

2023 HOLIDAY MOVIE REVIEWS

**Note: Movies in red earned 4 and 5 stars!*

*Movies airing through November 27th
(Unless otherwise mentioned, all movies premiered in 2023)*

**Note: Movies in grey earned 1 and 2 stars.*

Name	Channel	Synopsis	Redeeming Features	Rating (1-5)	Modernity (1-5)
A Dash of Christmas	Great American Family**	A woman spend the holidays with her sister while trying to land a new dream job as a food-website marketing guru. She doesn't know how to cook (or bake), but luckily there is a handsome single man running the local bakery (and wouldn't you know it, his bakery could use some marketing help.)	Don't bother. Nothing redeeming.	1	1 - everything is a trope, even her using salt instead of sugar
A Merry Scottish Christmas	Hallmark	Estranged siblings spend Christmas in Scotland with their mother who dumps quite a bit of baggage on them. Of course driving them further apart at first, but ultimately bringing them back together. There's some romantic love stuff too.	Lacey Chabert and Scott Wolf reunite as siblings (Party of Five.) A funny Easter egg with a secondary male character who was in last year's A Christmas Waltz with Lacey. I found that clever enough to be glad that I'd watched.	3	3
A Paris Christmas Waltz	Great American Family**	A fan of dance suddenly becomes good enough after a year of lessons to participate in a Waltz Pro-Am in Paris (after she quits her job to save the job of a coworker with a family.)	I do love Jen Lilley, the actress, and the actor is Mr. Shu from Glee. But pretty dumb otherwise.	2	2
A World Record Christmas	Hallmark	An autistic boy, being raised by wonderful mom and step-dad, decides he wants to break a world record by Christmas in the hopes that his (jerk, absentee) bio-dad will be proud of him.	I appreciate movies that show non-traditional families and diverse character storylines. This fit the bill, but it was just fair.	3	4
Best. Christmas. Ever!	Netflix	A woman with a somewhat lackluster life (Heather Graham) gets a boastful Christmas letter from a former friend (Brandy the singer) and ends up getting stuck at said friend's mansion for the holidays thanks to her obnoxious son with a creepy stuffed animal.	I did like the lesson in this one. It bills itself as having "hijinks" which is almost always a deal breaker for me, but I'm glad I stuck with it.	3	4
Checkin' It Twice	Hallmark	Hot struggling hockey player gets sent to the "minors" in small-town Idaho where he meets a woman who - you guessed it - restores his love for Christmas and his belief in himself.	Love this actor, Kevin McGarry. Worth it for him alone as far as I'm concerned.	4	3
Christmas by Design	Hallmark	An up-and-coming fashion designer gets the chance to enter a Christmas design competition held by the fancy department store, but needs to do her designing at her hometown because a pipe burst in her apartment.	I had to look this one up online to remember anything about it.	2	2 - I mean a department store?

***I don't like supporting this channel, but alas, I've watched it a few times. I'm not surprised that these are two low rated movies.*



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Christmas Island	Hallmark	A female airline captain gets an opportunity to become a private pilot for a wealthy family over Christmas. They run into issues on their way to Germany but luckily there is a tiny airport on Christmas Island where they can land and the locals are more than happy to host them.	Strong female career woman, cute town on the water, obnoxious teenager learns a life lesson.	3	5 - I feel like these movies are looking at the full range of Barbie careers and trying to hit each one.
Everything Christmas	Hallmark	To honor her grandmother's dying wish, a woman quits her job (because they wanted her to work over Christmas), and goes on a road trip to find this enchanted Christmas town.	Not much. Pretty old school formulaic and I'm not a fan of Cindy Busby the lead actress.	2	1
Feast of the Seven Fishes (2019)	Netflix	Set in 1983, small town PA near Philly, in the days leading up to Christmas Eve, where the predominantly Italian neighborhood goes all out for the Feast of the Seven Fishes. Enter rich preppy ivy-league girl. A very sweet story.	Super nostalgic. If you remember the 80s at all, or if you grew up on the east coast, you must watch.	4	1 - But 1983, so no points lost.
Flipping for Christmas	Hallmark	Trope-fest of a big city real estate gal landing a monster client, then going to her little hometown for Christmas where monster client wants to build mixed-use behemoths. Oh, and the MOST absurd legal handling of a shared inheritance I've ever seen in my life.	DO NOT BOTHER. Although the lead actress wears a really nice power suit in the beginning.	1	2
Heidelberg Holiday	Hallmark	An artist from Colorado whose name is Heidi Heidelberg, gets the chance to sell her goods at the "famous" Heidelberg Christmas Market (it IS actually a real thing.) She meets a hot guy, calamity ensues with her art, together they triumph!	The scenery was beautiful (seems like it was actually filmed in Germany) and the lead actor was hot. That's all I can say.	2	1
Holiday Hotline	Hallmark	A chef from the UK quits her job because her loser boyfriend/boss is a jerk, and spends the holidays in Chicago at her great aunt's empty apartment. She gets a part-time job answering the holiday hotline, helping struggling home cooks (including a hot single dad) with their turkeys, etc.	Super cute, I really liked this. Somewhat reminiscent of You've Got Mail.	4	3
Joyeux Noel	Hallmark	A journalist who no one takes seriously pitches a story about a Christmas Market in France, depicted in a newly discovered painting. She goes to France with her dismissive coworker to track down the deets.	Eh. I appreciate the diversity in casting a plus-sized lead actress (and pairing her with a non-plus sized lead actor), but that's about it.	2	3 (for the actress Jaicy Elliot from Grey's Anatomy)





