



RAPPLER

Our Netflix binge-watch combos for the holidays

Netflix has released data on people's binge-watch behavior – but some things, even statistics can't curate! Here are our binge-watch recos, just in time for all that free time over the holidays

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ELEVEN. Eleven in this picture is all of us binge-watching everything this holiday season. Photo courtesy of Netflix

MANILA, Philippines – 'Tis the season for Netflix staycations once again, and while others Instagram sand

castles and cocktails in Boracay, the less socially inclined of us will be building defiant pillow forts in our bedrooms and catching up on all those shows and movies we didn't have time for earlier in the year.

2016 was particularly good for streaming video, and as the amount of accessible content at our lazy fingertips gets ever larger, our viewing habits have also begun to mutate.

Netflix recently published data on how a growing number of their viewers had started "pairing" their binge-viewing sessions. Like the proverbial wine and cheese, Netflix users would watch a TV series from start to finish, and then watch a feature film as a kind of mental intermission.

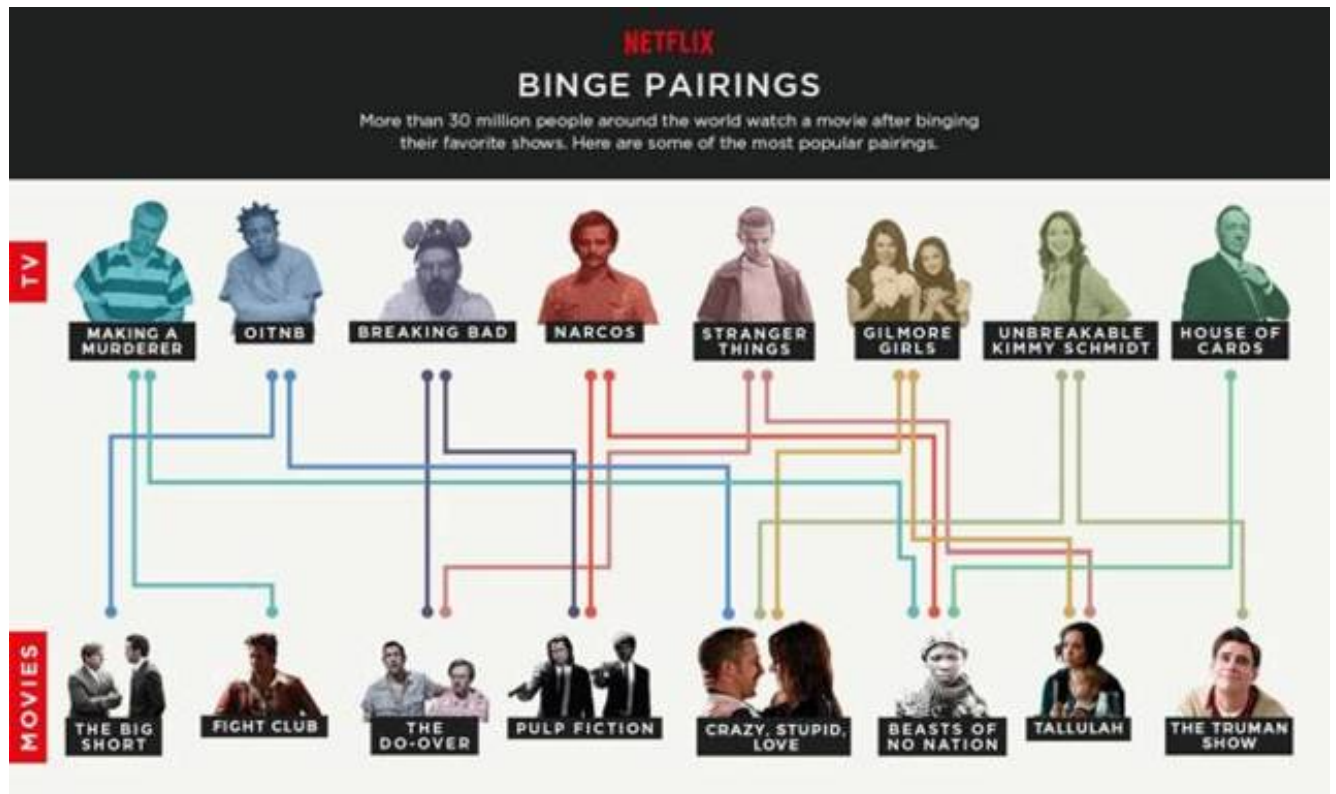


Photo courtesy of Netflix

Some of these TV + movie pairings were obvious complements. After finishing off Breaking Bad's seminal 6-season run, for example, quite a number would load up Pulp Fiction. Both stories are black comedies about crime, and easily two of the finest examples of the sub-genre.

