

# GENERATIONAL SHIFTS

WHO IS DRIVING THE FUTURE  
OF THEATRICAL?



MOVIEGOING TRENDS & INSIGHTS STUDY | SPRING 2026

# A NEW GENERATION DRIVING THEATRICAL MOMENTUM

2025 was a transformative year at the domestic box office, with sequels, remakes, animated films, and originals drawing mass audiences and deepening fandoms. Blockbusters like *A Minecraft Movie*, *Lilo & Stitch*, *Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning*, *Jurassic World: Rebirth*, *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba – The Movie: Infinity Castle* and many more helped propel the domestic box office past \$8.6 billion in revenue.

At Fandango, we remain committed to partnering with exhibitors to deliver unparalleled and memorable moviegoing experiences. Together, we continue to evolve and strengthen offerings such as online ticketing, concessions, premium formats and so much more. As we look to 2026 and beyond, we are focused on building on this momentum while creating new opportunities that continue to draw audiences to theaters.

In January 2026, we conducted our annual Moviegoing Trends & Insights Study, surveying over 5,000 Moviegoers to better understand sentiments and behaviors across the moviegoing journey. This year, the findings highlight clear generational differences, with younger audiences, particularly Gen Z and Millennials, driving theatrical momentum while approaching the experience with differing mindsets. We hope these insights help you implement strategies that resonate across generations and continue inspiring Moviegoers to choose the theater as their preferred entertainment destination.

## A GLANCE AT TODAY'S MOVIEGOERS BY GENERATION

Total: 262,330,000 US Population ages 18+

### U.S. Adults Who Have Seen 1+ Movies in Theaters



### BIGGEST CHALLENGES FOR MOVIEGOERS

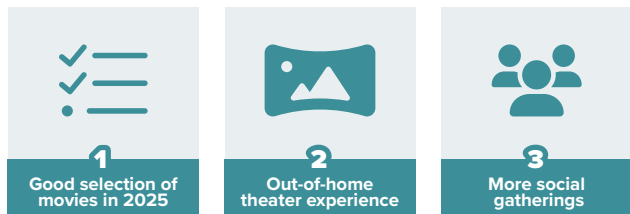
- 1 Coordinating schedules with others
- 2 Setting aside time to go to the movies
- 3 Finding a deal on movie tickets

### Average Number of Movies Seen in 2025

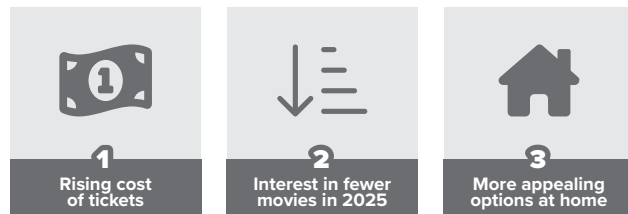


## GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES ON MOVIEGOING

### Reasons for Increased Gen Z Attendance



### Reasons for Decreased Gen X Attendance



## THE POWER OF GEN Z & MILLENNIALS

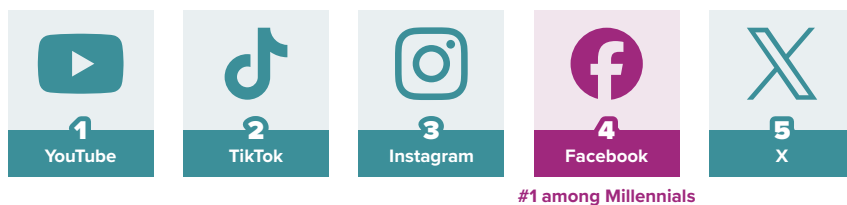
Our study has shown that younger generations, particularly Gen Z and Millennials, are driving theatrical momentum, seeing more movies per year and spending more money per trip than other generations, while still approaching the experience with differing mindsets.

### TOP THEATRICAL DRIVERS

For Gen Z, it is a form of social gathering. For Millennials, it is an escape from daily routine.

