



# San Diego Comic-Con 2016: Your Complete Guide

From the superhero-movie sneak peeks to 'Game of Thrones' news, here's what's happening at this year's SDCC

*BY CHARLES BRAMESCO July 11, 2016*



Cersei Lannister, meet Harley Quinn: Both 'Game of Thrones' and 'Suicide Squad' will have panels at the upcoming 2016 San Diego Comic-Con. Helen Sloan/HBO, Clay Enos

In 1971, the 300-or-so people pawing through cardboard boxes of dusty comic books couldn't have possibly imagined that they were standing in what would become the cradle of nerd civilization. From a small meetup for diehard geeks, San Diego Comic-Con has grown into one of the largest and most feverishly anticipated pop-cultural events of the year. Thousands upon thousands of industry types, journalists, the devout faithful (and the suckers they've handsomely paid to stand in line as proxies) and cosplaying fans of all stripes will descend upon the city from July 21st-24th to feast on tidbits about everything from superhero-movie multiverses to geek-TV staples.

SDCC offers more events, guests, panels, screenings, and nebulously defined "experiences" than you can shake a lightsaber at, so allow us to impose a little order on the chaos. Below, we've organized the buzziest previews by the company representing them (movie studio, TV network) to give you a comprehensive rundown of what to expect from the Super Bowl of people who don't like watching the Super Bowl. In the event that you've finagled a pass to this four-day bender of networking and branded promotion with a little genuine passion for entertainment mixed in — godspeed and may the Force be with you. If you're observing from the sidelines, meet your newest obsessions for the next 12 months.

## MOVIES

After sending Justin Timberlake and Anna Kendrick to Cannes for a little frizzy-haired promotion of the upcoming **Trolls** animated feature, DreamWorks Animation will ship the pair off to San Diego for another musical number or two. Based on the freakish, bug-eyed dolls that reached the height of their popularity during the Eighties, this new comedy will give the toys the Shrek treatment, with an ogre-sized payday to hopefully follow.

Having directed searing profiles of such lightning-rods as Richard Nixon and George W. Bush (not to mention an entire movie devoted to J.F.K. assassination conspiracies), Oliver Stone is no stranger to controversy. He's going to stir the pot once again on September 16th with **Snowden**, his biopic on the divisive NSA whistleblower starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt as the title traitor/American hero. Expect the filmmaker, his lead actor and the supporting cast (which includes Shailene Woodley, Melissa Leo, and Star Trek's Zachary Quinto) to make a splash at the convention — and to experience a next-level feeling of irony if footage of the movie's panel is leaked.

The first teaser for Disney's upcoming Pacific-Island-set princess tale **Moana** promised a delightful vocal performance from Dwayne Johnson as an ages-old Polynesian demigod, gorgeous animation, and another welcome dash of diversity to Disney's roster. Johnson will be sadly absent from the "Moana: Art of Story" panel, but the film's directors and their fleet of animators will sit down to show off footage from the upcoming feature.

Luc Besson blew minds with his trippy, Scarlett Johansson-led action picture *Lucy* in 2014; his even more ambitious opus, **Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets**, will send having-a-moment actors Cara Delevingne and Dane DeHaan to space to rid the cosmos of evil while navigating the undeniable romantic tension between themselves. DeHaan, Delevingne, Besson, and his co-producer/wife Virginie Silla will all attend the panel; unfortunately, supporting actress Rihanna apparently had something else going on.

Sony first brought their animated moveable feast **Sausage Party** to South by Southwest; expect the SDCC crowd to eat this foodcentric cartoon raunchcom up, with a screening on the agenda as well as a chat with longtime collaborators/Preacher producers/nerd royalty Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg.

Marvel's big Hall H presentation will include all manner of untold wonders (perhaps a look at the upcoming Doctor Strange, or a reassurance that the Doctor Strange movie is still actually happening?), but an appearance from Chris Pratt and director James Gunn guarantees an eyeful of **Guardians of the Galaxy 2**. The throwback space opera remains one of Marvel's most charismatic properties to date; a follow-up arrives awash in hype and high expectations. Here's hoping Gunn is up to the task.

