

Movies in the Park – BYO Everything

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Outdoor movie showings are perhaps the most telltale sign of summer approaching. Cities across the nation have come to embrace this seasonal tradition. Often the movie is a classic or fan favorite and draws a mighty crowd. From Hollywood Forever cemetery in Los Angeles to Grant Park in Chicago, cities all over America can't get enough of the silver screen and leisurely picnics in the park. Two great tastes that taste great together.

After you've secured your tickets, which depending on the location and movie may be a herculean feat in and of itself, you now need to decide what you'll need to bring. You're not alone. You'll be surrounded by a vast sea of humanity that either brought too much or too little for optimal evening enjoyment. In this clip from "Portlandia," you'll see the far end of the hyper-preppers:

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Surely we can all agree that you're going too far by bringing bookcases to a movie screening. But, bringing too little is a surefire way to be less than comfortable for two hours. Here's a quick list of things that will make your viewing in the park as enjoyable as possible to your party and those around you.

Blanket



A blanket defines the boundaries of your personal viewing space. Think of it as laying out the borders of your country. It is advantageous to have enough space to comfortably fit all members in your party with legs outstretched. Sitting Indian style for an entire movie on the ground is a younger person's game. Adults need to stretch regularly, remember that and bring enough blankets that fill your square footage needs.

Also remember that a blanket or overlapping blankets that are far larger than you need may induce scorn from your neighboring blanket nations. Remember diplomacy when taking your land grab. Be honest about your space needs but don't be greedy. Those around you may not take to egregious excess especially if they were too modest in the amount of space they staked out.

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Beach Chairs

Sure, you could sit on the ground, and if you've never been to an outdoor movie showing, you may think that is required. Often it is not. Low-rise chairs are almost universally allowed. Although, it is advised to check with your local outdoor movie promoter to make sure you can bring them.

These chairs make all the difference when sitting for two-plus hours. The low-rise keeps you from blocking other peoples' view of the movie and also keeps your backside from screaming at you in the third act. Remember that camping chairs or normal deck chairs are almost always forbidden due to the height you'd be sitting at.

Milk Crate and Tray



The milk crate is wildly valuable when putting together your small trove of supplies for outdoor movie enjoyment. You can carry your dinner, drinks and tray all within the crate. Then, once you set up the boundaries of your blanket nation, you can place the tray on top of the milk crate for a remarkably effective table. Ikea [sells trays](http://bit.ly/1KqjHJa) that perfectly fit the opening of a standard milk crate.

Beer/Wine

The majority of outdoor screenings should allow libations, but again, remember to check with your local outdoor movie promoters before packing the booze. The first thing to remember about drinks when watching movies outdoors is how hard it might be to set a drink down. The ground offers little perfectly flat sanctuary and the tray on the milk crate can easily shift. Remember that spilling a drink during a movie can be a painful ordeal since you won't want to stand and obscure the view of your fellow patrons.

So, in order to avoid the embarrassment of a messy cleanup during that climactic action sequence consider bringing a six pack of your favorite brew along with the cardboard beer carrier they are sold in.

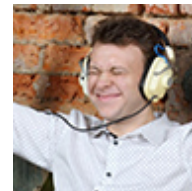
The six pack carrier is perfect for resting an open beer mid-drink. The proportions and low profile of the cardboard carrier will keep your beer from knocking over easily. Plus you can slide the cardboard carrier between chairs for easy access and confident storage.

For wine, you can find prefilled, disposable plastic glasses at many liquor and grocery stores around this fine nation. The disposable plastic glasses have sealable lids and no stems, which keep your drink's center of gravity lower and less likely to tip.



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We all dream of finding the perfect home. We obsess over the number of bedrooms, being close to good



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Few things are permanent in this disposable culture of ours. But it's still hard to believe how quickly to-



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There is no more potent image of American prosperity than a sprawling tree-lined street filled with large single-family homes. In a word: suburbia - born...

Of course, you could always bring a whole bottle of wine, but remember to bring a rubber stopper for once you open the bottle. Rubber stoppers can be found nearly anywhere wine is sold and are a valuable outdoor-movie addition, as are a corkscrew and bottle opener.

Candle



Let's not go crazy with this one, and remember to always check with your local promoter if allowed. But a single candle, preferably in an apothecary style jar is a lovely addition to your milk crate table. It helps you see what you're looking for in the dark and is less offensive than using your cell phone flashlight intermittently. Plus, the lovely ambiance it creates makes it hard for fellow park patrons to complain.

Extra Blankets

What? More blankets? Yes. More blankets. Depending on where you're located in the country, the night can turn chilly. You don't want to cede your blanket country's borders just for the warmth of its citizens.

A Word on Dinner Choice

People can easily overdo it on dinner in the park for a movie night. Remember there will be limited space and light. Pack something easy, preferably premade. Consider the waste that your choice might create and remember the distance you'll need to go to dispose of it either during the movie or during the mad rush to leave after the movie.

Sandwiches work great. Anything in a Tupperware: fruit, pasta salad, or similar items all work well. Also, if you're the guy that brings an extra-large pizza, be prepared to use slices when bartering. Bartering? Yes.

Bartering Between Blanket Nations

Perhaps the most curious instances of international diplomacy occur during movie nights in the park. Contact between blanket nations may not always be necessary. But if a diplomat from a neighboring blanket country is bemoaning their error of forgetting a bottle opener, imagine how heroic you will appear when you offer one up. You might even get a slice of that pizza for your troubles!

Takeaway

After going to your first movie in the park, it can become all too easy to over prepare and bring everything but the kitchen sink. Remember that your enjoyment of the evening also hinges on quick setup and cleanup, so refrain from bringing anything solely cosmetic or redundant. Keep your item list lean but remember to keep warm and comfy while you enjoy your film under the stars!

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