SOFTWARE & TECH

What Is The Order Of The National Lampoon Vacation Movies

PUBLISHED
November 25, 2026

REFERENCE
#1795580592431395

Introduction: The Enduring Charm of the Griswold Family Road Trip

For decades, the hapless yet endearing Griswold family has been a beloved staple of American comedy. From ill-fated cross-country drives to disastrous European tours, their misadventures have provided generations of viewers with laughter, cringes, and surprisingly heartfelt moments. If you have ever wondered about the correct sequence to watch these films, you are not alone. The question "What Is The Order Of The National Lampoon Vacation Movies" is a common one among both newcomers and dedicated fans looking to take a proper trip down memory lane.

Understanding the order of the **National Lampoon Vacation movies** is more than just a matter of chronological release. It involves tracing the growth (or lack thereof) of Clark Griswold, the unwavering patience of his wife Ellen, and the evolution of their children, Rusty and Audrey, through various actors and life stages. This article will serve as your definitive guide, breaking down every film in the franchise, explaining the chronology, and offering insights into why this series remains a comedic gold standard.

The Core Canon: The Main Vacation Film Series

When people search for "What Is The Order Of The National Lampoon Vacation Movies," they are typically looking for the core series that follows the Griswold family. While there are spin-offs and later reboots, the primary saga consists of five distinct films. Understanding this sequence is essential for appreciating the narrative arc and the running gags that tie the franchise together.

1. National Lampoon's Vacation (1983)

The film that started it all. Released in 1983, **National Lampoon's Vacation** introduced the world to Clark Griswold (Chevy Chase), a man with a singular vision: to take his family on a cross-country road trip from their home in suburban Chicago to the mythical "Walley World" theme park in California. What follows is a masterclass in Murphy's Law, where everything that can go wrong does.

This installment established the template for the entire series. We meet the long-suffering Ellen (Beverly D'Angelo), the moody teenager Rusty (Anthony Michael Hall), and the quirky pre-teen Audrey (Dana Barron). The film is a road-trip odyssey filled with unforgettable moments: the "Family Truckster" station wagon, the visit to Aunt Edna's house, and the eventual desperate hostage situation at Walley World. This movie is the essential starting point for any viewing marathon and defines the answer to "What Is The Order Of The National Lampoon Vacation Movies."

2. National Lampoon's European Vacation (1985)

Following the success of the first film, the Griswolds set their sights overseas. **National Lampoon's European**

(1985) sees the family winning a grand prize trip to Europe. While the setting changes, the formula remains the same: Clark's grand plans meet a continent of cultural misunderstandings and physical comedy disasters.

This sequel is notable for several reasons. First, it features a completely recast Rusty and Audrey, now played by Jason Lively and Dana Hill. Second, it leans heavily into the "ugly American" trope abroad, with scenes set in London, Paris, Germany, and Italy. While opinions vary on its ranking within the franchise, it holds a special place for its iconic moments, such as Clark's confusion over the British road system and the infamous "pig in a blanket" scene. For anyone exploring the list of **National Lampoon Vacation movies**, this is a crucial second entry.

3. National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (1989)

Arguably the most beloved film in the entire series, **National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation** (1989) is a holiday classic that transcends the franchise. In this installment, Clark Griswold is determined to create the perfect old-fashioned family Christmas, complete with a massive tree, a house covered in 25,000 imported Italian twinkle lights, and a very large bonus from his boss.

The cast returns with Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo, while Rusty and Audrey are once again recast, this time with Johnny Galecki and Juliette Lewis. This film is a masterwork of comedic tension and holiday spirit. From the arrival of Cousin Eddie (Randy Quaid) and his RV, to the kidnapping of Clark's boss, and the final, uplifting rescue of the turkey, this movie is a cultural touchstone. It is often the first film that comes to mind when people ask **"What Is The Order Of The National Lampoon Vacation Movies"**, even though it is the third in the main series.

4. Vegas Vacation (1997)

After a long hiatus, the Griswolds returned in 1997 with **Vegas Vacation**. This time, the family heads to Las Vegas for a vacation. The plot sees Clark determined to win big to pay for a new pool, while Rusty (now an adult played by Ethan Embry) learns the ropes of blackjack, and Audrey (Marisol Nichols) falls for a creepy Wayne Newton impersonator.

This film has a different feel from its predecessors. It trades the road trip format for a single-location comedy. While it lacks the sharp edge of the early films, it features hilarious supporting performances, including Wallace Shawn as the blackjack dealer and Wayne Newton as himself. It is a lighter, more whimsical entry that shows the family adapting to a new type of chaos. For those keeping track of the **National Lampoon Vacation movies** order, this is the final entry featuring the original Griswold parents.

