, giving Clemmons a copy of Kipling's book, and telling him: "The first thing I want you to do is not to read it."^[8] Clemmons still looked at the novel, and thought it was too disjointed and without continuity, needing adaptations to fit a film script. Clemmons wanted to start [in media res](#), with some flashbacks afterwards, but then Disney said to focus on doing the storyline more straight - "Let's do the meat of the picture. Let's establish the characters. Let's have fun with it."^[11] Although much of Bill Peet's work was discarded, the personalities of the characters remained in the final film. This was because Disney felt that the story should be kept simple and that the characters should drive the story. Disney took an active role in the story meetings, acting out each role and helping to explore the emotions of the characters, help create gags and develop emotional sequences.^[8] Clemmons would write a rough script with an outline for most sequences. The story artists then discussed how to fill the scenes, including the comedic gags to employ.^{[11][12]} The script also tried to incorporate how the voice actors molded their characters and interacted with each other.^[13]

The Jungle Book also marks the last animated film from the company to have Walt's personal touches, before his death on December 15, 1966.^[14]

Casting

“ In *The Jungle Book* we tried to incorporate the personalities of the actors that do the voices into the cartoon characters, and we came up with something totally different. When Phil Harris did the voice of Baloo, he gave it a bubble of life. We didn't coach him, just let it happen. ”

—Wolfgang Reitherman^[13]

Many familiar voices inspired the animators in their creation of the characters^[8] and helped them shape their personalities.^[14] This use of familiar voices for key characters was a rarity in Disney's past films.^[8] The staff was shocked to hear that a wise cracking comedian, Phil Harris was going to be in a Kipling film. Disney suggested Harris after meeting him at a party.^[15] Harris improvised most of his lines, as he considered the scripted lines "didn't feel natural".^[7] After Harris was cast, [Disneyland Records](#) president Jimmy Johnson suggested Disney to get Louie Prima as King Louie, as he "felt that Louis would be great as [foil](#)".^[16] Walt also cast other famous actors such as George Sanders as Shere Khan and Sebastian Cabot as Bagheera. Additionally, he cast regular Disney voices such as Sterling Holloway as Kaa, J. Pat O'Malley as Colonel Hathi and Buzzie the Vulture and Verna Felton as Hathi's wife. This was her last film before she died.^[14] David Bailey was originally cast as Mowgli, but his voice changed during production, leading Bailey to not fit the "young innocence of Mowgli's character" which the producers were aiming at anymore. Thus director [Wolfgang Reitherman](#) cast his son [Bruce](#), who had just voiced [Christopher Robin](#) in [Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree](#). The animators shot footage of Bruce as a guide for the character's performance.^{[17][7]} Child actress [Darlene Carr](#) was going around singing in the studio when composers [Sherman Brothers](#) asked her to record a demo of Shanti's song "[My Own Home](#)". Carr's performance impressed Disney enough for him to cast her as Shanti.^[18]

In the original book, the vultures are grim and evil characters who feast on the dead. Disney lightened it up by having the vultures bearing a physical and vocal resemblance to [The Beatles](#), including the signature [mop-top haircut](#). It was also planned to have the members of the band to both voice the characters and sing their song, "[That's What Friends Are For](#)". However, scheduling conflicts, added to [John Lennon](#) reacting badly, lead to the idea being discarded.^[19] The casting of the vultures still brought a [British Invasion](#) musician, Chad Stuart of the duo [Chad & Jeremy](#).^[7] In earlier drafts of the scene the vultures had a near-sighted [Rhinoceros](#) friend named Rocky, who was to be voiced by [Frank Fontaine](#), however Walt decided to cut the character for feeling that the film had already much action with the monkeys and vultures.^[20]

Animation

While many of the later Disney feature films had animators being responsible for single characters, in *The Jungle Book* the animators were in charge of whole sequences, since many have characters interacting with one another. The animation was done by [xerography](#), with character design, lead by [Ken Anderson](#), employing rough, artistic edges in contrast to the round animals seen in productions such as [Dumbo](#).^[21] Anderson also decided to make Shere Khan resemble his voice actor, George Sanders.^[7] Backgrounds were hand-painted - with exception of the waterfall, mostly consisting of footage of the [Angel Falls](#) - and sometimes scenery was used in both foreground and bottom to create a notion of depth. Following one of Reitherman's trademarks of reusing animation of his previous films, the wolf cubs are based on dogs from *101 Dalmatians*. Animator [Milt Kahl](#) based Bagheera and Shere Kahn's movements on live-action felines, which he saw in two Disney productions, [A Tiger Walks](#) and the "Jungle Cat" episode of [True-Life Adventures](#).^[21] Baloo was also based on footage of bears, even incorporating the animal's penchant for scratching. Since Kaa has no limbs, its design received big expressive eyes, and parts of Kaa's body did the action that normally would be done with hands.^[22] The monkeys' dance during "[I Wan'na Be Like You](#)" was

partially inspired by a performance Louis Prima did with his band at Disney's soundstage to convince Walt Disney to cast him.^[7]