Meanwhile, DC couldn't possibly sit this one out. While it's uncertain as to whether crowds can expect a snippet of the upcoming Justice League film, they will be treated to the world-premiere screening of the animated adaptation of Alan Moore's immortal Batman story **The Killing Joke**. A more psychologically penetrating and elegantly written arc for the popular Caped Crusader cartoons than usual, this feature-length take on the fan-favorite graphic novel outlined the razor-thin division between the Joker and our ostensibly sane hero — who, it should be reminded, is a dude who dresses up like a bat and punches people at night. Expect the darkest look at the animated Dark Knight yet.

Warner Bros. has a strong stable of new show ponies to parade around this year. First, the Comic-Con set will get a jump on the highly anticipated **Suicide Squad**, hopefully before Jared Leto can leak even

more press releases about his disgusting preparations to portray the Joker. (Note: Please don't send us a dead pig for writing that.) Continuing on the superhero beat, the studio will whip – er, lasso? – their fans into a frenzy with the first taste of the long-demanded **Wonder Woman** solo film starring Gal Gadot, a brief highlight of *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* earlier this year. They'll also roll out early looks at **The Lego Batman Movie**, the Harry Potter-adjacent **Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them**, and next spring's **Kong: Skull Island**, with noted actor/God of Mischief/Taylor Swift paramour Tom Hiddleston in attendance to hype up the crowd. And finally, perhaps the biggest question mark of the bunch, Guy Ritchie will give the crowd a glimpse of **King Arthur: Legend of the Sword**, the first installment of a planned six-film series (good god, the trilogies are multiplying!), that offers a gritty revisionist take on the ages-old mythology of the Knights of the Round Table.

Hard to believe it's already been 30 years since James Cameron's blood-curdling **Aliens** lunged for the jugular at cineplexes across America, but Sigourney Weaver will be on the scene to commemorate the occasion. Though no promises have been explicitly made on the Comic-Con schedule, fans may fairly hold out hope for a little peek at the upcoming fifth installment of the franchise, *Alien: Covenant*; production is in full swing down in Australia, so director Ridley Scott could have enough presentable footage for a little sizzle reel.

## TV CBS

This year, the Tiffany Network's slate of upcoming projects includes a sneak peek of the third season of their high-tech thriller series **Scorpion**, brought to you in part by executive producers Alex Kurtzman and Roberto Orci. **American Gothic** began its run back in June, but this Six Feet Under -meets-Agatha Christie series (a recently deceased patriarch is outed as a serial killer; someone in the big dysfunctional family was his assistant) will grant audiences a preview of the back half of this season. Meanwhile, improbably resourceful man-of-action **MacGyver** lives again in a new reboot of the Eighties classic hitting small screens this fall; Comic-Con attendees, however, will get a chance to check out the pilot episode early.

## NBC

The Peacock has been scrambling to score a new comedy hit in a post-30 Rock, post-The Office, post-Community, post-Parks and Recreation world. (Remember how great Thursday nights' Must-See TV used to be?) They're praying that they've found one in **The Good Place**, a new sitcom from Parks/Office/Brooklyn Nine-Nine producer Mike Schur about a woman (Kristen Bell) who wakes up in heaven only to realize that she does not deserve to be there. Ted Danson co-stars as her spiritual guide, and geeks take note: Daredevil producer and future Sinister Six helmer Drew Goddard directed the pilot, which will screen at SDCC.

Superhero fanatics may take a special interest in **Powerless**, a sitcom set in the DC universe focused not on Batman or Superman, but an office of insurance claims adjusters who must contend with a world full of super-sized damages. (Our research indicates that this is, in fact, a real TV show.) Their dark-fantasy saga **Grimm** is still going strong and has the panel to show for it. And before breakout thriller **Blindspot** returns on September 14th, Con-ers will get an early look at the second season.

## ABC

The last of the old-school Big Three networks will take it relatively easy this year, fronting a panel for **Time After Time**, their remake of the 1979 film featuring Malcolm McDowell as sci-fi trailblazer H.G. Wells. In the film, the author uses an actual time machine to pursue serial killer Jack the Ripper into the present day. On the show, the historical figures will do battle in modern New York (with their antiquated spectacles and robust beards, they'll fit right in around Brooklyn). Meanwhile, ABC will push the newest season of their fairy-tale soap opera **Once Upon a Time** to the perennial crowd of rabidly excited superfans. And Marvel's TV branch will allow a glimpse at the next batch of **Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.** episodes.

