

# ACJournalism

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## Top Ten must watch British Christmas films.

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With Christmas just around the corner, it is the perfect time to immerse yourself in the festive spirit. To help you feel more Christmassy during this period, I have curated a list of the top 10 British Christmas films that promise to bring joy and festivity to your day.

This Christmassy selection offers a mix of love stories, comedies, heartwarming animations and Christmas classics. So, whether you're wanting to relax by the fire to a timeless classic that transports you back to childhood or bring the family together and watch a children's animated tale, this list has something for everyone.

### 1. Love Actually (2003)

Of course, *Love Actually* had to be first, it's a classic and a must watch every Christmas. If you haven't watched *Love Actually* before then where have you been?! This film follows many different characters each with their own love story. From the Prime Minister (Hugh Grant) falling for his staff member Natalie (Martine McCutcheon) to Harry (Alan Rickman) trying to seduce his secretary while he's married to Karen (Emma Thompson), each storyline will have you hooked. If you aren't sobbing to the famous Emma Thompson scene, ifykyk, then you are heartless! There are many recognisable British faces in this movie, so you don't want to miss out on watching *Love Actually* this Christmas.

## 2. Arthur Christmas (2011)

A light-hearted, animated Christmas movie that follows the story of Arthur, the clumsy son of Santa Claus, as he embarks on a mission to deliver a forgotten present to a young girl called Gwen before she wakes up on Christmas day. With its blend of humour, adventure and festive spirit, *Arthur Christmas* is the perfect cosy watch for this festive period. Snuggle up with a hot chocolate and enjoy the adventure.

## 3. Bridget Jones Diary (2001)

While this classic may not be a traditional Christmas movie, it does start during the Christmas period and ends with a romantic kiss in the snow, encapsulating the festive spirit in its own special way. This film, starring Renee Zellweger as the chaotic yet relatable Bridget Jones, follows the journey of a single woman in her thirties navigating a midlife crisis. Initially, Bridget is lost and the best thing about her week involves fantasising over her hot boss, Daniel Cleaver (Hugh Grant). Eventually, Bridget attempts to turn her life around, she begins to improve herself image and is on the search for a lover. Bridget's love interests are the iconic British actors, Hugh Grant and Colin Firth, who also starred in Christmas rom-com *Love Actually*. Hugh Grant plays the hot boss, who is rather perverted in his ways, although he is physically attractive, he doesn't have the personality to match. Colin Firth plays the good guy, Mark Darcy, he is a well-educated lawyer who is both charming and kind toward Bridget. This film is a must watch during every season, however, make sure to add it to your Christmas view list.

## 4. Your Christmas or Mine? (2022)

This film follows young love birds Hayley (Cora Kirk), and James (Asa Butterfield) separate for Christmas, however last minute they equally decide to swap trains so they can surprise each other on Christmas. Later, when realisation hits and they attempt to go back home they realise they can't... This film also showcases some interesting twists with family secrets exposed and it highlights a quintessential British Christmas up North. If you enjoy this movie, then you're in luck as its prequel was released last year!

## 5. The Holiday (2006)

Another classic Christmas movie that I can only assume every British household has watched. The storyline follows Iris (Kate Winslet) and Amanda (Cameron Diaz) house swap for the holidays after their relationships end. Amanda visits Iris' quaint cottage in the countryside and ends up taking interest to Kate's brother Graham who is British heartthrob Jude Law. At the same time Iris makes herself at home in a Californian mansion. While she's there, she develops a heartwarming friendship with her elderly neighbour and has a holiday romance with heartbroken Miles (Jack Black).

## 6. Nativity (2009)

If you are British, you have definitely binge watched *Nativity* 1,2 and 3 each Christmas. They are the quintessential British Christmas movies that encapsulate the festive period during primary school. The first of three follows Mr Maddens (Martin Freeman) conduct his first nativity for St Bernadettes against their rivals Oakmoor. Mr Maddens is not alone as the hilarious Mr Poppy (Marc Wootton) is here to help or hinder their performance. The film sees Mr Maddens lie about his connections to Hollywood which creates utter chaos and hilarity. The entire movie is comical and the perfect British Christmas film for the lead up to Christmas.