Music

Main article: [The Jungle Book \(soundtrack\)](#)

The instrumental music was written by [George Bruns](#) and orchestrated by Walter Sheets. Two of the cues were reused from previous Disney films. The scene where Mowgli wakes up after escaping King Louie used one of Bruns' themes for *[Sleeping Beauty](#)*; and the scene where Bagheera gives a eulogy to Baloo when he mistakenly thinks the bear was killed by Shere Khan used [Paul J. Smith](#)'s organ score from *[Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs](#)*.^[23]

The score features eight original songs: seven by the [Sherman Brothers](#) and one by [Terry Gilkyson](#). Longtime Disney collaborator Gilkyson was the first songwriter to bring several complete songs which followed the book closely but Walt Disney felt that his efforts were too dark. The only piece of Gilkyson's work which survived to the final film was his upbeat tune "[The Bare Necessities](#)", which was liked by the rest of the film crew. The Sherman Brothers were then brought in to do a complete rewrite.^[7] Disney asked the siblings if they had read Kipling's book and they replied that they had done so "a long, long time ago" and that they had also seen the [1942 version](#) by [Alexander Korda](#). Disney said the "nice, mysterious, heavy stuff" from both works was not what he aimed for, instead going for a "lightness, a Disney touch".^[24] Disney frequently brought the composers to the storyline sessions.^[7] He asked them to "find scary places and write fun songs" for their compositions^[23] that fit in with the story and advanced the plot instead of being interruptive.

Release and reception

Theatrical run

The Jungle Book was released in October 1967,^[8] just 10 months after Walt's death.^[14] Some copies were in a [double feature](#) with *[Charlie, the Lonesome Cougar](#)*.^[25] The film was a success, earning \$73 million in just its domestic release,^[14] mostly due to the popularity of its musical numbers.^[8] The film was re-released theatrically in North America three times, [1978](#), [1984](#), and [1990](#), and also in Europe throughout the 1980s.^[26] The total gross is \$141 million in the United States and \$205 million worldwide.^[3] The North American total, after [adjustments for inflation](#), is estimated to be the [29th highest grossing film of all time in the United States](#).^[27]

Home media

The Jungle Book was released in the United States on [VHS](#) in 1991 as part of the [Walt Disney Classics](#) product line, and in 1997 as part of the [Walt Disney Masterpiece Collection](#) for the film's 30th anniversary.^[26] A Limited Issue [DVD](#) was released by [Buena Vista Home Entertainment](#) in 1999.^[28] The film was released once again as a 2-disc [Platinum Edition](#) DVD on October 2, 2007 to commemorate its 40th anniversary.^[29] The Platinum DVD was put on [moratorium](#) in 2010.^[30]

Critical reception

The Jungle Book received an outpouring of positive reviews upon release, undoubtedly influenced by a nostalgic reaction to the passing of Walt.^[14] [Time](#) noted that the film strayed far from the Kipling stories, but "the result is thoroughly delightful...it is the happiest possible way to remember Walt Disney."^[14] [The New York Times](#) called in "a perfectly dandy cartoon feature,"^[25] and [Life](#) magazine referred to it as "the best thing of its kind since [Dumbo](#), another short, bright, unscary and blessedly uncultivated cartoon."^[31] Some negative reviews came from [Judith Crist](#), who said the film was "devoid of mood or atmosphere." [Variety](#)'s review was generally positive, but they stated that "the story development is restrained" and that younger audiences "may squirm at times."^[14]

Retrospective reviews were also positive, with the film's animation, characters and music receiving much praise throughout the years.^[32] In 1990, when the film had its last theatrical re-release, [Entertainment Weekly](#) considered that *The Jungle Book* "isn't a classic Walt Disney film on the order of, say, [Cinderella](#) or [Pinocchio](#), but it's one of Disney's liveliest and funniest",^[33] while [The Los Angeles Times](#) thought the film's crew was "near the height of their talents" and the resulting film "remains a high-spirited romp that will delight children--and parents weary of action films with body counts that exceed their box-office grosses."^[34] In 2010, [Empire](#) described the film as one that "gets pretty much everything right", regarding that the vibrant animation and catchy songs overcame the plot deficiencies.^[35]

