

Parks' Godzilla Viewing Guide

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Preface and Objective

Thank you so much for your interest in Parker's work and a franchise that he holds dear! The goal of this document is to provide the most concise, educational, and satisfying viewing sequence of Godzilla media. With 38 official movies released over eighty years (not to mention many notable fan projects), the aim is to cut seventy hours of screentime into a more digestible package. This will need to not only appeal to hardcore fans who have enjoyed these films already, but more importantly, the approach will need to aid the uninitiated by providing all relevant and crucial information required for truly appreciating the King of the Monsters. This is an incredible undertaking which many have tried and failed before, but per the usual, Parker will not fail.

To achieve this end, this document is structured to be easy to follow while not skimping on any details. The watch order will be separated into Acts which will have Intermissions in between them. Each Act will cover an "Era" of Godzilla history as commonly defined by the fan community. To be perfectly clear: the goal is to not watch every Godzilla movie, but rather, the Acts will guide you through which movies you should watch while providing recaps of information missed from movies that you should not watch. For each movie that you should watch, there will be a brief description outlining why said movie is so relevant and important to the franchise. Each Intermission will be themed around shorter form fan content that will help contextualize the cultural relevance of the previous act. While the Acts will be presented in the order in which the films were released, the Intermissions will pull from content across any point in history.

While these efforts will significantly reduce your workload when it comes to tackling this monstrous amount of content, this still represents a time commitment of about thirty hours. For scale, this is what you would expect in about three seasons of an American television show. Runtimes will be included throughout for your convenience, but it is Parker's recommendation to watch this with a loved one over the course of about two to three weeks; this allows for plenty of time to watch without burnout while keeping all the information top of mind along the way. It is also recommended that you go through this with a Godzilla expert to help with any questions that may arise. If only you knew one.

Watch Order Structure

Act/Intermission: Title

Dates (Not Included in Intermissions)

Description

Movie You Will Watch

Year of Release ~ Runtime (Preferred Language Settings if Applicable)

Description of Relevance Meant to be Read Before You Watch (so no spoilers)

Movie Poster Here

Movie You Will Not Watch

Year of Release

-Description of Important Detail Summarized (likely multiple bullets each)

Parks' Watch Order

ACT I: Showa Era

1954 – 1975

Godzilla is born as a coping mechanism for Japan's World War II devastation but evolves into a heroic icon fully unrecognizable from his dark origins

Gojira

1954 ~ 1.5 Hours (Japanese Version with English Subtitles)

Godzilla's genesis acts as a true horror film, depicting the kaiju as an aftershock of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan during WWII. This legendary picture by Toho of Japan is part of every film buff's criterion collection as it is the universally praised masterpiece that kicked off a worldwide phenomenon. Please note that there was an English recut/dub that offers the perspective of an American reporter, but it detracts from the narrative.



Godzilla Raids Again

1955

- Godzilla returns after death; establishes recurring theme of invincibility/force of nature
- Capitalizes on the original's appeal with two monsters this time
- Angirus becomes the first monster to fight Godzilla; only depiction of him as an antagonist

King Kong vs. Godzilla

1962

- Pretty much what it says on the tin; east versus west mentality
- Sets precedent for prioritizing spectacle at the expense of story for the Showa era
- First Godzilla film to be in color

Mothra vs. Godzilla

1964

- Mothra is introduced as Godzilla's most important co-star
- Mothra acts as a thematic and moral counterbalance to Godzilla
- Think feminine magic juxtaposed against masculine power

Ghidorah: The Three-Headed Monster

1964 ~ 1.5 Hours

Godzilla and Mothra are established as aligned forces along with Rodan. To round out the roster of franchise fundamental monsters, King Ghidorah is established as Godzilla's most important archrival. Batman has the Joker, Sonic has Dr. Eggman, and Godzilla has King Ghidorah. This film also cements the transition of Godzilla as a terrifying disaster to humanity's savior complete with his own alliance of heroes.



