

# SANTA CLAUS is coming to town... in two WEEKS

Here are the best movies made on Father Christmas, according to movie buffs. Watch them with your family



## THE SANTA CLAUS (1994)

After divorced dad Scott (Tim Allen), who has custody of his son (Eric Lloyd) on Christmas Eve, accidentally kills a man in a Santa suit, they are magically transported to the North Pole. An elf explains that Scott must take Santa's place before next Christmas. Scott thinks he's dreaming; but he isn't.



## GET SANTA (2014)

A father and son team up to save Christmas once they discover Santa Claus sleeping in their garage, after crashing his sleigh and finding himself on the run from the police! Say what?



glitch a little girl's Christmas gift has been misplaced, he sets out on a mission to deliver the present before it's too late.

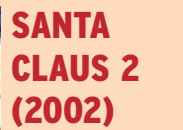
## FRED CLAUS (2007)

Of the two Claus brothers, Fred (Vince Vaughn) is the troublemaker and polar opposite of his saintly sibling, Nicholas (Paul Giamatti). When Fred's criminal ways sends him to jail, Nicholas bails him out only on the promise that he'll go to the North Pole with him, and make toys.

## THE CHRISTMAS CHRONICLES (2014)

Naughty siblings, Kate and Teddy Pierce, hatch a scheme to capture Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. When the plan falls apart, they join forces with a somewhat jolly Saint Nick (Kurt Russell) and his loyal elves to save the holiday before it's too late.

— Screenrant.com; theguardian.com



## SANTA CLAUS 2 (2002)

Not just a great film, this film has beaten the curse of sequel in the sense that it's as good as the first one, 'The Santa Claus'. Scott Calvin (Tim Allen), despite being Santa Claus, is in all kinds of trouble. His son appears in the annual "naughty" list, and he has to get married within a month! Or, he cannot remain Santa Claus anymore.



## MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET (1994)

An old man named Kris Kringle (Edmund Gwenn) fills in for an intoxicated Santa in Macy's annual Thanksgiving Day parade, and becomes an instant hit. He becomes so popular that he becomes a regular. Till he starts claiming he's THE REAL SANTA! This leads to a court case to determine his mental health. Could it be true?

## ARTHUR CHRISTMAS (2011)

When Santa's gawky son, Arthur, learns that owing to a technical



## X-MAS AS A CHARACTER



Christmas is a time for hope, forgiveness, and love. Authors of classic novels have often used the season as an effective narrative device to spin magical tales. Here are some of the most intriguing ones:

### LETTERS FROM FATHER CHRISTMAS BY J

#### R R TOLKIEN

In this calligraphy picture book, the English fantasy author presented a collection of heart-warming letters that he wrote to his children every year at Christmas. All letters are from the point of view of either Father Christmas or a talking polar bear, and accompanied by the most whimsical illustrations.

### THE VALANCOURT BOOK OF VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS GHOST STORIES BY TARA MOORE

A compendium of 13 ghost stories from 19th-century Victorian-era periodicals set around the theme of Christmas time.

### THE SNOW QUEEN BY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

Loved Queen Elsa of Arendelle in the film 'Frozen'? Then you'll love reading the original Danish fairy-tale gem that inspired the film. Reading about Gerda and Kay, the characters at the centre of Andersen's story of good, evil, and deep snow, must be accompanied by a cup of hot chocolate.

### THE TAILOR OF GLOUCESTER BY

#### BEATRIX POTTER

The story of a mousy tailor working on the mayor's clothes for a Christmas Day wedding is perfect to read aloud with the family.

### HERCULE POIROT'S CHRISTMAS

And finally, if you love a good mystery, there is nothing better than reading about Hercule Poirot solving a murder. A Christmas time family reunion that ends in bloodshed is right up the notorious detective's alley.



# What's a SITCOM?

Well, it's short for situational comedy – a television series in which the same characters are involved in amusing situations in each episode. To make it simpler, let's differentiate between any comedy and sitcoms. A comedy can be any show or film with humour and a happy ending. Sitcoms are made for television.