Awards

The song "The Bare Necessities" was nominated for [Best Song](#) at the [40th Academy Awards](#), losing to "Talk to the Animals" from [Doctor Dolittle](#).^[36] [Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences](#) president [Gregory Peck](#) lobbied extensively for this film to be nominated for Best Picture, but was unsuccessful.^[35]

[American Film Institute](#) Lists

- [AFI's 100 Years...100 Movies](#) - Nominated
- [AFI's 100 Years...100 Songs](#):
 - "The Bare Necessities" - Nominated^[37]
 - "I Want to Be Like You" - Nominated^[37]
- [AFI's Greatest Movie Musicals](#) - Nominated^[38]
- [AFI's 10 Top 10](#) - Nominated Animated Film^[39]

Legacy

In 1968, Disneyland Records released the album *More Jungle Book*, an unofficial sequel also written by screenwriter Larry Simmons, which continued the story of the film, and included Phil Harris and Louis Prima voicing their film roles. In the record, Baloo (Harris) is missing Mowgli ([Ginny Tyler](#)), so he teams up with King Louie (Prima) and Bagheera ([Dal McKennon](#)) to take him from the man village.^[40] On February 14, 2003, [DisneyToon Studios](#) in [Australia](#) released a film sequel, *The Jungle Book 2*, in which Mowgli runs away from the man village to see his animal friends, unaware that Shere Khan is more determined to kill him than ever.

Elements of *The Jungle Book* were recycled in the later Disney feature film [Robin Hood](#) due to that film's limited budget, such as Baloo being inspiration for [Little John](#) (who not only

was a bear, but also voiced by Phil Harris). In particular, the dance sequence between Baloo and King Louie was simply [rotoscoped](#) for Little John and Lady Cluck's dance.^[41] It has been widely acclaimed by animators, with [Eric Goldberg](#) declaring *The Jungle Book* "boasts possibly the best character animation a studio has ever done". The animators of [Aladdin](#), [The Lion King](#) and [Lilo & Stitch](#) claimed to have taken some inspiration from the design and animation of the film, and four people involved with Disney's animations, director [Brad Bird](#) and animators [Andreas Deja](#), [Glen Keane](#) and Sergio Pablos, have declared the film to be their inspiration for entering the business.^[42]

Many characters appear in the 1990-91 animated series [TaleSpin](#).^[43] Between 1996 and 1998, the TV series [Jungle Cubs](#) told the stories of Baloo, Hahti, Bagheera, Louie, Kaa, and Shere Khan when they were children.^[44]

Disney later made a [live-action remake](#) of the film, which was more of a realistic [action-adventure film](#) with somewhat-more adult themes. The film, released in 1994, differs even more from the book than its animated counterpart, but was still a box-office success. In 1998, Disney released a [direct to video](#) film entitled [The Jungle Book: Mowgli's Story](#).

There are two video games based on the film: [The Jungle Book](#) was a [platformer](#) released in 1993-4 for [Master System](#), [Mega Drive](#), [Game Gear](#), [Super NES](#), [Game Boy](#) and [PC](#). A version for the [Game Boy Advance](#) was later released in 2003. [The Jungle Book Groove Party](#) was a [dance mat](#) game released in 2000 for [PlayStation](#) and [PlayStation 2](#). [Kaa](#) and [Shere Khan](#) have also made cameo appearances in another Disney video game, [Quackshot](#). A world based on the film was intended to appear more than once in the [Square Enix-Disney Kingdom Hearts](#) video game series, but was omitted both times, first in [the first game](#) because it featured a similar world based on [Tarzan](#),^[45] and second in [Kingdom Hearts: Birth by Sleep](#), presumably due to time constraints, although areas of the world are accessible via hacking codes in the latter.

Since the film's release, many of the film's characters appeared in [House of Mouse](#), [The Lion King 1½](#), [Who Framed Roger Rabbit](#), and [Aladdin and the King of Thieves](#).

An artwork by British artist [Banksy](#) featuring the jungle book characters which had been commissioned by [Greenpeace](#) to help raise awareness of deforestation has gone on sale for the sum of £80,000 pounds sterling.^[46]

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38. [^] [AFI's Greatest Movie Musicals Nominees](#)
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