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Letters to Santa	Hallmark	Don't bother. I couldn't get through the first 15 minutes to even create a synopsis.	None	1	2 (because of a scene at couple's counseling, that felt modern.)
Love at First Sight	Netflix	Two college students meet at JFK on their way back to London and end up sitting next to one another on the plane. Chemistry abounds. I cried.	Love love love. Just the right amount of cheesiness and conflict. GREAT chemistry between the leads. Not totally believable, but close enough.	5	4
Merry Ex-Mas	Prime	Leighton Meester breaks up with her fiancé but still loves his family so she spends Christmas with them (not expecting the ex to be there.) Of course the ex returns home unexpectedly.	Don't bother unless you want to see Leighton Meester from Gossip Girl.	1	3
Ms. Christmas Comes to Town	Hallmark	A home shopping network Christmas superstar experiences a recurrence of her cancer. She announces her retirement and does a final hurrah tour of small town USA with her protegee.	I did watch all the way through, but aside from the age diversity (most of the cast is clearly over 40), there wasn't much redeeming about it.	2	3 (for the ages and the cool tour bus)
My Christmas Guide	Hallmark	A woman who trains seeing eye dogs convinces a blind single dad to adopt one. He's reluctant. Therefore he is the Grinch.	DOGS! But aside from that, not much.	2	3
Mystic Christmas	Hallmark	A nomadic marine biologist visits her best friend in Mystic Connecticut for Christmas. She happened to hook up with her best friend's brother years ago at a wedding and they have unsettled business.	Seals, pizza, a non-annoying precocious child, believable chemistry	5	The ending is somewhat revolutionary for Hallmark
Navigating Christmas	Hallmark	Not to be confused with Christmas Island. A recently divorced mom to an obnoxious teenaged son makes a last minute reservation at a Christmas-town lighthouse for the holidays (after dad bails on their father-son ski trip, so I guess he's allowed to be obnoxious.) They need to save the lighthouse, AND the Christmas spirit of the lighthouse owner.	Pretty scenery. Glad Hallmark is depicting the reality of divorce as opposed to making everyone a widow.	2	3 (for divorce vs. widowed)
Never Been Chris'd	Hallmark	A surprising tale of friendship between two women who've been besties since high school, masquerading as a story of unrequited love with a HS crush.	Felt pretty realistic. The first half was pretty strange, but the ending was redeeming.	4	5





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The Santa Summit	Hallmark	Three friends go on a Santa-themed bar crawl where one of them has an incomplete meet-cute with a hot guy (Brady from Virgin River.) They each spend the rest of the bar crawl trying to find one another.	I really appreciated the modernity of the bar crawl and the silent rave. There was also a nice plutonic friendship formed and a nerdy side love story.	4	5
Under the Christmas Sky	Hallmark	An aerospace engineer (who wants to be astronaut) loses out on her dream due to injuries from an accident. She befriends the wheelchair-bound daughter of a single dad and she too wants to be an astronaut. They create a cool museum exhibit at the local planetarium.	Female astronauts and diverse cast.	3	4 (female astronaut - Barbie career - check; normalizing differences)

