

How to Plan a Watch Party

If you've participated in National Canadian Film Day (NCFD) in the past, you're probably used to organizing or attending a live screening. But, due to the continued reality of COVID-19, we're keeping this year's National Canadian Film Day festivities online and on-screen! (With a select few lucky ducks who get to celebrate in person- pending local guidelines, of course.) In fact, participating in NCFD is easier this way! You don't even have to leave your couch!

In the absence of physical film screenings, people like you will help Canadians feel like they're truly keeping each other company, through the magic of the internet. Your participation is key to making this online NCFD a success!

Whether you're thinking small and intimate, or you want to party festival-style, we can help by recommending a film, an online platform, and strategies for audience interaction. Individuals and organizations are equally welcome to host!

Below are the detailed instructions for planning your online watch party, and links to additional resources on our website. Please don't hesitate to reach out to ncfd@reelcanada.ca to schedule a phone call so we can talk through it with you, and help you determine what will work best for your community.

5 Steps to Organizing an Online Watch Party

1. **Find your audience:** Who's invited? What kinds of films might they enjoy? Are they a tech-savvy group, or will they need help figuring out how to connect with you online? Will they prefer a daytime event or evening? You can tailor your watch party to the audience you are targeting.
2. **Choose a movie:** Our curated [Light at the End of the Tunnel](#) spotlight list features contemporary films that we hope will brighten your day, as well as some beloved classics that will make you feel warm and fuzzy.

You can also check out our [Family-friendly](#) options, or browse our full TV schedule and streaming guide. Almost everything is available for free (or with a free trial membership) through one of our broadcast or streaming partners. And you can always email us for recommendations that will appeal to your audience. *For help with navigating the various streaming services showing Canadian film on NCFD, download [How to Stream a Canadian Film](#)*

3. **Choose your type of engagement:** If you've worked with us before, you know we love getting the audience involved at NCFD screenings. Without that, it's just a movie night, not a "watch party"!

There are two basic ways to create audience engagement and interaction:

- a. **Chat While You Watch:** Viewers can chat in real time while the movie plays. The best way to approximate the feeling of sitting in the same living room, watching a movie together. There are many ways to enjoy this experience – make popcorn together, dress up, be silly or serious, it's all good!
- b. **Chat After The Movie:** If you'd rather just pay attention to the movie while you watch, that's no problem! You can organize a discussion after the film. Think of it like a book club, except with movies... and online! With this model, each person can watch the film independently and then log on to your chosen platform at a specified time to chat about it.

Make sure to download [How to Choose a Platform for Your Watch Party](#) for more ideas on how your audience can interact. Your watch party can take place on the usual social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Or, you might want to try some new favourites like Zoom (they're easy to use – we promise!)

You can enhance your watch party even further by preparing questions to guide and moderate the conversation, or even inviting a special guest to participate. *For more info about how to integrate a guided discussion or special guest into your plans, download [How to Enhance Your Watch Party](#).*

... Or email ncfd@reelcanada.ca, and we'll help you figure it out!

4. **Let us know about your party:** Send us an [email](#) and tell us what you're watching, when you're watching it, and how you'll be engaging online. We'd love to know about your NCFD plans.
5. **Promote, Promote, Promote!** If you're planning a community event, the last — and most important — step is to make sure you have an audience for the amazing watch party you've organized! If you already communicate with your audience through an email list, newsletter, or social media, those are great places to start. Otherwise, you might need to get creative!

For more tips on how to promote your event, download our guide for [How to Get an Audience for Your Watch Party](#) and take a look at our [Press Kit & Social Media Assets](#)

