

Around the world through movies on the couch?



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Movies on TV screen can provide a window into the human soul, where longings for adventure can be fulfilled during the pandemic

by LYDIA NATHAN

SO WE are finally allowed to travel across the various states in the country, yet, there is this pent-up need to see the other parts of the world that are currently not accessible due to the global Covid-19 pandemic.

International travel plans might be in limbo right now, as no one in the right frame of mind would be hopping on to a plane and jet off into some exotic location.

Fret not, as everything can now be done in the comfort of your living room. Yup, we can still kindle our wanderlust through timeless movies and television (TV) series that can take us on trips and help us dream of real-life travel experiences.

After all, movies have not only indulged our late-night desires for a romantic-comedy or action-packed laden experience, but the TV screen also provides a window into the human soul, where longings for adventure can be fulfilled.

Some movies — more than others — feature stunning sceneries and epic historical monuments for us to draw inspiration on where to go next.

The Malaysian Reserve takes a look at some of the movies that could literally bring the world right to your couch.

‘Train to Busan’

The South Korean action-horror film is known as one of the most successful films outside of Korea and has captivated audiences around the world. It is said that if you visit Seoul, you are most likely to get to a destination by the Korea Train Express which was where the film was shot.

Because of its storyline, the buildings and scenery filmed are completely empty, but viewers still get glimpses of the-could-be-lives of the people and the different stops on the rail line.

‘Crazy Rich Asians’

This film actually made history by being the first English-language Hollywood movie to have an all Asian cast.

Taken from Kevin Kwan’s novel, the plot revolves around American professor Rachel Chu who travels to Singapore with her partner, Nick Young, for a wedding, diving into a world of opulence and the glamorous lives of the couture-wearing family.

Despite the film being known as mostly Singaporean, most of the scenes were actually shot in Malaysia, proving that we do have some really impressive architecture.

For instance, Young’s family home is actually Carcosa Seri Negara, built in 1896 for the British High Commissioner of Malaya Sir Frank Swettenham, and is a luxury hotel right now.

Another local heritage to boast of is the Eastern and Oriental Hotel in Penang, fondly known as the E&O Hotel to locals, but more importantly, the opening scene of the movie.

Other locations used for filming include the Four Seasons Resort in Langkawi, Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion in Penang and the Be-Landa House in Kuala Lumpur.

TO FRONTLINERS, WE SALUTE & THANK YOU

‘Eat, Pray, Love’

Based on a novel by Elizabeth Gilbert, the stunning Julia Roberts takes us on a soul-searching journey to the countryside of Italy to the busy streets of India before finally ending up in peaceful Indonesia.

Scenes in Rome feature Gilbert navigating a busy cafe to make new friends, while savouring mouth-watering Spaghetti all’Amatriciana and Neopolitan pizza, and infamously telling co-star Tuva Novotny, “I’m having a relationship with my pizza”.

From there, she takes off to India where she eats and drinks on the chaotic streets filled with stalls, bikes, cars and donkeys before landing up in an ashram and cycling alongside a river in Bali.

Even the king of the fruits, the durian, makes an appearance in the film.

While many said the movie is an unabashed chick flick, the scenery and hidden beauty of each country Gilbert ventures to, are a good enough reason to watch for travel buffs.

‘Lord of The Rings Trilogy’

The three epic fantasy feature films based on JRR Tolkien’s novel and directed by Peter Jackson undoubtedly put New Zealand on the map.

After the films were released, Rotorua and Matamata (also known as Hobbiton) became famous and were soon swimming with tourists wanting to see the region and explore Hobbit Holes that were featured.

Visitors also flocked to Tongariro National Park, otherwise known as Mordor and Hidden Bay, and the entrance to The Lonely Mountain in “The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug”.

The movies kept not only fantasy film enthusiasts happy, but nature lovers as well, with its shots of rolling hills, grand mountains and forest in the South Island, and eroded pillars on Dimholt Road.

‘Sisterhood of The Travelling Pants’

American comedy-drama, Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants is about the lives of four young women who share a deep bond of friendship with each other and a special pair of pants while dealing with deaths, divorces, love lives and all-round growing up.

Parts of the second movie was shot on the beautiful island of Santorini, at the village of Oia, Ammoudi Harbour, the beach and other pretty locations surrounding it.

While the girls explore the island, viewers are transported to the typical steep paths one would see in Greece, blue Santorini roofs and white buildings clinging to steep cliffs, overlooking the ocean.

‘Mamma Mia!’

Meanwhile, Mamma Mia! became a smash hit musical featuring an all-star studded cast, including Meryl Strep, Pierce Brosnan and Amanda Seyfried.

More importantly, the locations used featured fine sandy beaches on Skiathos, mountains on Skopelos and the fictional hotel featured in the film is pictured on the cliffs above Glysteri Beach.

Given the fact that we most likely will not be able to travel until the end of year, these movies will have to do for now.