People who followed both seasons of the Pablo Escobar biopic Narcos were right at home with Cartel Land, an equally eye-popping documentary on the modern vigilante war on drugs. The retro sci-fi hit show Stranger Things was most often followed up with the similarly '80s-themed (and IMHO equally overrated) Super 8.

But not all TV/movie pairings can be curated by statistics, and there's certainly a wide enough selection on Netflix these days that quite a few gems often fall through the cracks. Here are some of my own favorite TV + movie combinations:

Shooter (2016-ongoing) and Spectral (2016)

Ryan Phillippe stars in Shooter, an action/drama series about a master sniper that was itself adapted from the 2010 movie led by Mark Wahlberg. Neither the ongoing series nor the movie it was based on is exactly Oscar material, but if you like stories that celebrate ballistics, this is the show for you.

When you're ready for something even more bombastic, the military sci-fi Spectral (2016) is this year's Starship Troopers. There are aliens, and soldiers, and explosions, and that's all you need to know.

Star Trek Into Darkness (2013) and The Expanse (2016-ongoing)

The Star Trek reboot movies from JJ Abrams (and later, Fast and the Furious director Justin Lin) are the most action-oriented that the beloved franchise has ever been, and more than a few veteran fans missed the more socio-political angle taken by the earlier movies and episodes.

Addressing this exact problem, The Expanse is an excellent 2016 Syfy show starring Thomas Jane that is equal parts detective drama and interstellar political thriller. Set against the growing unrest between Earth and the colony on Mars, the show is a grungy counterpoint to the lens-flaring glitz of the new Trek movies.

Brooklyn Nine Nine (2013-ongoing) and The Other Guys (2010)

With 4 seasons under their belts, Andy Samberg's gang of oddball cops at precinct 99 is probably in the pantheon of the best police comedies of all-time. The cast is made up of comedians at the top of their game, and every new season just gets tighter and more polished.

As brilliant as it is, Brooklyn Nine Nine certainly owes at least some of its ideas to Adam McKay's The Other Guys, a buddy-cop parody from 2010 that didn't really get much recognition outside of the US.

With Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg in the lead roles as two underperforming police detectives, McKay built a

truly impressive supporting cast around them: Dwayne Johnson, Samuel L. Jackson, Michael Keaton, and Eva Mendes are all stellar in this movie. (Bonus double-feature: the financial crime perpetrated at the center of *The Other Guys* seems an obvious dry run for McKay's Academy Award-winning *The Big Short* a few years later, so check that out as well if you're looking to hate on Wall Street for a few hours.)

Van Helsing (2016-ongoing) and World War Z (2013)

The worst thing about the new Syfy show *Van Helsing* is its title, and that's only because it piggybacks on a well-known character without really needing to do so.

It's a feminization of the public domain *Van Helsing* story – yes, the “Van” now stands for “Vanessa” – appropriated and reestablished in a post-apocalyptic near-future where volcanic ash in the atmosphere has allowed vampires to roam freely and take over the Earth. Honestly, they could have called this show anything and it would have still worked. Created by playwright/director Neil LaBute, the characters are crafted with enough care that you find yourself invested within the first episode.

Van Helsing takes a lot of liberties with its vampire mythos, and its more ferocious bloodsuckers are almost indistinguishable from another pop culture monster: zombies. *World War Z* from 2013 is not the greatest zombie film of all time, but with its \$540M box office revenue it was certainly the highest-grossing, and is a pretty entertaining entry in an over-crowded genre.

The OA (2016-ongoing) and The Fountain (2006)

It's hard to describe Britt Marling's *The OA* in a sentence, but if you were one of the few who saw the young writer/actress' 2011 arthouse sci-fi *Another Earth*, you'd know that it certainly wouldn't be anything conventional. Marling stars as a young woman who mysteriously resurfaces after having disappeared 7 years ago, but here's the kicker: she used to be blind, but has somehow regained her sight. Of all of Netflix's new original programming, this is probably the most opaque and challenging to watch, and is best viewed with a generous amount of Shiraz.

Its heady mix of sci-fi and the supernatural is reminiscent of Darren Aronofsky's divisive *The Fountain* from 2006 starring Hugh Jackman and Rachel Weisz. With a narrative spanning 3 time periods, the film is a meditation on life, death, and love that is both a little self-indulgent and quite frankly a bit bonkers. But you can't argue with how beautiful it looks, or how utterly committed the filmmaker is to his concepts, and it's hard not to respect that kind of ambition.