## 7. Click and Collect (2018)

This holiday comedy is the perfect light-hearted watch to stick on this festive season. Stephen Merchant, who plays Andrew sets on a mission to save Christmas with his needy neighbour Dev in search of Sparklehoof the Unicorn Princess. The relationship between Andrew and Dev adds comedic value which will have you belly laughing for an hour. However, the storyline can be rather frustrating as you're left shouting at the TV, why didn't you just buy it the first time, it would've saved him the time and petrol! Secondly, the vending machine is a hard watch but also relatable as they are the worst made machines in history.

### 8. Last Christmas (2019)

This film stands out as the most relatable Christmas movie in the list due its coverage of a range of themes, including heart conditions, homelessness, family tension and romance. The story follows Kate, played by Emilia Clarke, a lost millennial struggling to find direction in her life.

After suffering a life-threatening illness that required a heart transplant, Kate's life has essentially become a mess. Her relationships are strained, especially with her mother, Petra (Emma Thompson) and her boss, Santa (Michelle Yeoh). While Kate's heart desires a career in music, she's currently stuck in a part time job at a Christmas store where she's required to dress as an elf, for the whole movie... However, Kate's life changes when she meets Tom (Henry Golding), a charming and caring individual who is Kate's polar opposite. Tom encourages Kate to delve back into her passions and give back to the world. This film culminates in a plot twist that, while surprising to some, was highly criticised by others for being spoiled by the trailer. Nevertheless, Last Christmas still makes the top 8 must watch British Christmas film list. With its blend of humour, heart, and relatability, *Last Christmas* offers a compelling and emotional holiday experience

### 9. That Christmas (2024)

The newly released *That Christmas* is one you should be adding to your watch list this Christmas. Set in a fictional seaside town, Wellington on Sea, this animated tale explores the lives of the children in town over the Christmas period. Firstly, we have Danny, who is forced to spend Christmas with his strict teacher as his mum is overworked with her job as a nurse. Danny also has a crush on Sam, and he is trying to navigate how to tell her this. However, Sam is too busy fretting over twin sister Charlie, who seems to be the 'naughty' to Charlie's 'nice'. Finally, the film follows, The McNutts, Forrests and Muljis. These three families, who are close friends, plan to spend Christmas together. However, all does not go to plan when a snowstorm blows over this quaint Suffolk town. The children are left stranded and are forced to spend Christmas day with no parents. Led by eldest Bernie, they decide to throw out all Christmas traditions and instead feast on dominos pizza and sweet treats. During the chaos of Christmas, the youngest Evie, goes missing. This leaves Bernie feeling very guilty, that without the presence of parents she's managed to ruin Christmas and lose her baby sister. Meanwhile, Danny and his teacher, Mrs Trapper, set out a plan to rescue the parents and bring them home before the day is over. With everyone finally home, Bernie begins a rescue mission and is dedicated to finding Evie. Eventually, with the help of everyone in town, Evie is reunited with her family, and everything is okay.

The movie culminates in a happy ending on Boxing Day, where the town gather again for a swim in the cold sea. This highlights the themes that appear throughout, of community that the town possess. This film was also written by Richard Curtis, who is no stranger to creating an amazing Christmas movie, with *Love Actually* also under his belt. This movie maintains a similar tone, with a focus on different families and people navigating through tough situations during the festive period, however *That Christmas* is tailored towards a much younger audience. Overall, this animated tale is a

festive and heartwarming film that is filled with comedic scenes, love and friendship which make it a must watch during the holiday season.

### **10. The Snowman (1982)**

This top 10 list, had to end with a classic Christmas film that regardless of your age, will always transport you back to the magic of childhood and ultimately make you feel like a kid at Christmas again. *The snowman*, adapted from Raymond Briggs' picture book, is a timeless animated tale that explores themes of childhood friendship, imagination and the idea that love and loss can appear at the same time.

The story follows a young boy named James, who builds a snowman that magically comes to life over night. Together, they embark on an adventure which involves, exploring James' house, taking a thrilling motorcycle ride, and eventually flying to the North Pole to meet Father Christmas. However, the film's poignant conclusion reminds us that all good things must come to an end. As the sun rises, the snowman melts away

What makes *The Snowman* even more unique is its silent narrative, relying solely on music to guide the audience through each scene. Overall, this classic animated film is a must-watch during this festive period, especially if you want to be reminded what its like to be a small child with a big imagination.