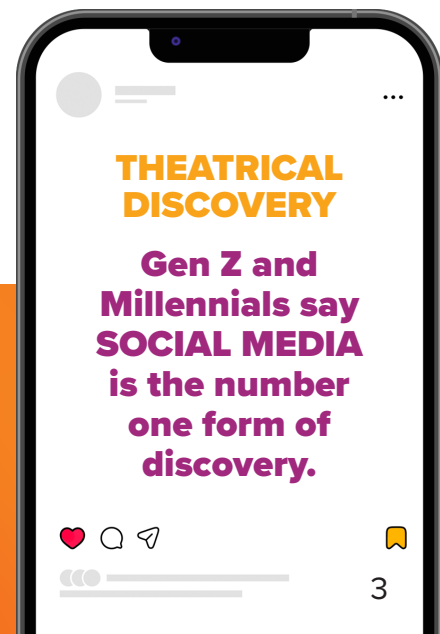
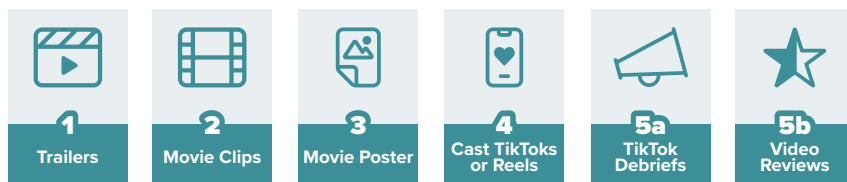
#### Top Social Media Platforms

Among Gen Z Moviegoers



#### Top Information to Build Excitement

Among Gen Z Moviegoers

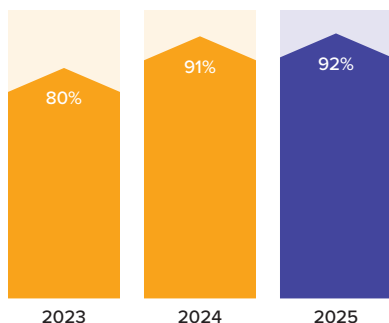


## MOVIEGOING IS BETTER TOGETHER

92% of all Moviegoers prefer to go to the movies with others, with Gen Z specifying they prefer to go with their friends and Millennials preferring to go with their significant others or children.

### Going to the Movies with Others

Among U.S. Moviegoers

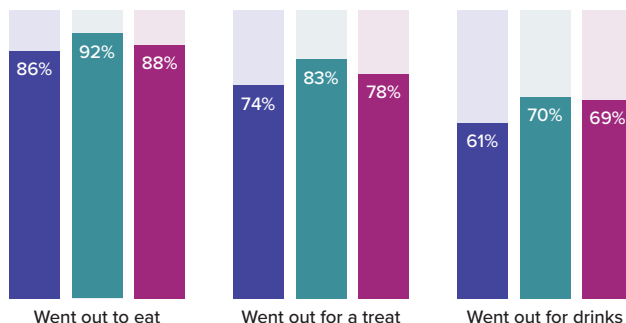


## MOVIEGOING EXTENDS BEYOND THE SCREEN

Both Gen Z and Millennials prefer to extend moviegoing beyond the screen more so than the general population, pairing it with dining and drinking.

### Additional Activities

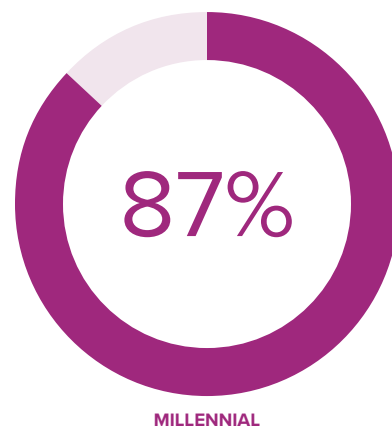
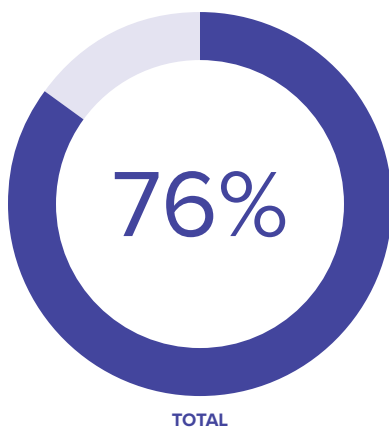
■ Total ■ Gen Z ■ Millennial



## GEN Z & MILLENNIALS LEAD ONLINE TICKETING

### Online Purchasing

Among U.S. Moviegoers



# A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD

Looking ahead to 2026, a robust and diverse theatrical slate across all genres is bound to deliver something for everyone, reinforcing theaters as the destination for must-see entertainment.

