



An outdoor theater requires some investment and planning, but is a fun way to spend a summer evening with friends.

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Looking for a way to get the most out of your summer evenings? Make it a night at the drive-in at home! With the right equipment and planning, you can easily enjoy your favorite movies under the stars, right in your own back yard. Here are a few simple steps for bringing your new favorite tradition to life.

The Setup

Designing your outdoor screening space is a simple process. To begin, determine where your screen should be placed. You will want your screen positioned where there is minimal light once the house lights are off and the sun has set. There should be ample space for guest seating, and room for the projector's image throw distance. For optimal image quality, your projector should be elevated.

For seating, an assortment of lawn chairs, floor chairs, outdoor ottomans and outdoor rugs will accommodate preferences for guests of all ages.

Since you will be limiting ambient light as much as possible, keeping pathways lit for safety purposes is a sensible exception. Solar LED pathway lights are a tasteful accent that will keep guests safe around tripping hazards.

The Basics

Select the right projector. Since outdoor settings include a number of light sources that are not always within your control, such as street lights and moonlight, choosing

a projector with the right lumen level for your space is critical for clear image projection. As a rule, the more ambient light in your backyard, the higher you will want your projector's lumen level to be.

The second component to consider is sound. No home theater system is complete without quality sound, and your outdoor screening experience is no exception. Your guests will appreciate an audio source with enough output to cut through ambient noise.

For simplicity and convenience, consider an all-in-one outdoor movie theater kit, such as the one offered by Improvements, which is Wi-Fi enabled and features everything your backyard home theater needs, including a 1,200 lumen projector with 800x480 DPI, Bluetooth speaker and a 90-inch screen.

The Extra Details

Since you'll most likely be waiting for the sun to set before starting the movie, get creative with activities for both kids and adults to pass the time. It's a smart step to spray the area for bugs before guests arrive, and keep additional pest control solutions on hand.

Hosting an outdoor movie party is a fun opportunity to put a twist on movie theater snacks, especially ideas that can be prepared in advance. However, fresh popcorn is an absolute must.

Creating a drive-in theater in your backyard is easier than you think. With the right equipment, and some planning, the most difficult step will be picking out the movie.

Smart tips to keep your grill clean and safe

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Nothing beats barbecues, block parties and al fresco dining. For your family's safety and for the sake of your grill, here are some pointers on keeping that grill well-maintained all season.

Visual Check

Ensure your grill is still in good working order after the off-season by giving it a once-over. Remember to turn off the gas and tank valves before getting started. Check whether all of its components are intact, including gas hoses. Also, determine whether the tank is full.

Keep in mind that many grills come with a warranty, and you may be able to replace worn out parts without needing to buy a brand-new grill entirely.

Quick Clean-Up

When it comes to the grates, experts recommend using tools that allow you to skip the brush and the elbow grease to save some time and energy.

"Spray a concentrated multipurpose

cleanser over your grill's grates evenly, wait a few seconds to give the grease time to break down, then gently wipe the area down with a sponge," says TV contractor, Jeff Devlin, who uses Mean Green on his grill. The spray, which was recently named by Real Simple Magazine as the Best Multipurpose Spray, is available at Walmart and other retailers.

Other Considerations

A deep clean is important once or twice a season. However, after each use, you can keep debris and build-up from becoming a bigger problem with a quick spot clean. One important area you don't want to neglect is the bottom of the grill, where ash and grease build-up is likely to occur. Scrape out this section regularly.

You can better protect your grill from the elements and guard against rusting by covering it after each use. If possible, use the cover provided by the manufacturer, as its designed to best fit your grill.

This season, take great care of your grill. With the right tools on hand, you can streamline your routine.



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A clean grill is a safe grill and can make a backyard barbecue a neighborhood event.

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