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Majestic movie theater

Big changes are brewing in the movie industry: Emerging digital technology is about to revolutionize studios as well as your local movie theater. Find out why Hollywood's going digital!By Tom HarrisIf you've ever seen an IMAX movie, you know it's not a typical film. It sometimes takes years to produce, resulting in an incredible unmatched viewing experience. Find out all about this amazing movie-making technology!By Marshall BrainSpielberg has said that sound is the major technological achievement of contemporary film. Indeed, much has changed since the first 'talkies,' when a musical score and a few bits of dialogue first made cinematic history.By Jeff TysonWhen you see the THX logo splashed across a movie screen, and hear the trademark Deep Note, you know that you are in for an audio feast. But what does that logo mean? Find out what THX is and why it improves your movie experience.By Jeff TysonWhen you sit down in a movie theater the screen is the center of attention. But have you ever walked up close and looked at it? Discover the intricacies of a movie screen and learn how to find the best seat in the house.By Jeff TysonWhen you see a movie in the theater, do you notice the projector? Without it, you'd be staring at a blank screen. Enter the projection booth and learn what it takes to show a movie.By Jeff Tyson As states begin to reopen, many Americans are seeking safe, affordable things to do. Movie theaters are a traditional staple of summer, offering a two-hour block of air-conditioned entertainment. A trip to the movies this summer is likely to be very different, starting with what you'll see on the big screen. Many studios have halted the release or production of what were supposed to be this year's summer blockbusters. Disney pushed the release date of "Mulan" back to August 21 as coronavirus cases rise, for example, and Warner Bros. postponed the release of Christopher Nolan's "Tenet" for the second time to August 12. Chains have also announced plans to limit capacity and encourage or require mask-wearing, among other precautions. AMC, the largest U.S. chain, originally announced that, when it reopens 450 theaters on July 30, viewers would not be required to wear masks, for example. After an outcry, the company reversed itself and said masks will be necessary. Viewers who don't have one can buy one for \$1 at the theater.Even so, infectious disease experts are still not sure going to a traditional movie theater is safe yet. "It's way too early to go back to movie theaters," says Dr. Ravina Kullar, an infectious disease specialist and epidemiologist at Expert Stewardship in Los Angeles. In response, some viewers are considering alternatives, and some businesses are seizing the opportunity: A new drive-in movie theater is opening in Brooklyn, but it's charging viewers \$55 per car (up to 7 passengers per car) and \$35 per motorcycle. Here's what you can expect if you do venture to a movie theater this summer, and some safer alternatives.One retro movie-watching option that has reemerged amid coronavirus concerns is the drive-in movie theater, where customers can view movies from the safety of their cars. In some areas, viewers can get that experience at a nominal cost: In Hockley, Texas, for example, the Showboat Drive-In is charging \$8 per person. In big cities, though, the situation is different. In Brooklyn, the new Skyline Drive-In NYC is now an option, but an expensive one, especially given that it's showing older films such as 1995's "Braveheart." Viewers can order food from food trucks on site. Pedestrians and bicyclists will be accommodated soon, according to the theater's website.In Chicago, the Chicago Drive-In is charging between \$30 and \$50 per car.There are about 315 drive-in movie theaters remaining in the United States, according to Drive In Movie.com, and most play older movies. Instead of releasing movies to theaters, some production companies have decided to release films directly onto streaming services and cable providers' on demand services, at price points of \$20-\$30. That trend was already emerging before the pandemic, but is now more appealing to customers who want to watch new movies from the safety of their own homes.For example, you can rent Judd Apatow's latest, "The King of Staten Island," for \$19.99 on Amazon Prime Video, whether you have an Amazon Prime subscription or not. In early June, Netflix distributed Spike Lee's new feature "Da 5 Bloods" for free to subscribers. It's way too early to go back to movie theaters.Dr. Ravina Kullarinfectious disease specialist and epidemiologistAMC will only fill theaters to 30% of capacity at first and eventually increase to 40% and 50% capacity, according to The Hollywood Reporter. Regal, which plans to start reopening July 10, is also requiring that viewers wear masks and capping capacity at 50%, according to a statement on the company