

ROADSIDE READER



BEST ALL-TIME TRUCKIN' MOVIES
Cooler weather calls for firing up the DVD

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FEATURE



BEST ALL-TIME TRUCKIN' MOVIES

Buckle up for a wild ride!



"Smokey and the Bandit" encapsulates the spirit of rebellion, camaraderie, and the thrill of the open road. It remains a testament to the enduring appeal of trucker culture and the timeless joy of a good old-fashioned adventure. Whether you're a fan of action or comedy or simply looking for a fun, entertaining ride, this film delivers on all fronts, making it a must-see for audiences of all ages.

Released in 1977, "Smokey and the Bandit" is a classic action-comedy film directed by Hal Needham. Set against the backdrop of the American South, the movie takes audiences on a wild, high-speed journey that combines humor, adrenaline-pumping chases, and unforgettable characters.

The story centers around two truckers, Bo "Bandit" Darville (Burt Reynolds) and Cledus "Snowman" Snow (Jerry Reed), who are hired by wealthy Texan Big Enos Burdette (Pat

McCormick) and his son, Little Enos Burdette (Paul Williams), to illegally transport 400 cases of Coors beer from Texarkana, Texas, to Atlanta, Georgia. Why Coors? Selling the beer east of the Mississippi River at the time was illegal, making this a high-stakes adventure.

The catch? Bandit and Snowman must complete the mission in just 28 hours, all while avoiding the relentless pursuit of Sheriff Buford T. Justice (Jackie Gleason) and his dim-witted son, Junior (Mike Henry), who have made it their mission to catch the infamous Bandit.

As the two truckers embark on their daring journey, the film quickly establishes its infectious energy. Bandit's charming wit and Snowman's no-nonsense demeanor create a dynamic and endearing duo. Their camaraderie and witty banter are the movie's heart, forming a solid emotional core that resonates throughout the narrative.

Meanwhile, Sheriff Justice, a determined but somewhat comically inept lawman, sets out to apprehend the Bandit. Gleason's performance brings an unforgettable mix of bluster, frustration, and sheer determination, creating a hilarious and strangely endearing character.

The pursuit unfolds in a series of high-speed chases, narrow escapes, and clever tactics as the Bandit and Snowman skillfully outmaneuver the law enforcement, all while providing moments of uproarious comedy. Along the way, the duo encounter a host of colorful characters, including a runaway bride named Carrie (Sally Field), who joins them on their journey, adding a touch of romance to the high-octane adventure.

As the clock ticks down, tensions rise, and the stakes increase. The film's climax builds to a heart-pounding crescendo, with the Bandit and Snowman facing their biggest challenge yet.

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2. Convoy (1978)

Based on the C.W. McCall anthem, "Convoy" paints a vivid portrait of the camaraderie and solidarity among truckers in the face of oppressive authority. Kris Kristofferson stars as the rebellious "Rubber Duck," leading a massive convoy of truckers across the country, evading law enforcement at every turn. With its memorable theme song and powerful message of unity, "Convoy" remains a timeless classic.

3. Duel (1971)

Directed by Steven Spielberg, "Duel" is a masterclass in suspense and tension. Dennis Weaver plays David Mann, an ordinary man stalked by a mysterious and malevolent tanker truck on a deserted desert highway. With minimal dialogue, Spielberg creates a white-knuckle experience that keeps viewers on the edge of their seats. "Duel" showcases Spielberg's early genius and is a testament to the power of simplicity in storytelling.

4. Maximum Overdrive (1986)

While not a critical darling, "Maximum Overdrive" holds a special place in the hearts of many trucking movie aficionados. This cult classic, directed by Stephen King, combines horror and dark humor as machines, including a fleet of menacing big rigs, rebel against humanity. The over-the-top action and outrageous premise make "Maximum Overdrive" an entertaining and unforgettable entry.

5. Black Dog (1998)

"Black Dog" combines high-octane action with a compelling storyline. Patrick Swayze stars as Jack Crews, a former trucker turned ex-convict who reluctantly takes on a dangerous job transporting illegal weapons. As he races against time to deliver the cargo and protect his family, Crews faces intense challenges, including a rival trucker played by the formidable Meat Loaf. With its adrenaline-pumping sequences, "Black Dog" is a modern classic in the genre.

Honorable Mentions

White Line Fever (1975)

Starring Jan-Michael Vincent, "White Line Fever" delves into the world of independent truckers battling against corruption and organized crime in the trucking industry. This gritty film is a must-see for those seeking a dose of 70s-era trucking rebellion.

High-Ballin' (1978)

Peter Fonda and Jerry Reed team up in this action-packed film about two truckers taking on a powerful trucking magnate trying to control the independent drivers. "High-Ballin'" is a fun ride showcasing truckers' resilience and determination in the face of adversity.

