

# Movies 101: Foreign & Independent Films

Foreign and Independent films can teach you a lot about other cultures—if you know where to find the good ones and how to make the most out of your movie experience. Here we present 5 simple tips for Foreign & Indie Films.

**1 Create wiggle room.** Finding the films that you like and that fit you takes a little time. Give yourself a little room to wiggle into non-mainstream films. Don't get turned off by a film you don't like or don't get. You'll find goldmines, not landmines, if you spend a little time looking.

**2 Start with an appetizer.** If you don't watch many independent and foreign films, start with a mainstream film that deals with subcultures to ease your way into the indie/foreign world. A few good starters:

- *My Big Fat Greek Wedding:* Details the life and wedding preparations of a Greek woman living in the suburbs of Chicago. (Comedy)
- *Whalerider:* A touching story of a Mauri tribe's struggle to hold on to traditions and redefine themselves in modern society. (Drama/Comedy)
- *Tortilla Soup:* A Mexican single-father in California runs his own restaurant and tries to run the lives of his three daughters. (Drama/Comedy)
- *Run, Lola, Run:* A German movie about a girl named Lola who must save her boyfriend from possible death. (Suspense)
- *Abre Los Ojos:* The Spanish film starring Penelope Cruz that *Vanilla Sky* was based on. (Action/Suspense)
- *Spirited Away:* Japanese animation which received accolades around the world. It tells the story of a young girl who gets separated from her parents in a world of ghosts. (Animation)

- *Monsoon Wedding:* Similar to *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* in theme, this movie deals with Indian culture and issues surrounding marriage in India. (Comedy)



**3 Choose movies that fit the world around you.** Pick a flick that is linked to your life in some way. You will connect more with the film and take more away from it. A great way to do this is to learn about other cultures as they take center stage in world issues. If you recently watched a news report on Cuba, you can rent *The Buena Vista Social Club* to learn some of the struggles in the country in a roundabout way.

**4 Choose movies that match your interests.** Whether it's a trip to Thailand, a new Brazilian neighbor, or a new resolution to refresh the French you learned in high school, there's a movie to match that can entertain you and prepare you for future interactions and adventures. Like to cook? Rent *Como Agua Para Chocolate* or *Tortilla Soup*. Like soccer (football)? Rent *Bend It Like Beckham* or *The Iron Ladies*.

**5 Make a night of it.** Have fun with these movies. Invite over your most interesting friends, pull out the snacks, and have a movie night. Take advantage of the fact that there are other people around to start talking about these movies. ✧

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