website. Cinemark, which plans to have theaters reopened by July 17, is only "encouraging" masks, not requiring them, unless it is mandated by local health officials. The chain will also "have limited capacities that meet or exceed local ordinances and the seats adjacent to parties will be automatically blocked upon ticket purchase," according to a statement on the company's website. Because the amount of new releases is limited, some traditional theaters are playing older movies at a discounted price. In Dallas, Texas, for example, Cinemark 17 is playing 1999's "The Matrix" for \$5.Even though theaters will be opening back up, doctors urge caution. Theaters can be a "breeding ground for coronavirus," says Dr. Kullar. Even if theaters sell fewer tickets and keep viewers a few seats apart from one another, you're still indoors — where studies have found Covid-19 is more likely to spread. "You're in a closed environment," she says. "There is no ventilation system and you're stuck in an air situation that might be spreading the virus. That's why it's been a recommendation to stay in outdoor spaces if you do have people you want to get together with." If you live in a city that has an outdoor movie theater or a drive-in, those would be safer options, she says. Until cases go down, though, Kullar recommends holding off on visiting a movie theater: "Why would put yourself in a closed space and potentially risk contracting Covid-19?" More from Grow: Chances are, by this point in the Year of the Pandemic, you've had a lot of family movie nights. We've also had family movie afternoons and family movie Saturday mornings. Perhaps the novelty is wearing thin and what once was a fun weekly treat is now just another mundane, this-is-the-best-we-can-do sort of activity. In that case, it's time to turn your backyard into your family's own private movie theater experience.Evaluate your spaceBefore you start ordering equipment and getting the kids all excited, you first have to determine whether your outdoor space really is well-suited for a theater set-up. You certainly don't need three acres plus parking and a working snack stand, but you do need to make sure that wherever you set up, you've got access to outlets and space for a retractable projector screen—or some sort of DIY version of a screen, but we'll get back to that.You'll also want to think through the design of your outdoor theater—not just how it looks right now, in the middle of the day, but how it looks at night. Are there streetlights or lights on nearby homes that will throw a glare on your movie screen? Particularly if you're DIYing your screen, you'll want to make sure inconveniently placed outdoor lighting doesn't impede your view because the picture quality will already be inferior to a real screen.Buy—or make—a screenCan you buy (and potentially mount) a retractable movie screen? Sure you can! And you can find some that are not terribly expensive, depending on what size and style you go with. Here's the one our video team used above.But this is a lifehacker and money is tight right now, so we encourage you to make one. With a bed sheet. Or another smooth, white cloth. (It'll be fine.) How exactly you install or hang it will depend on the space you're using—so channel your inner MacGyver—but the main point is to get it as taut, wrinkle-free and movement-free as possible. Better yet? If you have a white garage door or a plain white wall of some kind on your property, that will probably work and you won't need to spend any money or craft anything.If you regularly tear the wrinkled sheets off your bed to use them as a makeshift projector screen, Read me!Score a projector and speakersYou need a projector that can be connected to your smartphone, laptop or game system. This one and this one were both recommended by Lifehacker readers. If you want to go even cheaper, you could look for a used option in your area. A projector with a built-in speaker is your best, easiest bet. If that's not an option, though, and you don't already have outdoor speakers, you'll need some kind of portable speakers or a pair of basic computer speakers. Connect the video signal from whatever device you're using to play the movie into the projector, and then connect the audio signal from the device with the speakers. (And don't blast those speakers unless you want to annoy the whole neighborhood.)Set your projector up on a small, sturdy table or chair, aim it at the screen, and move it forward or backward as needed to get the right picture size. Include the kids in the fun or get your own date night going in the backyard once they're in bed. Just pull up some chairs or throw down some blankets, pop some popcorn, crack open some beverages, and voila! It's movie time. Source: Thinkstock Following the success of Gone Girl and The Hunger Games: Mocking Jay (Part One), it's clear that movies based on books are hot commodities with built in audiences that practically guarantee box office returns. Here are a five adaptations in varying stages of development that are sure to please book lovers. 