Over the Top (1987)

While not strictly a truck-driving movie, "Over the Top" features Sylvester Stallone as a trucker who turns to arm wrestling competitions to win back his estranged son. The film's trucking elements and Stallone's iconic performance make it a noteworthy addition.



These movies offer a thrilling and diverse journey through the world of trucking on the silver screen. Whether it's the rebellious spirit of "Smokey and the Bandit" or the heart-pounding suspense of "Duel," each film captures a unique aspect of this iconic industry. So, grab your popcorn, buckle up, and prepare for a cinematic road trip you won't soon forget!

FUN FACT



Illinois produced the most pumpkins in the U.S. in 2021, followed by Indiana, California, Texas, and Michigan. Illinois's **651.9 million pounds** of pumpkins accounted for 39% of all the pumpkins produced in America.

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WHO'S HUNGRY?

Spicy Black Bean Chicken Enchiladas with Pumpkin Sour Cream Sauce

INGREDIENTS

For pumpkin sour cream sauce:

- 15-oz. can of pumpkin puree
- 14.5-oz. can of tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup low-fat sour cream
- 1/3 cup water or low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon red cayenne pepper
- Freshly ground salt and pepper, to taste

For filling:

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 white onion, diced
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2-3 cups cooked and shredded chicken breast
- 15-oz. can of black beans, rinsed and drained
- Freshly ground salt and pepper
- 12 soft corn tortillas
- 2 cups shredded Mexican or colby jack cheese

DIRECTIONS

- Make the pumpkin sour cream sauce: In your food processor or blender, combine pumpkin puree, tomato sauce, sour cream, water/broth, garlic, chili powder, cumin, and cayenne; puree until smooth. You can also do this in a large bowl. Taste and season with salt and pepper.
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 9x13 baking dish with non-stick cooking spray and add 3/4 cup of pumpkin sauce to the bottom; use a spatula to spread out evenly. Set pan aside.
- Place shredded chicken in a large bowl and add 3/4 cup of the pumpkin-sour cream sauce. Set aside.
- Next, make the filling: Heat a large non-stick pan over medium heat and add olive oil. Add onion, jalapeno, and minced garlic and cook for 3-5 minutes or until onions soften.
- Remove from heat and transfer into the bowl with the chicken, then add the black beans and 1 cup of the pumpkin sauce. Stir to coat the filling.
- Next, warm tortillas in the microwave for about 20 seconds so they are easier to roll. You can splash a little water before microwaving to make them more pliable. Then, place about 1/4 cup mixture on each tortilla. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of cheese in each tortilla. Roll each tortilla and place seam side down in the baking pan. Pour the remaining pumpkin sauce on top of all the tortillas, then sprinkle the remaining 1 1/4 cup cheese.
- Bake for 20-30 minutes until the cheese is melted and the edges of the tortillas begin to turn golden brown. Top with sour cream, avocado, or cilantro. Makes six servings – about two enchiladas each (12 total).



These healthy black bean pumpkin chicken enchiladas can be made one day ahead and placed covered in the fridge.

Simply bake for 10-15 minutes longer once you are ready to cook them. Easy!

Have leftovers? Warm up one for breakfast and throw a fried egg on top. No regrets.

CONTACT US

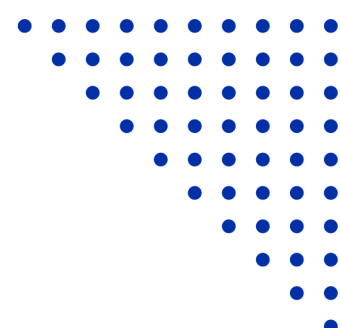
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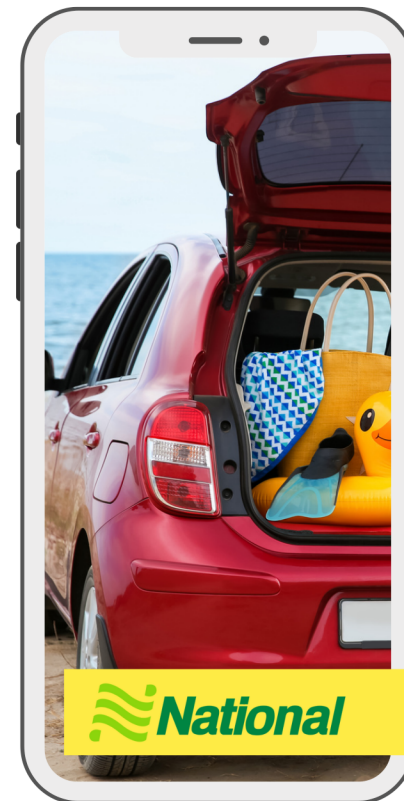
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