

# How to Create Your Own Drive-In Movie Theater at Home

Watch summer blockbusters and enjoy a socially-distanced summer evening with your neighbors.

By **Roxanna Coldiron** | August 13, 2020

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Stay-at-home orders don't mean that we can't be social with friends and family. Case in point: drive-in movie theaters. *The New York Times* reports that the estimated 305 drive-ins around the United States are experiencing a resurgence in response to the call for distance. But what if you're in one of the states without a theater nearby? Now is the perfect time to host your own socially distanced drive-in movie night from home; invite the neighborhood and others can enjoy the rest of summer with a few cinematic favorites.

To help you host a movie night of your own, we tapped Marley Majcher, CEO and founder of The Party Goddess, a high-end celebrity and corporate event planning and catering company, who shares some of her ideas.

Related: Host a Virtual Movie Night with Friends Using This Free Streaming Plug-In

## Set up technology for showtime.

Majcher says that you'll need to choose a movie (or several), have a means to show it, and somewhere to screencast it. Try a "wall, a real screen, even a sheet if you're going super retro," she says. You can use something like the inflatable outdoor movie screen by Gemmy Inflatable Diagonal Widescreen Air blown Deluxe Movie Screen (\$143, homedepot.com) or the TaoTronics Indoor/Outdoor 100-Inch Projector Screen (\$131, amazon.com) to get a large enough picture for everyone to watch it together.

Along with a screen, you'll need to have a projector. The Vankyo Leisure 3 Mini Projector (\$120, walmart.com) has 40,000 hours of LED lamp-life. Ohderii Mini Projector (\$99.99, amazon.com) comes at a lower price point, but can also be used to project movies onto an outdoor screen. You'll need an outdoor outlet or extension cord that can hook up your projector to a power source, as well as the right hookup cords for your device that holds the movies (VGA, HDMI, or USB). For sound, speakers are important. You can find a pair of outdoor all-weather speakers like this set from Yamaha (\$130, betsbuy.com). But if you want surround sound or are broadcasting across a large lawn, try the ION Audio Pathfinder Waterproof Rechargeable Speaker System (\$179, bhphotovideo.com). Depending on which speakers you get, you may be able to connect by Bluetooth or you may need an adapter or synchronize screen cable to make it work.

And if you want to keep it simple and make sure everything works together from the start, you can purchase outdoor home theater kits. For the ultimate package, the Backyard Theater Systems Indoor/Outdoor Theater Kit (\$1,499, amazon.com) has everything you need to get started.

## Map out plots to maintain proper distance.

To make sure that everyone can easily view the screen—and maintain a social distance of at least six feet—Majcher suggests creating properly spaced demarcation so that people know where to park or where to sit if it's a smaller gathering on the lawn.

You will also need to plan for restroom breaks. Guests may be able to go to their own homes for the restroom if they live nearby, but you'll want to plan for anyone who might be out of easy access. Majcher says to make sure to add clear signage about spacing and traffic flow for the bathroom. And for party favors, you can provide hand wipes and sanitizer as well as bug spray.

## Announce the movie schedule.

"A visible schedule is always fun," Majcher says, "especially if it notes an intermission for pit stops and snack refills." You can write on a large dry erase board like Staples' Standard Durable Melamine Dry-Erase Whiteboard (\$23, staples.com) or flash it periodically on the screen before the movie starts. It's also good to include the schedule in your invitations, which could be sent by Paperless Post. (And speaking of invitations, if you want to really make a splash, Majcher says to "have Ceci New York create some die-cut invitation wonder.")

Related: How to Host a Virtual Game Night

## Prepare a socially-distanced menu of snacks.

So, how can you provide food and snacks to your guests while keeping at a distance? Give it a nostalgic twist by serving movie treats on roller blades and make sure to wear a mask, Majcher says. "Flags for the guests [can be used] to raise or wave should a need arise," she says. "Food could be pick-up 'bento' boxes to eat outside or in the car. Anything involving a line should have space demarcations approximately six feet apart." For example, Majcher suggests using vinyl cut-outs as a great way to show guests where to stand and how to move through the line.

Make it even more memorable by hiring an ice cream truck. "Have an ice cream truck show up and park with flavors adapted to match the movie theme," Majcher says. It'll be a huge hit with everyone at the party—think peach sorbet for watching *James and the Giant Peach* or marshmallow pops that look similar to Olaf for *Frozen*.

If everyone keeps proper distance, sanitizes regularly, and wears masks when appropriate, you can host a fun and memorable drive-in movie experience.