1. The Truth About the Harry Quebert Affair The novel is a fast-paced thriller originally published in France under the title La vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert. The story, however, is set in small town New Hampshire, a classic location for eerie murder mysteries. A little unorthodox as an international best seller that never quite made it to the list on this side of the Atlantic, the novel was optioned by Warner Brothers well before its lackluster U.S. release in May. According to Deadline, Ron Howard signed on to direct in April 2014. No release date has been set, but the novel is sure to pick up in popularity as news of this production reaches more ears. 2. A Wrinkle in Time Madeleine L'Engle's classic young adult fantasy novel has been in continuous publication since 1962 and is read widely by children to this day. This is the first true film adaptation of the novel which means that expectations are running high. According to Variety, Jennifer Lee (of Frozen fame) has replaced the original screenwriter and director, and the novel as one of her childhood favorites. With three more books in the "Time Quartet" series, this franchise is sure to attract a large moviegoing following when it finally does hit the big screen. 3. You Shall Know Our Velocity Dave Eggers has had film success as the screenwriter of Where the Wild Things Are and Away We Go, but he is first and foremost a prose writer. You Shall Know Our Velocity was his debut novel released in 2002 about two friends working to give away a large sum of money and running into trouble along the way. Interestingly enough, Eggers is not adapting his own novel for the screen. Instead, Wells Tower, another popular figure in the world of literary fiction, is writing the script, reports ComingSoon. 4. Struck By Genius This memoir written by Jason Padgett details the physical and mental changes the author underwent after suffering a traumatic brain injury. While nobody is quite ready to start thinking of Channing Tatum as a dramatic actor after his turn in comedies such as 22 Jump Street, he is set to produce and possibly star in this adaptation, reports The Hollywood Reporter. Non-fiction remains one of the most popular categories of literature in the United States, and this story in which a tragedy turns a man into a genius is bound to satisfy our urge to see someone overcome nearly insurmountable odds. Source: Getty Images/ Bryan Bedder 5. The Snowden Files Based on two books, this film appears to be a blend between the findings of journalist Luke Harding in The Snowden Files: The Inside Story of the World's Most Wanted Man and a novel by Snowden's lawyer, Anatoly Kucherenka: Time of the Octopus. Unsurprisingly, Oliver Stone is taking the job of writer and director. He has already referred to the novel he will be adapting as a "chilling, prescient horror story" in a statement, reports THR. The film promises to dramatize one of the most controversial events in recent history and puts itself into conversation with recent films seeking to reframe history (Algo and Kill The Messenger to name a few). More from Entertainment Cheat Sheet: In the 1920s—back when people dressed up to see the latest Hollywood feature—movie palaces resembled cathedrals. They lured moviegoers with polished-marble foyers, ceilings glowing with tiny starlike lights, hand-painted murals, costumed ushers, and—the pièce de résistance—dramas unfolding on the screen like a cast spell Unfortunately, many of the world's grandest movie palaces have gone the way of silent films—nobody's making them anymore, and very few have survived in the era of TiVo and Netflix. Luckily, though, there are still a few operating vintage movie houses scattered around the globe—some in some very unlikely places.Many still-in-business movie palaces have stayed competitive by keeping their vintage eye-candy interiors but adopting today's must-have technology (including digital surround-sound speakers, gynormous screens, and blizzard-cold air-conditioning). Others have expanded their repertoires to include more than just movies: for example, at Le Grand Rex, a glamorous Mediterranean-themed theater in Paris, film screenings alternate with a calendar of concerts by famed performers (Bob Dylan and Björk among them).What's wonderful about old theaters, says Mike McMenamin, co-owner of a handful of palace theaters in the American northwest, is that, as well as giving moviegoers a taste of old-school grandeur, each venue has a unique history. "Often the stories of the theater can eclipse the stories on screen," he says. At his Bagdad Theater & Pub, in Portland, Oregon, those stories include a lavish 1927 grand opening, where Carl Lamall, then president of Universal Studios, brought a live camel to accompany him on the red carpet.A battered economy may leave many palace