

Dinner and a night at the Oscars!

Menu based on food movies sets stage for watching the awards

By Tracy Beard

Going to the movies is a favorite American pastime. Whether you love dramas, comedies, horror films, love stories, or foodie flicks, there seems to be something for everyone. In 2022, more than 15 million Americans watched the Oscars, the 94th Academy Awards Ceremony. This year, the Oscars will be on television March 12, 2023, at 5:00 pm PST.

All About the Oscars

Many people in the movie industry and viewers of the award ceremony consider the Oscars the most prestigious awards presented in the U.S. entertainment industry. Participants in the American film industry are awarded Oscars for artistic and technical merit. There are five main Oscar award categories: Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best Screenplay, original or adapted.

Top Foodie Movies

Unfortunately, this year no food-centric movies made it onto the Oscar nominee list. However, here is a list of some of the top food-centric films made over the last 52 years.

- Chef* (2014)
- The Lunchbox* (2014)
- Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* (2009)
- Julia & Julia* (2009)
- No Reservations* (2007)
- Ratatouille* (2007)
- Waitress* (2007)
- Last Holiday* (2006) A romantic comedy with great food
- Under the Tuscan Sun* (2003) A romantic comedy but also a foodie film
- Chocolat* (2000)
- Big Night* (1996)
- Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971)



Current Nominees

The Best Picture is the most important category to me, and the nominees this year are:

- All Quiet on the Western Front*
- Avatar: The Way of Water*
- The Banshees of Inisherin*
- Elvis*
- Everything Everywhere All at Once*
- The Fabelmans*
- TAR*
- Top Gun: Maverick*
- Triangle of Sadness*
- Women Talking*

Find the nominees for other categories at: <https://www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/2023>

Food and Movies

Most people love food, and many enjoy watching movies about food, so why not put the two together? This year, when watching the Oscars, enjoy a fabulous dinner created from famous food movie recipes.

In the movie *Last Holiday*, Queen Latifa plays the role of Georgia Bird, a woman that loves to cook but never eats the fruits of her labor. She idolizes Chef Emeril Lagasse, a famous chef in New Orleans. During the movie, she becomes convinced that she will die, so her outlook on life dramatically shifts.

I love this famous line in the movie. "Food, of course, is a metaphor for how to live: if you want to taste life in full, don't ask the "chef" to make any "substitutions" As Georgia (Queen Latifa) remarks, "You wait, and you wait for something big to happen in life, and then you find out you're gonna die." So, turn your "Book of Possibilities" into a "Book of Realities," pursue your dreams now, and live without regrets. This train of thought is a widespread message in Hollywood films, but *Last Holiday* gives it a delicious twist.



DELICIOUS DISHES FROM FAMOUS MOVIES

Creole Roasted Duck Hash en Croute – my version on crostini for six people

- 2 duck breasts
- 4 Tbl butter
- 1 duck liver, chopped
- 4 Tbl onion, finely chopped
- 1 Tbl orange zest
- 1 Tbl brandy
- 1 baguette – 6 large slices, cut at an angle
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tbl fresh parsley, chopped



Roast the duck breasts at 400°F for about 30 minutes or until 165 degrees internally. Set aside. Sauté the bacon, onions, duck livers, and orange rind in the butter. Add

brandy. Let this mixture cook for about 5 minutes over moderate heat. Skin the duck breasts and cut them into bite-size pieces. Mix with the sautéed ingredients and salt and pepper



Scene from *Last Holiday*.

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to taste. Drizzle baguette slices with olive oil and toast on a grill or under the broiler until golden brown on both sides. Top the baguette slices with duck hash and serve. Top with parsley.

Another of my favorite movies is *Under the Tuscan Sun*. The film, based on the book written by Frances Mayes, features many delicious Italian recipes. Here is one tasty recipe from her book. It is similar to a recipe I made while staying in Rome:

Eggplant Involtini – serves 8

- 3 Tbl extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for the parchment
- 1 large eggplant, cut lengthwise into 8 slices
- 1Tbl fresh oregano leaves or 1½ teaspoons dried
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- 1 28-ounce can of whole tomatoes, drained of most liquid, chopped
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 8 slices prosciutto
- 8 slices mozzarella
- 1 ounce (¼ cup) grated Parmigiano-Reggiano



Preheat the oven to 400°F. Oil a parchment-lined baking sheet pan. Place the eggplant slices on the pan and brush on both sides with 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Sprinkle with oregano, salt, and pepper. Bake for 10 minutes, turning once after 5 minutes.

While the eggplant is in the oven, make tomato sauce. Chop tomatoes in a food processor. In a medium skillet over medium heat, sauté the onion for 2 to 3 minutes in the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil, then add the garlic and sauté for another minute. Stir in the tomatoes and cook the mixture to blend the flavors. Cook for about 2 minutes.

Remove the eggplant from the oven. Lower the temperature to 350°F.

Place a slice of prosciutto and a slice of mozzarella on each slice of eggplant. Roll the pieces from the small end forward, and secure the bundle with a toothpick or by tying a chive around it.

Cover a 9 x 13-inch baking dish with a layer of tomato sauce, and arrange the eggplant rolls seam side down. Spread more sauce over each bundle and sprinkle with Parmigiano. Warm in the oven for about 15 minutes.



Tracy Beard, writes about luxury and adventure travel, traditional and trendy fine dining and libations for regional, national and international magazines. She is in her eighth year as CRR's "Out & About" columnist. She lives in Longview, Wash.

This next recipe gives another nod to New Orleans and the movie *Last Holiday*.

New Orleans Crab Cakes

- 1 egg
- 1 package ZATARAIN's crab cake mix
- 2/3 cups mayonnaise
- 1 pound fresh lump crabmeat
- Vegetable oil for pan frying

Mix the first four ingredients. Shape into cakes and fry until golden brown in vegetable oil.



Having something tasty to sip on while watching a movie is always a good idea. Although *The Big Lebowski* starring Jeff Bridges, is not a foodie movie, his character's favorite drink is a luscious white Russian, and the film made the drink quite famous.



White Russian or a White Russian with Chocolate

The Dude's Favorite Drink

- 1 oz Kahlúa
- 1-½ ounce vodka
- 1 ounce heavy cream
- Chocolate sauce - optional

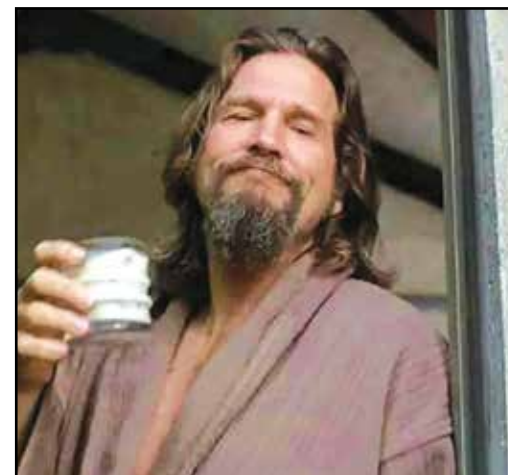
Shake the liquor with ice and pour over the rocks in a nice glass. Top with cream You can dress it up by adding a little chocolate sauce to the glass before pouring in the cocktail, yummy.

Before you sit down to watch your favorite actors and actresses take

the stage at the Oscars, make these tasty dishes to enjoy during all the excitement. Hopefully, our famous actors and actresses will be respectful this year, and they will all keep their hands to themselves during the 95th Academy Awards.

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The Dude enjoying a White Russian.



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