## Fox

First, the returning shows: While Batman stumbles to find his footing in the Batfleck era at cineplexes, the network's spin-off **Gotham** will preview its third season; after 11 seasons and 232 episodes, **Bones** will enter its final season come 2017, and the stars will be on the scene to prep for the long goodbye; supernatural cop procedural **Lucifer** will court potential converts in San Diego with a first look at its second

season; and after creating buzz with its youth-friendly cast (Nick Jonas gets stabbed!), **Scream Queens** carved out a niche for its weird horror-comedy combo. (Jamie Lee Curtis, Lea Michele, and Emma Roberts will be on hand to drum up support for Season Two.) And annual staples **Bob's Burgers** and **The Simpsons** will make their kingly return to San Diego.

As for the new series and one-offs: When the pilot episode of **The Exorcist** spinoff program screens for a discerning crowd, we're hoping the audience members' heads won't start spinning. Fox will fuse live-action and animation for family comedy **Son of Zorn**. And, most tantalizing of all, the network will be previewing their musical event of the **Rocky Horror Picture Show** starring Victoria Justice and Laverne Cox. Transporting the bawdy midnight-madness staple into the SFW constraints of network TV is no enviable task, and the gathered watchers will be the first to rule whether Fox pulls it off.

## USA

The basic-cable upstart has turned into a legitimate player with the ascendance of Current It Show **Mr. Robot**; the cast and creators will be present at Comic-Con for a panel discussion as well as an overall peek at the new season. Executives are also gunning for a Robot-caliber reception at the preview for **Falling Water**, a mysterious program about which little is known beyond its roots in the supernatural and the participation of The Walking Dead producer Gale Ann Hurd. And finally, sticking to the sci-fi beat, USA will also tease the second season of dystopian life-in-alien-wartime drama **Colony** in advance of its 2017 return.

## Syfy

Arguably the geekiest original-programming network in basic cable, Syfy will arrive at Comic-Con in full force, with six full panels promoting their upcoming season of goodies. Despite a marked lack of crossbow-wielding Hugh Jackman, the latest iteration of legendary monster hunter **Van Helsing** will cast Kelly Overton in the title role — sort of. Her name is Vanessa Helsing, but she'll still poach all the expected vampires and occult beasties. The Harry-Potter-but-grittier charms

of **The Magicians** earned a substantial following during the first season, and those fans will be eager to get a look at the 2017-slated second season of the real-sorcery action program. The debut season of their thriller series **Wynonna Earp** concluded near the tail end of June, but the cast and crew will be on hand regardless to answer fan questions and stoke the fires.

Also: Matt Damon and Ben Affleck put their names on the upcoming corporate espionage thriller **Incorporated** as executive producers; with new shark-tornado Z-list disaster flicks now practically an annual holiday, SyFy will trot out **Sharknado: the 4th Awakens**; and space opera **The Expanse** will be back with an early glimpse of its sophomore year.

### **The CW**

A one-time purveyor of high-grade teen soap operas, the CW has matured into a serious TV contender. (Not that they've completely left the soap game behind them — **Supernatural**, **The Vampire Diaries** and its spinoff **The Originals** will tease their new seasons in San Diego.) CBS and Warner Bros.' joint venture is the home of most of DC's forays onto the small screen, with **Supergirl**, **Legends of Tomorrow**, **the Flash**, and **Arrow** all trotting out their new season for wide-eyed devotees. Throwing their full support behind cult-courting hits like **The 100** and **iZombie** has brought the network success the likes of which would've been unthinkable as recent as five years ago.

They are also aiming for another youth-gear smash with **Riverdale**, a Dawson's Creek-ified take on Archie, Betty, Veronica, Jughead, and the rest of the gang. The wild card on the CW's docket is **Frequency**, a supernatural thriller with an odd hook: A detective discovers she can speak to her dead father via ham radio, and together, they solve crimes. Points for originality!

### **AMC**

With full-blown panels devoted to **The Walking Dead** and spin-off **Fear the Walking Dead**, the executives at AMC know exactly why they're here. For an added dose of nerd-dom, Kevin Smith and Greg Grunberg will be on hand to promote their new pop-culture talk show **Geeking Out**, set to debut July 24th. And given that the zombie craze can't last forever (or can it? Discuss.) so AMC has already begun crafting its next

crossover genre hit with the comic-book adaptation **Preacher**; the cast and crew will be on hand with an advance look at the rest of their debut season.