theaters struggling, but it's worth noting that even in the poorest days of the Great Depression, 60 to 80 million Americans continued going to movies regularly. "At that moment in American cultural history," says Ross Melnick, cofounder of theater-tracking organization Cinema Treasures, "we viewed entertainment and the news together every week—not five times a year (the current average movie attendance today)."Founded in 1999, Cinema Treasures has a Web site that lists 23,000 vintage theaters (hundreds demolished, but many still aglow) in more than 175 countries. Melnick's organization and others like it are fighting to keep palace theaters up and running, but regular ticket buyers are equally—if not more—important. True, a film may look the same at the chain theater down the street, but there's something about settling into a velvetreen seat, in the same place where a generation first laughed at Chaplin's madcap antics or shed a tear during Casablanca, that gives palace theaters a starring role. Credit: Courtesy of Tuschinski Theater Original Debut: Abraham Tuschinski had led a life worthy of its own feature film by the time he opened his theater in 1921. After emigrating from Poland en route to America, the impoverished Jewish tailor was swept up in Amsterdam's cinema scene and eventually managed to open the grandest theater the city had ever seen (with lavish Art Deco interiors, Moorish side suites, and even a cabaret). Although Tuschinski was subsequently killed during the Nazi regime, his namesake vision lives on Now Showing: With 933 seats and 24 private boxes (or "loveseats"), the Tuschinski is the largest cinema in the Netherlands. It has undergone star-worthy renovations in the last few decades—a new carpet was flown in from Morocco to the tune of \$100,000; original murals have been restored to glory. Now owned by mega-movie distributor Pathé, it shows the latest films and hosts red-carpet premieres. Lovebirds (or even likebirds) who book a private box are supplied with a bottle of champagne. Advertisement Advertisement Credit: Courtesy of Astor Theater Original Debut: Though local residents complained to the press that the new movie theater would be built "too close to churches" and that "such a noisy, showy place of entertainment would detract from the dignity and charm" of the area, the Astor Theater first lifted its curtain to a packed house on April 3, 1936. Its Art Deco interior, with a stepped ceiling and steel chevron-patterned friezes, survives as homage to a glamorous bygone era.Now Showing: Double features, both new and old, regularly take the stage here—you might catch both The Curious Case of Benjamin Button and a sanguine Grace Kelly in Rear Window for less than a ticket to the multiplex. Patrons with a sweet tooth swear by the Astor Choc Ice, a coconut and pecan-topped dark chocolate ice cream made on the premises since 1983. Credit: © Kelly-Mooney Photography/Corbis Original Debut: Unveiled in 1932 by Hungarian architect L. E. Hudec (responsible for more than 60 Shanghai landmarks), Grand Cinema had Art Deco flourishes, a glistening three-tiered roof shaped like a water lily, and—unfortunately for the warm-blooded—no inner cooling system. Despite its showing of first-rate American films, audiences couldn't bear the heat until 1941, when central air-conditioning was installed.Now Showing: Grand Cinema reopened just after 2009's Chinese New Year with a smattering of renovations—most notably a new garden-topped roof, where patrons can pull up a chair at the terrace café with a bird's-eye view of the People's Square (a green-swathed space that's a welcome break from the charcoal-gray city skyline). Not a bad place to discuss the latest blockbuster. Advertisement Credit: © Archives Grand Rex/Etoiles du Rex Original Debut: When the king of theaters broke ground in 1931, with a whopping 3,300 seats and a John Ebersson-designed interior, patrons were dazzled by its potted palm trees, faux Venetian monuments, and a ceiling that shimmered with tiny starlike lights. On its opening night, it seemed everyone in Paris was seated inside—even on-duty nurses and policemen.Now Showing: Le Grand Rex still shows the latest flicks and film premieres, and some fairly big concerts have been staged here ('80s icons Morrissey and Grace Jones are both scheduled to perform this coming fall), but you can also catch festivals throughout the year. Every April, the Jules Verne Festival for adventure films makes a stopover here; and in late December there's the Fêteie des Eaux, or "water show," during which 1,200 jets of water are shot from onstage fountains to celebrate the latest family-friendly film premiere (in 2008, it was Madagascar 2). Credit: Liz Devine-McMenamins Original Debut: In 1927, Universal Studios spent \$100,000 (big bucks in those days) bankrolling the Bagdad Theater in Portland's Hawthorne District. It was a lavish ode to the former Ottoman Empire—with intricate Middle Eastern architectural