In a situational comedy, the plot is centred on a particular situation set in a typical setting – such as home or workplace. A situational comedy features a regular cast of characters, apart from recurring ones who appear in subsequent episodes, and some special guest stars. There are some sitcoms that are aired performed before a live studio audience, making it

similar to a theatrical play. Start with any one among these four TV hits.

Apart from the ability to make you laugh instantly, sitcoms are a great way to learn to tackle day-to-day problems with humour and good attitude. It's also the best way to learn about screen writing. Sitcoms are the playground of the best writers of TV, anywhere in the world.

### Seinfeld (1989)

'Seinfeld' stars Jerry Seinfeld as a stand-up comedian, whose life in New York City is made even more chaotic by his quirky group of friends who join him in wrestling with life's most perplexing yet often trivial questions. Often de-



scribed as "a show about nothing", 'Seinfeld' mines the humour in life's mundane situations – like waiting in line, searching for a lost item, or the trials and tribulations of dating.



### Friends (1994)

This hit sitcom follows the merry misadventures of six 20-something pals as they navigate the pitfalls of work, life and love in 1990s Manhattan.



### Young Sheldon (2017)

An offshoot of 'The Big Bang Theory', this one deals with a young Sheldon Cooper growing up in East Texas. Being a bonafide genius isn't always helpful in a land where church and football are king. And while the vulnerable, gifted and somewhat naive Sheldon deals with the world, his very normal family must find a way to deal with him.

### Full House (1987)

The show chronicles the events of widowed father, Danny Tanner, who enlists his brother-in-law, Jesse Katsopolis, and best friend, Joey Gladstone, to help raise his three daughters in his San Francisco home. It aired from September 22, 1987 to May 23, 1995, broadcasted eight seasons and 192 episodes. This one is perfect to start with for young kids.



## OLD ENGLISH WORDS WE CAN USE AGAIN...

**Bedward:** Heading for bed. It means exactly how it sounds.

**Crapulous:** Feeling ill as a result of too much eating/drinking.

**Fauche:** Fumbling things and making mistakes at work because you are exhausted.

**Aptycock:** A quick-witted or intelligent young man.

**Crambo-clink:** Also known as crambo-jink, this refers to poor quality poetry. Or, a long-winded and pointless conversation.

**Flench:** When the weather looks like it's going to improve but it never does.

**Elflock:** Hair that is tangled, as if it has been matted by elves.

Sources: lifehack.com; mentalfloss.com

## HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE KING?

1) What was Elvis Presley's first #1 hit on the US Billboard pop charts?

'Heartbreak Hotel' was the first #1 hit on the US Billboard pop charts and also earned him his first gold record.

2) What single did Elvis record after filing for divorce from Priscilla on January 8, 1973?

This was Elvis' most introspective and personal song: 'Separate Ways'.

3) Elvis memorised every line from what George C Scott movie?

'Patton', the movie for which George C Scott won the Academy Award for best actor and famously refused to accept it.

5) What was Elvis' favourite sandwich?

Presley's legendary love for peanut butter and 'nanner sandwiches' led to his oversized waistline in his middle age.

6) Why is Elvis' mansion called 'Graceland'?

The name came with the mansion from the days when it was originally used as a church.

7) Which musician had once broken into Graceland?

Long before he became famous, Bruce Springsteen was caught climbing over the Graceland fence by one of Elvis' first cousin and a security officer. Elvis wasn't home. Springsteen was promptly escorted off the property.

8) What actress did Elvis always send flowers to when she opened a show in Las Vegas?

In her memoir, Ann-Margret refers to Presley as her "soulmate", but very little is revealed about their long-romoured romance.

9) What was the first magazine that ever published an article about Elvis?

In September 1955, 'Country Song Roundup' magazine was the first to feature an article on Elvis, calling him a "folk music fireball".

10) How many competitive Grammy Awards did Elvis Presley win during his lifetime?

