

Young audiences flock to theaters, proving movie cinemas' enduring appeal —for now

Article

The news: National Cinema Day (last Sunday, August 27) reported 8.5 million attendees, a 5% increase from last year's event.

- All tickets, regardless of format, were priced at \$4.
- The Cinema Foundation-sponsored event led to a 16% jump in box office collections from the previous Sunday, resulting in \$34 million in ticket sales. Last year's event generated \$24.3 million.
- Over 3,000 venues participated, with many theaters reporting sold-out shows.

Yes, but: Deadline notes National Cinema Day admissions contributed to 59% of the entire weekend's foot traffic. For context, last year's event accounted for 77% of the Labor Day weekend's ticket sales, which could suggest diminishing returns for this type of stunt.

- The average US movie ticket cost \$10.53 in 2023, up from \$4.35 in 1995, [per](#) The Numbers.

Our take: The event demonstrates that it's possible to get audiences—even younger ones—to pay more for an in-theater experience.

- The 18-to-24 and 25-to-34 age brackets each constituted 22% of the audience, with 13- to 17-year-olds accounting for 16% of ticket buyers.
- Those figures are impressive considering three in 10 individuals in the US [watch free premium streaming video](#) and have access to other free or low-cost alternatives.
- The increase from last year's National Cinema Day suggests a sustained interest in cinema. Given that word of mouth is paramount to viewers' consumption habits, it's up to studios to continually deliver content worth paying a premium for. That may be a tall order.

How Do Adults Worldwide Choose Which New TV Show or Movie to Watch? March 2023

% of respondents, by region

	North America	Europe	Asia-Pacific	United Arab Emirates	Total
Recommendations from friends/family/word-of-mouth	60%	59%	57%	48%	58%
Reviews online and elsewhere	37%	36%	43%	40%	38%
TV commercials	33%	27%	32%	32%	30%
Social media/online buzz	32%	23%	44%	44%	32%
Recommendations from streaming services	27%	22%	29%	27%	25%
Online advertising	21%	15%	26%	38%	20%
Metareview sites such as Rotten Tomatoes and Metacritic	11%	8%	13%	15%	10%
Radio	10%	11%	12%	19%	12%
Podcasts	10%	8%	12%	15%	10%
Print advertising	7%	8%	13%	16%	10%

Note: ages 18+

Source: YouGov, May 11, 2023

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