Invasion of Astro-Monster

1965

- King Ghidorah returns to further solidify his place as the “big bad” of the franchise
- Sets precedent for alien invasions to be common in these stories

Ebirah, Horror of the Deep

1966

- Godzilla's first showing as a true adventure protagonist
- Introduces Ebirah as a C-tier villain lobster monster

Son of Godzilla

1967

- Introduces Minilla, Godzilla's son that will continue to make appearances regardless of canon
- Widely panned as the first truly bad Godzilla movie

Destroy All Monsters

1968

- Precedent for Super Smash Bros. style kaiju cross over event
- Includes kaiju from non-Godzilla movies

All Monsters Attack

1969

- First film to be very clearly marketed toward kids rather than a broad audience
- Criticized for heavy usage of stock footage and scenes from earlier movies

Godzilla vs. Hedorah

1971 ~ 1.5 Hours

This film pulls Godzilla closer back to his roots in social commentary, but this time, the lens is put onto environmentalism. Hedorah makes their single yet fan favorite appearance as the embodiment of pollution. More than anything, this film shows just how far Toho is willing to experiment with Godzilla; this movie is straight up bizarre.



Godzilla vs. Gigan

1972

- Introduces Parks' goat: Gigan the alien super weapon
- Reinforces alien/supernatural themes over scientific ones

Godzilla vs. Megalon

1973 ~ 1.5 Hours

Godzilla is officially unrecognizable from his original cinematic incarnation. Megalon and Jet Jaguar join the roster to team up with Gigan and Godzilla respectively for what essentially a 90's WWE wrestling "match". More absurdity is sprinkled in (not to mention the single funniest technique in Godzilla's arsenal) to make this movie a medley of "it's so bad it's good". What's important to take away here is that Godzilla is not always meant to be taken seriously, but it doesn't mean this film is a flaw, it is a true feature.



Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla

1974

- Mechagodzilla is introduced as a foil to Godzilla and a fearsome recurring rival
- Worth mentioning that this is the only version of Mechagodzilla built by aliens, not humanity
- Also brings in King Caesar as another Mothra-esque guardian figure

Terror of Mechagodzilla

1975

- Titanosaurus, a new oceanic kaiju, joins Mechagodzilla as another threat to contend with
- Ends Showa on an appropriate note; we need to take Godzilla more seriously after this

INTERMISSION I: Return to Horror

Godzilla started as a fear-driven concept, and many fans try to reinvent the kaiju in a way that returns him to his truly terrifying roots

Man in the Suit (Episodes 1-3)

2023 ~ 0.5 Hours

This fan-made YouTube series takes us out of the world of Godzilla and puts us in the shoes of the real-life Toho during the production of the first few movies when an inexplicable tragedy strikes. The first three episodes will give you the gist of how fans can recreate the OG Goji, but the series evolves throughout the Showa era with some seriously good analog horror scares.



ACT II: Heisei Era

1984 – 1995

Toho commits to a reboot continuity to tell a Godzilla epic that would set the quality precedent for decades to come

Godzilla 1985

1984

- Reboot sequel takes place directly after the original 1954 Gojira
- Returns Godzilla to a destructive and morally ambiguous monster
- Steps away from WWII aftershocks to the then current Cold War fears
- Ends with Godzilla trapped inside Mount Mihara and ready to strike in the next film

Godzilla vs. Biollante

1989 ~ 1.75 Hours

Heisei takes Godzilla more seriously as a pseudo-scientific organism hated by humanity, a vibe that will carry into future iterations. This results in humans attempting to understand Godzilla a little too closely, leading to a body-horror monstrosity and one of Godzilla's most fearsome opponents yet. More than anything, this film indicates just how different Heisei is from Showa in how much more seriously it approaches storytelling and combat.



Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah

1991

- Introduces the Godzillasaurus, a more grounded approach to Godzilla's origin story
- King Ghidorah is back to reclaim his rightful place as Godzilla's greatest foe
- Mecha King Ghidorah is also introduced as humans continue to innovate to fight Godzilla

Godzilla and Mothra: The Battle for Earth

1992

- Mothra also returns to Godzilla's side as a staunch ally
- Introduces Battr, Mothra's evil doppelganger
- Important precedent set: Godzilla continues to get stronger via mythological/nuclear upgrades
- Further cements Mothra as a friend to humanity with more magical and ecological origins

Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla II

1993 ~ 1.75 Hours

This film represents the Heisei status quo: humanity is using sci-fi weapons to fight Godzilla while he tries to defend his son: Baby Godzilla (a.k.a. Minilla). Rodan makes his proud return, but this is easily overshadowed by our first good look at Mechagodzilla, a villain so powerful it gives King Ghidorah a run for his money. It is worth mentioning that this movie is widely regarded to have the worst name in the franchise; this is the first time Mechagodzilla was fought in the Heisei era, and if you include the Showa era, this is the third time Mechagodzilla appeared.