### **Comedy Central**

The foulmouthed grade-schoolers of **South Park** are worshipped like lower-tier deities around the function halls of Comic-Con — and with the 20th season coming down the pike, they'll need a proper blowout. "South Park 20" will go beyond a sneak peek at the upcoming season; this multifaceted experience also offers fans the chance to insert themselves into a scene of their choosing. The reliably amusing **Drunk History** will stagger into San Diego to promote the newest round of booze-soaked anecdotes through the ages. (No word on whether the panel will have a two-drink minimum.) Also on hand: Simpsons veteran Brad Ableson and the rest of the folks behind the network's new animated series **Legends of Chamberlain Heights**, a comedy mixing urban-set social commentary with slacker hijinks.

### **HBO**

The remaining days of world-conquering, Comic-Con-friendly smash **Game of Thrones** are numbered — literally. But before HBO parts with their reigning money-factory, they'll unleash one more nerve-shredding season full of twists, flashy deaths, and firebreathing beasts, and the cast will hit the storied Hall H to get the legions of fans frothing at the mouth. **Silicon Valley** creator Mike Judge and the stars will sit for a Q&A before hinting at what season 4 might hold. And then there's **Vice Principals**, a promising sitcom featuring the master of alpha-male a-hole characters himself, Danny McBride, and Justified alum Walton Goggins as public-school employees sniping at one another over the vacant principal position.

### **Starz**

Though it's not held in a regard as high as its premium-cable cousin HBO, Starz has what just might be the most hotly anticipated show on this year's schedule. Once thought unadaptable, Neil Gaiman's mythology-meets-Americana graphic novel **American Gods** will finally come to our nation's living rooms in 2017. With his tenure on Hannibal now at a sad end, Bryan Fuller will take over as showrunner, and he'll join select members of the cast for a way, way-



early preview of this high-profile projects.

Starz also found an unlikely hit in **Ash vs Evil Dead**, an unnatural revival of Evil Dead, the campy horror franchise fittingly about unnatural revivals. At Comic-Con, they'll bring out Bruce Campbell to cock his eyebrow and get the crowds jazzed about another season.

## **FX**

Spoiler alert: The most recent season of FX's espionage/sitcom hybrid **Archer** ended with the world's most lovably douchey secret agent floating dead in a swimming pool. He can't possibly be that dead, though, because Sterling Archer's voice actor H. Jon Benjamin, his fellow castmates, and creator Adam Reed will converge on San Diego for a discussion about the most recent season and what the future holds for the investigations agency formerly known as ISIS.

Meanwhile, the third season of the Guillermo del Toro-fronted horror series **The Strain** arrives August 28th, and while the celebrated filmmaker will not be on hand for the panel, the co-creators and cast will be only too happy to answer any and all vampiric inquiries.  
Related: [How Tatiana Maslany Plays 9 Roles on 'Orphan Black'](#)

## **BBC America**

Send in the clones: Tatiana Maslany, Tatiana Maslany, Tatiana Maslany, and Tatiana Maslany star in the latest season of sci-fi sensation **Orphan Black** (with outstanding supporting character work from Tatiana Maslany). She'll only occupy one seat on the stage, however, when the cast promotes its fifth and final season.

New on the scene is **Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency**, an adaptation of work from Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy; author Douglas Adams, mounted by polarizing screenwriter Max Landis, the pen behind Chronicle, American Ultra, and last year's Victor Frankenstein.

## **The rest**

MTV shows off the latest season of their steamy **Teen Wolf** modernization ... The Nazis are up to no good in the new season of Amazon's **The Man in the High Castle** ... History Channel continues to

sully its reputation with another round of **Vikings**, everyone's favorite SFW Game of Thrones... Cinemax's demonic-possession horrorshow **Outcast** will spook audiences with a preview of the rest of their freshman season ... The Daily Show's Wyatt Cenac leads a support group for alien abductees in TBS' **People of Earth** ... Netflix pulls back the curtain on the long-awaited **Marvel's Luke Cage** ... TNT will tease the third season of their post-apocalyptic seafaring adventure **The Last Ship**... the BBC will hop across the pond, with the **Sherlock** team in tow... WGN America continues their witch hunt with another season of supernatural drama **Salem**... Norman Bates spends some quality time with his mama in the upcoming season of A&E's **Bates Motel**.