Elvis won three



# BILL GATES, the digital Nostradamus



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In 1995, Bill Gates wrote and published 'The Road Ahead', a seminal book in which he made several predictions about the next 25 years of digital technology. Recently, in a blog announcing his upcoming book 'How to Avoid a Climate Disaster: The Solutions We Have and the Breakthroughs We Need', Gates offered a few reflections on his previous book.



He wrote: "...We tend to overestimate the changes that will happen in the short term and underestimate the ones that will happen over long term." While Gates is "too optimistic" about some things, there are others that have happened faster than he had imagined. Among the things he got right are...

### Smartphones (even got pricing right)

Back in 1995, he wrote about something he termed then as the "wallet pc" in 'The Road Ahead'. He noted: "It will

be about the same size as a wallet, which means you'll be able to carry it in your pocket or purse. It will display messages and schedules and let you read or send electronic mail and faxes, monitor weather and stock reports, and play both simple and sophisticated games. At a meeting, you might take notes, check your appointments, browse information if you are bored, or choose from among thousands of easy-to-call-up photos of your kids." In addition to this, the "wallet pc" would be secured with a biometric; it would replace paying with paper money, and even "inform" you about the exit you are supposed to take on a highway. He wrote, this device would be cheap.

### Online digital streaming platforms

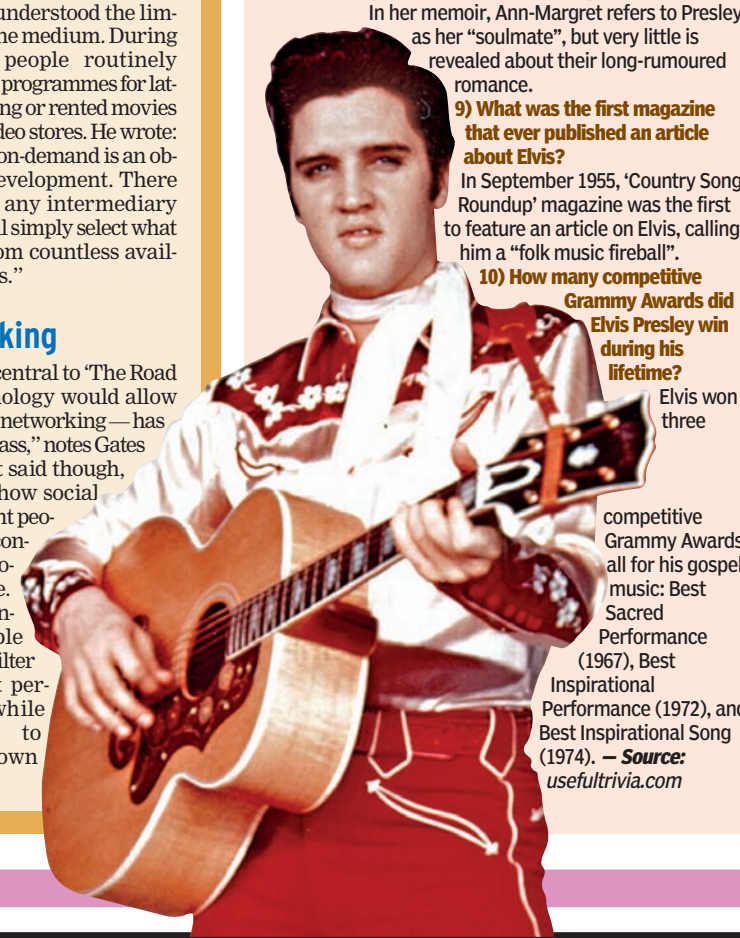
Gates wrote: "Television has been around for fewer than 60 years, but in that time it has be-

come a major influence in the life of almost everyone in the developed nations."

But Gates also understood the limitations of the medium. During the 90s, people routinely recorded programmes for later viewing or rented movies from video stores. He wrote: "Video-on-demand is an obvious development. There won't be any intermediary VCR. You'll simply select what you want from countless available programmes."