Godzilla vs SpaceGodzilla

1994

- Godzilla cells accidentally get into space to create SpaceGodzilla, a crystalline doppelganger
- SpaceGodzilla tries to kill Minilla (who's a little older now), so Godzilla gives him the works
- Mechagodzilla is replaced by MOGUERA as humanity's new anti-Godzilla robot
- Fun fact: MOGUERA started as a non-Godzilla kaiju that was reinvented for this movie

Godzilla vs. Destoroyah

1995 ~ 1.75 Hours

This film is universally praised as one of the best in the entire franchise as it brings the Heisei era to a triumphant close. Without spoiling anything, this film manages to tie the story back to the very beginning of Godzilla while setting up a potential future. The stakes have never been higher as Godzilla's nuclear heart is on the verge of global meltdown while a new foe that acts as a perfect counter to Godzilla is out for Minilla's blood. This masterpiece does an excellent job of toeing the line between Godzilla's role as a tragic protector and monstrous beast of legend.



INTERMISSION II: Meanwhile in America

Americans have created their own interpretations and additions to the iconic Heisei story

Godzilla vs. Gigan Rex and Megalon Official Fan Films

2023 ~ 0.5 Hours

While Japan created Godzilla, American fans have proven to add valuable fire to the flame time and time again. This pair of fan films do two important things for the franchise. First, it shows Toho's willingness to work with fans in the modern age as it was picked up to be officially licensed and presented at Toho's yearly Godzilla Festival. Second, it brings Gigan and Megalon into the Heisei continuity, and I'll be damned if I am going to live a timeline without Gigan.



Godzilla vs. Basketball

1992/2025 ~ 0.5 Hours

While Japan created Godzilla, American fans have proven to add very weird and confusing angles to his character. This 2025 YouTube video comically chronicles the 1992 advertising campaign by Nike which put Godzilla up against his natural rival: two-time NBA all-star, Charles Barkely. Before you ask, Charles does not use churros to get them big ol' women from San Antonio to aid him in this battle.



ACT III: Millenium Era

1998 – 2004

Toho begins to loosen the grip on singular lines of continuity in favor of shorter stories that stretch Godzilla's character while still celebrating the end of Toho's major oversight

Godzilla

1998

- May very well be the worst movie of all time
- This is America's first attempt making an official movie using the Godzilla license
- Reboot where a monster that doesn't even look like Godzilla attacks New York City
- Toho bought the rights to this movie after the fact just so they could kill this Zilla on screen later

Godzilla 2000

1999

- Toho's official reboot to truly kick off this era
- Sets the precedent of being connected to only to the 1954 Gojira
- Introduces Orga, the alien kaiju obsessed with becoming Godzilla

Godzilla vs. Megaguirus

2000

- Another standalone continuity only tied to the original Gojira 1954
- Introduces Megaguirus, basically a stronger version of Battra
- Brings the concept of different dimensions to the franchise long before the MCU did

Godzilla, Mothra, and King Ghidorah: Giant Monsters All-Out Attack

2001 ~ 1.75 Hours

This is Toho's third attempt at a standalone sequel to Gojira 1954 this era, and as they say, third time's the charm. Godzilla is reinvented as a vengeful reincarnation of the victims of WWII, so we are back to a purely violent beast of post-war rage. Mothra and King Ghidorah are back, and while Mothra maintains her role as Earth's guardian, this is the first and only time King Ghidorah is shown to side with her as another protector of humans. This film encapsulates what Millenium is all about: keep the icons but rewrite the rules.



Godzilla Against Mechagodzilla

2002 ~ 1.5 Hours

This is widely regarded as the best film in Millenium. The widespread appeal is mostly due to one attribute: Kiryu, the third iteration of Mechagodzilla. This version of the character is far and away the most engaging and powerful it has ever been. Like the others, this film is also a rebooted sequel to the original 1954 Gojira much like Godzilla 1985 was back in Heisei. Combine all this with what is considered to be the absolute pinnacle of the trademark “suitmation” combat style, and you have what Godzilla is truly meant to be in the modern age.



Godzilla: Tokyo S.O.S.