## PREMIUM FORMATS: AN UNMATCHED EXPERIENCE

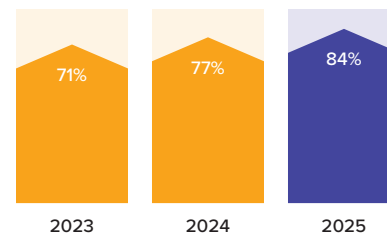
Attending premium formats continues to grow year over year, particularly among younger generations. IMAX remains the preferred premium experience overall, with Millennials ranking Dolby as their second choice and Gen Z showing stronger preference for 3D.

### 2025 Top 3 Types of Premium Formats

1	IMAX
2	Dolby
3	3D

### Attending Premium Formats

Among U.S. Moviegoers



## FAMILY MOVIEGOING

Family moviegoing is expected to gain momentum in 2026 with 78% of parents stating they plan to take their kids to the movies. Quality time, positive theater experiences, and specific titles motivate family attendance the most. When it comes to how children become aware of films coming to theaters, YouTube and influence from their friends or classmates are most impactful.

### Family Moviegoing Drivers

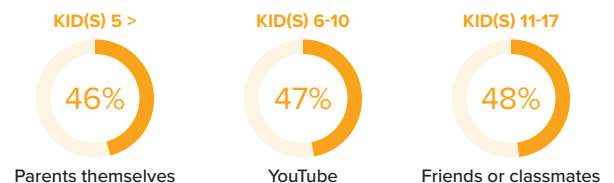
1	Quality time
2	Kids enjoy theater experience
3	Specific movies interest my kids
4	Create memories or traditions
5	Get children out of the house

### Family Moviegoing Motivators

1	Bundles or discounts
2	Comfortable seating
3	Kid-friendly showtimes during day
4	Family days
5	Additional rewards

### Children Awareness of Movies

Among U.S. Parents



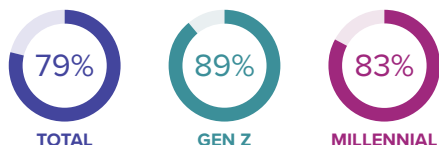
**78%** of parents plan to take their kids to the movies in 2026

## STRONG INTEREST IN ALTERNATIVE CONTENT

There is a strong interest to watch more alternative content in theaters, such as television shows, sporting events, concert films, and movie re-releases.

### Interest in Alternative Content in Theaters

Among U.S. Adults



## DEMAND FOR TELEVISION

TV premieres and finales generate the strongest content to screen theatrically.

### TV Content

1	Season Finales
2	Series Finales
3	Season Premieres
4	New Series Premieres
5	Documentaries
6	Animated or Family Specials
7	Multi-episode Binge
8	Limited or Miniseries
9	Reality Series
10	Behind-the-Scenes Specials

### Top Alternative Programming

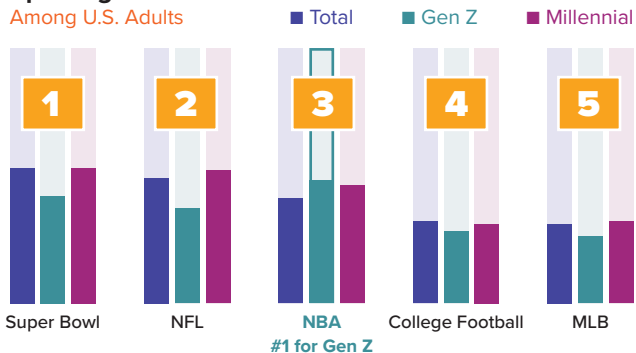
1	Sporting Events
2	Concert Films
3	Movie Re-releases <span style="float: right;">#1 for Gen Z</span>
4	TV Show Premieres or Finales
5	Broadway Shows

## DEMAND FOR SPORTS

The Super Bowl and NFL lead sports demand, while Gen Z shows stronger interest in the NBA.

