

GODZILLA

THE BEST, AND THE REST

Godzilla's been a movie presence for 60 years. Including the new movie (in at No. 3), here are 30 films featuring the Big Guy, in order of excellence

BY CHRISTOPHER BORRELLI | Tribune reporter

RANKING
THE MOVIES

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NO. 1 "Godzilla" (1954):

The grim, poetic original. Hiroshima/Nagasaki allegory. Stick to the Japanese cut.

NO. 2 "Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster" (1971):

Terrifically bonkers save-the-Earth cautionary acid trip.

NO. 3 "Godzilla" (2014):

Maybe it's too soon, but a Godzilla film with a soul? Grace notes? Genuinely involving.

NO. 4 "Destroy All Monsters" (1968):

The perfect Godzilla flick: dumb, fun, slow, clever, weird and big.

NO. 5 "Godzilla vs. The Thing" (1964):

The Thing is Mothra (making her debut). Neat cocoon effects. Clever story.

NO. 6 "Godzilla vs. Monster Zero" (1965):

Devo-ish aliens meddle. The art direction is a study in '60s design.

NO. 7 "Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla" (1974):

Lion-dog monsters, metal-zillas, ape people. Entertaining fan favorite.

NO. 8 "Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster" (1964):

Godzilla's coolest villain, a gold dragon from Mars, debuts.

NO. 9 "Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla 2" (1993):

Mechagodzilla returns. Inventive effects. Best of the '90s series.

NO. 10 "Godzilla vs. Destoroyah" (1995):

Godzilla has a meltdown, explodes. No kidding. Also, oddly touching.

NO. 11 "Godzilla vs. Megalon" (1973):

Ultraman-esque battle royal. Cheap, silly and impossible to resist.

NO. 12 "Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah" (1991):

Time travel. World War II. Mecha-Ghidorah. Nuts. But fantastic fights.

NO. 13 "Godzilla, Mothra & King Ghidorah: Giant Monsters All-Out Attack" (2001):

Somber, creative and surprisingly violent: Godzilla is possessed by vengeful ghosts of Japanese soldiers killed in World War II.



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NO. 14 "Godzilla 2000" (1999):

The Godzilla Prediction Network debuts. Godzilla nearly swallowed whole. Really.

NO. 15 "Godzilla 1985" (1984):

Franchise relaunches. A sequel to the 1954 film. Admirably serious (but slow).

NO. 16 "Godzilla vs. Biollante" (1989):

Underrated, perhaps depressingly dark Venus flytrap-horror hybrid.

NO. 17 "Godzilla: Final Wars" (2004):

"Destroy All Monsters" on a real budget. A kind of greatest hits package.

NO. 18 "Terror of Mechagodzilla" (1975):

Godzilla as Charles Bronson, mad scientist stomper. Convoluted plot.

NO. 19 "Son of Godzilla" (1967):

Cute, kid-friendly Saturday morning charm. Godzilla knows best.

NO. 20 "Godzilla: Tokyo S.O.S." (2003):

Godzilla kills Mothra and a giant turtle (not Gamera). Nothing fresh, but nice effects.

NO. 21 "King Kong vs. Godzilla" (1962):

Terrible Kong suit. Perfect at 3 a.m. Kong kind of wins.

NO. 22 "Godzilla Against Mechagodzilla" (2002):

Godzilla is haunted by the bones of the first Godzilla?

NO. 23 "Godzilla vs. Megaguirus" (2000):

First-rate space mosquito. Lamé CGI (but great miniatures).

NO. 24 "Godzilla vs. Mothra: The Battle for Earth" (1992):

Mothra's evil twin starts a three-way. Big explosions.

NO. 25 "Godzilla Raids Again" (1955):

First sequel, first hot monster-on-monster action, first dud.

NO. 26 "Godzilla vs. SpaceGodzilla" (1994):

Godzilla DNA creates a Godzilla with space acne. Also, robot penguin.

NO. 27 "Godzilla's Revenge" (1969):

A lonely boy fantasizes about Godzilla, watches stock footage

NO. 28 "Godzilla vs. the Sea Monster" (1966):

Bank robbers, terrorist cults and a giant lobster. Tedious.

NO. 29 "Godzilla vs. Gigan" (1972):

Godzilla converses with other monsters. Yet another alien threat. Lazy.

NO. 30 "Godzilla" (1998):

Cold Hollywood cash-in. Worse, an anemic Godzilla (murdered later in "Final Wars").

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