2003

- Only movie of Millenium to be a direct sequel to the one before it
- Mothra joins the show to warn humans that using Godzilla's bones will lead to disaster
- Kiryu becomes fully self-aware and decides to end himself along with the new Godzilla
- Basically, the same movie as Godzilla Against Mechagodzilla but Mothra is here now

Godzilla: Final Wars

2004 ~ 2 Hours

For Godzilla's 50th birthday, Toho ends Millennium by throwing everything and the kitchen sink at the wall. Most every kaiju from across the franchise makes an appearance in some capacity acting as a celebration of all things Godzilla. This is the opposite of high cinema, but it is one last smash fest before the franchise's longest hiatus.



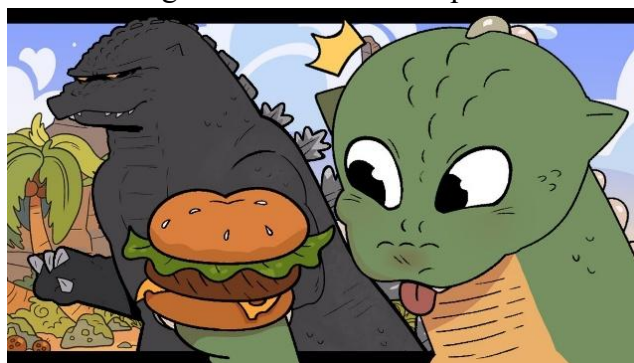
INTERMISSION III: American Fans Steal the Show

Japan stopped producing and licensing Godzilla movies for ten years, but America continued to celebrate the character while giving him a dose of modern theming

Tales from Monster Island: Godzilla Jr. Makes a Burger and Gigan's Big Score

2022 ~ 0.5 Hours

These cutesy animations present an alternate cartoon timeline where all the monsters we've come to know and love live on the fictional Monster Island where they get into endearing hijinks. The characterization of the monsters here is important as they show how the broader fan community have come to understand these characters, whether it be a self-absorbed Gigan or a drunk uncle SpaceGodzilla.



ACT IV: Reiwa Era

2014 – 2026

Toho lets the floodgates open for independent film makers to reinvent Godzilla resulting in five different timelines all with their own extremely unique wonders

Godzilla

2014

- America's second attempt at a Godzilla reboot starts the much-needed Renaissance
- Introduces the Mutos, kaiju who intend to reproduce to become the planet's dominant life
- Sends Godzilla back to his Showa roots of being a valiant yet destructive protector
- One of the greatest atomic breath scenes of all time

Shin Godzilla

2016 ~ 2 Hours (Japanese Version with English Subtitles)

The first Toho Godzilla film in 12 years is easily the best movie in the entire franchise. This is a completely standalone film not tied to any other before or after it. It takes the same approach as Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight*; what if Godzilla was real and attacked Japan today? This is far and away the scariest version of the King of the Monsters as well, taking him back to his horror roots from early Showa. Instead of being a reference to WWII trauma, this Godzilla maturely tackles commentary on Japan's current real-world issues: an ineffective and rigid government, subservience to the United States, and most notably, fallout from the 2011 ecological disaster which led to multiple and simultaneous nuclear reactor meltdowns. There is not enough praise that could be given to this movie; it even won Best Picture at the Japanese Academy Awards. Parker would be remiss not to mention that *Shin Godzilla* is home to the single greatest scene in any Godzilla movie ever (and possibly any movie ever), and there will be no spoilers for what that entails here, but damn.



Godzilla: Planet of the Monsters

2017

- The first official Godzilla anime was split into three parts
- Set in a post-apocalyptic Earth after a great kaiju war left Godzilla the only one left standing
- The largest Godzilla (over 1,000 feet tall) and modeled to look like more of a plant than animal
- The anime trilogy is known to be fairly low quality and get worse with each movie

Godzilla: City on the Edge of Battle

2018

- The second part of the Godzilla anime trilogy
- Shows a Mechagodzilla that reformed itself into a full-size city to try and counter Godzilla

Godzilla: The Planet Eater

2018

- The third and final part of the Godzilla anime trilogy
- King Ghidorah gets his most powerful iteration, acting as a multidimensional god

Godzilla: King of the Monsters

2019 ~ 2.25 Hours

When it comes to Godzilla movies made in America, this film by Legendary Pictures is the best. While this is an original take on the character, the movie acts as a love letter to Godzilla history, going as far to make his character a mix between his Showa and Heisei timelines. There are also plenty of references to Godzilla's adventures in Showa and Heisei as well, capped off with a scene that reminds everyone why he is the one and only King of the Monsters.