### Sporting Events

Among U.S. Adults



## GENRE PREFERENCES FOR RE-RELEASES

When it comes to theatrical re-releases, genre preferences vary by generation. Millennials are more interested in seeing various genre-films as they crave nostalgia, while Gen Z states horror is their favorite genre when it comes to re-releases.

### Top Genres For Re-Released Movies in Theaters



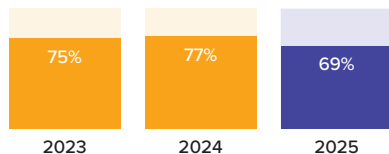
#1 for Gen Z

## YOUNGER MOVIEGOERS FAVOR PRE-ORDERING SNACKS

Even as overall awareness of pre-ordering concessions fluctuates for general Moviegoers, Gen Z and Millennials continue to show strong interest in pre-ordering concessions, with over 70% expressing interest when visiting theaters.

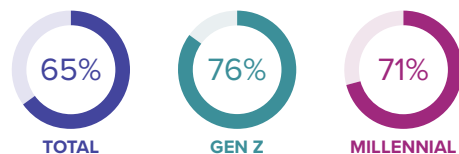
### Awareness in Pre-Ordering Concessions

Among U.S. Moviegoers



### Interest in Pre-Ordering Concessions

Among U.S. Moviegoers



## HEATING UP WITH SUMMER 2026

Summer remains the hottest time for moviegoing, with 76% of Moviegoers saying they plan on seeing a movie in theaters this upcoming summer. Below are the top 10 most anticipated summer movies according to Moviegoers.

### TOP 10 MOST ANTICIPATED SUMMER MOVIES

- 

**1** Toy Story 5
- 

**2** Spider-Man: Brand New Day
- 

**3** The Devil Wears Prada 2
- 

**4** The Odyssey
- 

**5** Scary Movie (2026)
- 

**6** Moana (2026)
- 

**7** Minions & Monsters
- 

**8** Mortal Kombat II
- 

**9** Supergirl
- 

**10** Sony/Blumhouse Insidious

## LOOKING FORWARD

At Fandango, we are proud to deliver the latest moviegoing trends and insights that help the industry understand and drive theatrical interest and attendance. This study underscores the powerful role younger generations play in fueling attendance, with Gen Z and Millennials shaping the future of moviegoing in distinct ways. Both generations are driving growth leaning into premium formats and pre-ordering concessions, while Gen Z leans heavily into the immersive, social-first experiences, and Millennials approach moviegoing as a more planned and value-conscious purchase. However, both generations continue to drive interest in niche genres like anime and alternative content like sporting events, concert films, TV finales/premieres and re-releases.

As theaters broaden theatrical beyond traditional blockbusters to include anime, re-releases, concert films, sports, and other alternative content, the opportunity to expand the definition of the big-screen experience continues to evolve. As passionate advocates for the theatrical experience, we look forward to continuing our collaboration with exhibition partners to turn these insights into action and inspire Moviegoers to choose the theater as their preferred entertainment destination.

## STUDY METHODOLOGY

Fandango surveyed more than 7,000 adults ages 18 to 70, from the general population, 5,091 of whom were Moviegoers, defined as those who saw 1+ movies in the past year, between January 8th – January 21st, 2026. The demographic breakdown of the surveyed Moviegoers was representative of the US population in terms of age, gender, region, ethnicity, and income. Additionally, information on our Top 10 most anticipated summer movies and overall summer sentiment was obtained in a supplemental survey of over 6,000 Moviegoers conducted in February 2026.

## CONTACT US

If you would like to learn more about these findings, please contact our exhibition team or press leads.

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