flourishes, a bubbling central fountain, and usherettes in Arabian-style outfits.Now Showing: Mike and Brian McMenamin, two Oregon-bred brothers with a yen for turning historical buildings into hip hotels and pubs, bought the Bagdad in 1991 and reddid it in their own artful way. Though they retained the Alhambra-style Middle Eastern architecture, they upped the ante by adding murals of mythical creatures, gleaming ceilings, mosaics, and seat-front tables where patrons can enjoy a menu of pub fare (the spicy mac 'n' cheese is a favorite) along with pints of Bagdad Ale, a lager on tap in the on-site bar. Credit: Paul van Yperen/Truus, Bob & Jan Too! Original Debut: Home to a fading vaudeville scene when it opened in 1913, the Imperial became a movie house in 1934 when it was leased to Leo Ernest Ouimet (owner of the Ouimetoscope, the first movie theater in Canada). The interior was known for its "Greek tragedy" theme, with white marble columns and frescoes of canoodling nymphs and satyrs.Now Showing: For the past 19 years, the Centre Cinéma Imperial has hosted the annual Montreal World Film Festival, where movies from more than 70 countries are shown every summer (Gus Van Sant's Drugstore Cowboy and Quentin Tarantino's Reservoir Dogs both premiered here; more recently, so did the 2009 Oscar-winning foreign film Departures). The building's original bones are still intact, but the interiors have been restructured: now the theater has 819 plush red armchairs imported from Europe and top-notch technical equipment including a 12,800-watt, 7-channel sound system (with 60 speakers) and LED sound pickups. Advertisement Advertisement Credit: © Wendy Connett / Alamy Original Debut: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—the studio behind The Wizard of Oz, Ben-Hur, and the lion that roars before every feature—built the Metro Cinema in 1938. Thomas Lamb designed the building, which had all the accoutrements of stateside versions: a marble Art Deco foyer; murals done by local art students; and pink-and-red-hued floors, walls, and ceilings.Now Showing: The theater is currently owned by BIG Cinemas, the largest movie theater chain in India (20 million people are expected to watch a film there this year). Known for its Bollywood bent, the building has been updated and remodeled, mostly keeping its 1930s inspiration (though not in the restrooms, where LCD screens flash the latest trailers and film trivia). Credit: © Sherwin Crasto/Reuters/Corbis Original Debut: Built in 1921 by Chua Cheng Bok, a Chinese immigrant who'd worked himself to riches in the Malaysian tin mines, the Art Deco-style theater had an interior meant to mimic the design of a Roman coliseum, with 828 seats and an overhanging balcony known as the "first class" section.Now Showing: Bollywood films are rife here and so well attended that in 2006, when the Malaysian government announced plans to turn the Coliseum Theater into a cultural center, outcry from the public nipped the idea solidly in the bud. According to Sofie Abu, manager of the theater, despite the proliferation of nearby Cineplexes playing Western movies, the Coliseum (which has a lemon-candy stall and a florist shop in its lobby) is still the number one theater in Malaysia. Original Debut: The Art Deco-style, 255-seat Phoenix originally opened as the East Finchley Picturedrome, with the tagline, "the world's finest picture plays." It has shown films nonstop ever since, even during WWII, when it was used as a makeshift home for evacuees from coastal towns (among them were 80 schoolchildren, whom county inspectors were aghest to find filling the front rows for a screening of a horror movie).Now Showing: Owned by a North London charitable trust, the Phoenix shows independent films and the occasional classic (1963's Le Mépris, featuring Brigitte Bardot, is forthcoming). The concession stall serves locally baked lemon-poppysseed cakes; and in-house projectionist Peter Bayley, who's worked in the theater since 1960, recently received an MBE (Members of the Order of the British Empire) for his service to the film industry. Advertisement Original Debut: In 1927, theater developer Sid Grauman set out to do no less than create the most opulent movie palace the world had ever known. America's fascination with the Orient led him to adopt a Chinese theme, with authentic temple bells and pagodas imported from the country itself and a 90-foot-high entryway guarded by a giant hand-carved dragon.Now Showing: Some four million annual visitors still come to pay their respects to the theater's glitzy Chinese statuary, copper-topped turrets, and infamous Walk of Fame (where Marilyn Monroe's delicate pump-prints, Brad Pitt's handprints, and scores of others are preserved in the cement outside). Its iconic status makes it a shoo-in for film premieres (He's Just Not That Into You, The Wrestler, and Che all had their first showings there).

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