Godzilla vs. Kong

2021

- The sequel to Godzilla: King of the Monsters revitalizes this matchup from 1962
- Introduces a new Mechagodzilla, this time controlled by the spirit of King Ghidorah
- It is almost comical how little of a chance Kong has in this continuity's matchup

Godzilla Singular Point

2021 ~ 5.25 Hours

Godzilla's second anime takes the risk of being even more experimental than the first, and it pays off in spades. To say that this is the most powerful version of Godzilla would be an extreme understatement. Humanity is up against an interdimensional deity hellbent on a body count in the billions. This allows Singular Point to really dig into the series' sci-fi elements in a way it never could before.



Godzilla Minus One

2023 ~ 2 Hours (Japanese Version with English Subtitles)

This is another Toho produced Godzilla that stands alone as its own continuity. After robots, aliens, magic, time travel, superheroes, analog horror, cosmic mathematics, and Charles Barkley, we finally come back full circle to Japan dealing with the aftershocks of WWII to tackle themes of survivor's guilt and the indomitable human spirit. This film is notable for two reasons. First, this is the first Godzilla film to win an American Academy Award at the Oscars. Second and more importantly, this film is currently being developed into the next major timeline for Godzilla with its sequel, Minus Zero, coming in winter of 2026.

RYUNOSUKE KAMIKI MINAMI HAMABE YUKI YAMADA ALI NUTAKA AOKI HIROETAKA YOSHIOKA SAKURA ANDO KURAMONOSUKE SASAKI



Godzilla X Kong: The New Empire

2024

- The most recent American Godzilla film has him going full Showa mode
 - Kong and Godzilla must team up to fight kaiju from an ancient civilization within the Earth
 - Godzilla gets another power up that makes his atomic breath and dorsal plates a vibrant pink
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Want More Godzilla?

If you enjoyed the films enough to crave more Godzilla content, you are in luck! There is more than enough alternative media out there for even the most hardcore of fans. Below are some of Parker's favorite Godzilla ancillary media that will compliment any deep dive into the King of the Monsters.

Video Games

GigaBash

- Massive kaiju crossover fighting game with original characters
- Also includes most of the Godzilla staple monsters as well as kaiju from Gamera and Ultraman

Godzilla Destroy All Monsters Melee

- Legendary nostalgic Godzilla fighting game with insanely over the top destruction
- Originally released on GameCube 2002 but is getting a remaster in 2026 for all modern consoles/PC

Comics

Godzilla vs. Marvel

- The universe of Marvel Comics is sent into a tailspin as heroes and villains alike try to stop Godzilla
- Shows how powerful Godzilla really is by pitting him against some of the strongest characters in fiction

Godzilla in Hell

- Dante's Inferno is used as an inspiration for Godzilla's romp through the underworld
- Shows off Godzilla's strength while still remaining artistically esoteric

YouTube Videos

DEATH BATTLE!

- Decorated YouTube series takes two characters from different universes to see who would win in a fight
- There are two Godzilla episodes: vs. Gamera and vs. The Hulk

Shelter 54 Godzilla Found Footage

- Analog horror that takes inspirations from across Godzilla history
- A somehow more tragic retelling of one of Heisei's best stories

Why Mothra Remains the Queen of the Monsters

- Wonderful analysis of Mothra's importance to Godzilla and pop culture as a whole
- Discusses why Mothra is the true hero of the franchise

Godzilla NES: The Most Disturbing Creepypasta of All Time

- Deep dive into the first fan made Godzilla horror story
- You could always read the whole Creepypasta, but this video captures the tension perfectly

Vrahno

- YouTube channel dedicated entirely to SFM Godzilla comedy
- All videos are good, hard to go wrong with his stuff

Real World Locations

Hotel Gracery Shinjuku

- The official Godzilla Hotel and Gift Shop complete with kaiju theming in every room
- Features an eight-story tall Godzilla statue/animatronic

Godzilla Museum

- Largest collection of Godzilla memorabilia and production assets on a small island off the coast of Osaka
 - Statuette collection of every single monster seen in the franchise
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Final Thought

If you are reading this after the thirty hours of movies and maybe even some extra content, then congratulations! You are now a certified Godzilla fan and scholar. On a personal note, Godzilla has always been a character that means so much to me. I was introduced to him through a childhood friend that I lost too soon, and he has followed me as I have grown into the man I am today. In a way, I always saw a bit of myself in Godzilla's character, regardless of the era. I appreciate you going through this journey with me more than you can know, and I hope we get to go on many more! Love you, Trevor.