### Social networking

"Another idea that's central to 'The Road Ahead' — that technology would allow unprecedented social networking — has pretty much come to pass," notes Gates in his blog post. That said though, he was "surprised" how social networks have brought people together but also contributed to a more polarised atmosphere. Gates said he hadn't anticipated how people would choose to filter out different perspectives while sticking to their own views.



competitive Grammy Awards, all for his gospel music: Best Sacred Performance (1967), Best Inspirational Performance (1972), and Best Inspirational Song (1974). — Source: usefultvtrivia.com

# UNUSUAL SPORTS

There are some bizarre sports around the world you may not have heard about yet. You may find them odd but some of these sports have a massive fan-following and are taken seriously. Check out the list...



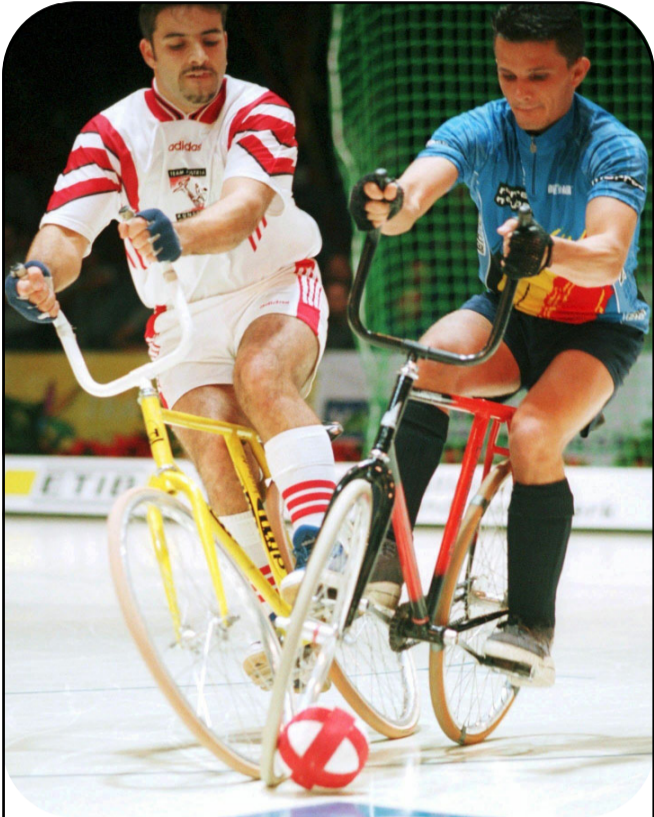
### DOG SURFING

Dog surfing involves canines hanging out with their owners. More intensive dog surfing involves dogs doing tricks while their owners stand on the board. Unlike with human surfers, surfing dogs cannot be leashed or attached to surf boards during the competition. The first competition was held in 2006 at Loews Coronado Bay Resort at Imperial Beach California, US.



### OSTRICH RACING

Ostrich racing originated in Africa and eventually made its way over to the United States. Ostriches can reach a surprising speed of around 70 kilometre an hour, and their legs can reach up to 16 feet in one single stride. During a game of ostrich racing, people sit on ostriches and race them around a track.



### CYCLE BALL

This sport, which originated in Germany, is also called as ‘rad-ball’. Cycle ball is a competition between two teams of two, played on bicycles with no breaks. Their goal is to get the ball into the goal using only their wheels and their heads. Players are allowed to use their hands on defense, but not on offense. Cycle ball is very popular in many European countries, and in Japan.

### CHESSBOXING

The ultimate game of brain-versus-brawn where players quickly flicker between rounds in the boxing ring and bouts at the chessboard. To take home the glory, they must either coerce their opponent into a knockout or batter them into checkmate. Since 1992 the sport has gone global with countries like England, Germany, Netherlands, France, Russia and Japan, all embracing it.



### QUIDDITCH

Quidditch started out as a fictional game for wizards in the popular ‘Harry Potter’ series. Fans loved the idea of quidditch so much that it soon became a real sport played internationally. A team is made up of seven athletes, who must play with a broom between their legs at all times. It borrows elements from rugby, dodgeball and tag.



