

## Friends TV

Every few years or so, a situation comedy grabs the nation and even identifies a generation. The Friends TV show above all was genuinely funny but it also made us cry sometimes because we really cared about the characters. It launched the six regular cast members into the limelight, playing a group of friends who hung out together in New York. The actors became very close during the run, which was between 1994-2004. Monica (Courtney Cox Arquette), Rachel (Jennifer Aniston), Phoebe (Lisa Kudrow), Joey (Matt LeBlanc), Chandler (Matthew Perry) and Ross (David Schwimmer) all brought something different to the series and it was interesting to see their characters develop.

Other actors were keen to make guest appearances and included Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Noah Wyle and Charlie Sheen. Recurring roles also made a contribution to the success of the Friends TV show. Elliot Gould played Dad to Ross and Monica, Tom Selleck was Monica's boyfriend for a time, Hank Azaria was Phoebe's boyfriend before Paul Rudd came on the scene and married her. A lot of the storyline was taken up by the many complicated romantic entanglements. Problems at work too were skillfully given a comic slant. Snappy one-liners kept everything rolling along at a good pace.

The best thing about the show was that it was character led. Rachel was fun but a little spoiled, Phoebe was a hippie with a mysterious past, Monica was caring and a control freak, Joey was sweet and dim, Chandler was a commitment phobic, wise cracker and Ross was the intelligent one if a little pompous. The chemistry between them was there from the start. It was the perfect mix.

After ten years of making us laugh, the gang decided to drink their last coffee together at Central Perk. The actor's fortunes since the series ended have been mixed. They have all appeared in movies, with Aniston probably achieving the most success. She has also had to suffer the publicity of her high profile split from husband, Brad Pitt. Schwimmer runs a theater group and impressed with a performance in the World War II series, Band of Brothers. LeBlanc's movie career didn't really take off and he made the Friends TV spin off called Joey. Joey goes to live in Hollywood to pursue his career there and re-connect with his sister and nephew. LeBlanc gives his usual fine performance but the script was rather weak and the show was cancelled in May 2006.

There are constant rumors of a reunion but all six would have to agree. They have always said that the Friends TV series would not go on with any one regular member missing. Unless that group decision is made, fans will have to be content with just the re-runs.