### ZORBING

Zorbing is the act of racing in a large, transparent ball down hills, through water, or other obstacles. Zorb is a ball, having a volume of 13 to 14 m and a weight of 75-80 kg. It consists of 2 layers: two spheres, differing in size, that are located just a little less than a meter from each other. The space between the outer and inner spheres is filled with air so that the total elasticity of the ball is maintained. The zorb tumbled into existence in the mid-1990s in New Zealand.



### WIFE CARRYING

Wife carrying originated in Finland and made its way to North America in 1999. The rules stipulate that the woman must be over 17 years of age and weigh at least 49 kilograms. Despite the event’s name, couples don’t have to be married. Finland has established itself as a prime venue for unusual events that include the air guitar world championship and swamp soccer too.

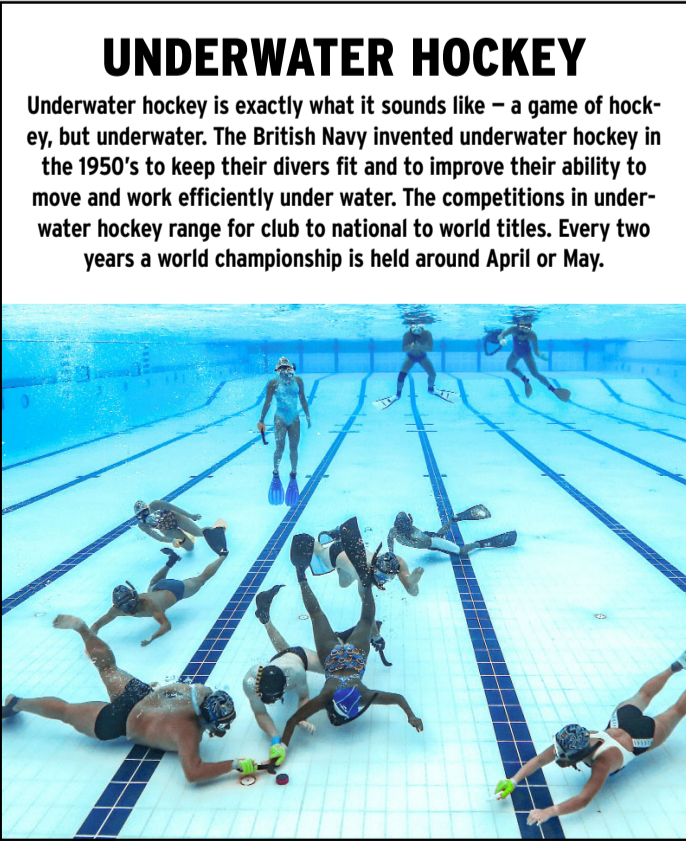
### ELEPHANT POLO

Elephant polo is just like regular polo, except on an elephant – it even requires the same equipment. This sport is popular in Nepal, India, and Thailand.



### CHEESE ROLLING

During cheese rolling, a large cheese wheel is rolled down a steep hill, and competitors race after it. The first person to make it down the hill wins the cheese. The event takes place on Cooper’s Hill, in the parish of Brockworth, Gloucester, UK. The main competitors are locals from the village, however, people have come from all over the world to take part in the unusual sport.



### UNDERWATER HOCKEY

Underwater hockey is exactly what it sounds like – a game of hockey, but underwater. The British Navy invented underwater hockey in the 1950’s to keep their divers fit and to improve their ability to move and work efficiently under water. The competitions in underwater hockey range for club to national to world titles. Every two years a world championship is held around April or May.



### SEPAK TAKRAW

Sepak takraw, which originated in Asia, is like volleyball, except the players must use their feet to get the ball over the net. Players are allowed to use any part of their body to keep the ball in the air, except for their arms or hands.

### SPORTHOCKING

Sporthocking, also known as extreme sitting, began in Germany. The sport involves a participant performing acts which could be spinning, kicking, throwing, juggling, sliding, etc. and slamming their bottoms down on a stool at the end to show the manoeuvre is complete. The apparatus being used for sporthocking includes a colourful plastic stool with linings made of rubber.

Photo: dailymail