5. National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation 2 (2003)

It is important to mention this film, though it is often considered the black sheep of the family. **National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation 2: Cousin Eddie's Island Adventure** (2003) is a made-for-television movie that focuses not on Clark, but on Cousin Eddie and his family. Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo do not appear.

Because it lacks the core cast and the original director's vision, most fans do not include it in the primary order. However, it exists within the National Lampoon universe. For completeness, it sits after **Vegas Vacation** on the timeline, but it is generally considered optional viewing.

The Legacy Sequel: A New Generation Takes the Wheel

A common point of confusion regarding "What Is The Order Of The National Lampoon Vacation Movies" is where the 2015 film **Vacation** fits. This film is a direct sequel and soft reboot of the original 1983 movie.

Vacation (2015)

Vacation is a 2015 reboot starring Ed Helms as a grown-up Rusty Griswold. Now an adult with a family of his own, Rusty decides to recreate the iconic road trip to Walley World in the hopes of bonding with his own wife and sons. Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo make cameo appearances as Clark and Ellen, passing the torch to the next generation.

This film is best watched after the original five, as it contains numerous callbacks and references that require knowledge of the earlier films. It updates the humor for a modern audience while staying true to the spirit of the original. It serves as a satisfying bookend to the saga, confirming that the Griswold curse (or blessing) of misadventure is hereditary.

Chronological vs. Release Order: A Simple Guide

For most viewers, the best way to watch the series is in release order. This allows you to see the evolution of comedy and the aging of the characters naturally. However, if you prefer a strict timeline of the characters' lives, here is a breakdown:

- 1980s (Original Timeline): National Lampoon's Vacation (1983), National Lampoon's European Vacation (1985), National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (1989).
- Late 1990s (Adult Children): Vegas Vacation (1997).
- 2000s (Spin-off): National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation 2 (2003).
- Modern Era (Next Generation): Vacation (2015).

Regardless of which order you choose, the core experience remains the same. The answer to **"What Is The Order Of The National Lampoon Vacation Movies"** remains: start with the classics, enjoy the holiday special, and finish with the reboot.

Key Themes That Define the Franchise

Understanding the order of the **National Lampoon Vacation movies** also requires understanding the themes that bind them together.

The Pursuit of the Perfect Vacation

Every film centers on Clark's obsession with creating a "perfect" family memory. This theme is the engine of the comedy. Whether it is a road trip, a foreign tour, a Christmas dinner, or a casino weekend, Clark's high expectations are always met with low reality. This universal experience—the gap between the vacation we dream of and the vacation we actually get—is why the series resonates.

The Unbreakable Griswold Bond

Despite the chaos, the Griswolds always come together. Ellen, despite her frustration, stands by Clark. The kids, despite their embarrassment, ultimately love their dad. This emotional core prevents the films from being merely mean-spirited. They are comedies of affection, not cruelty.

The Evolution of American Culture

Watching the series in order is like watching a time capsule of American life. The 1983 film captures the optimism of the early 80s. *Christmas Vacation* reflects the yuppie era. *Vegas Vacation* satirizes the 90s boom. The 2015 *Vacation* comments on modern parenting and digital-age disconnect. This cultural commentary is a subtle but powerful reason to watch them in the correct order.

Why the Cast Changes Matter

A frequent point of discussion regarding the **National Lampoon Vacation movies** order is the recasting of Rusty and Audrey. The children are played by different actors in almost every film. For many, this is a minor distraction. For others, it adds to the surreal, almost mythical quality of the series—the Griswold children are

archetypes rather than consistent characters.

Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo remain the anchors. Their chemistry is the constant that holds the franchise together. Without them, the spin-offs feel hollow. Their presence in the 2015 film serves as a symbolic "passing of the torch," ensuring that the legacy continues even with a new generation of actors.

How to Watch the National Lampoon Vacation Movies for the First Time

If you are a newcomer asking **"What Is The Order Of The National Lampoon Vacation Movies"** , here is a recommended viewing strategy:

1. Start with the original National Lampoon's Vacation (1983). This establishes the tone, characters, and world.
2. Watch European Vacation (1985). It expands the scope and shows the family dynamic abroad.
3. Enjoy Christmas Vacation (1989). Save this for the holiday season for maximum effect.
4. Finish the original run with Vegas Vacation (1997). It wraps up the parents' story.
5. Optional: Christmas Vacation 2 (2003). Only if you are a completionist.

Related Articles

- **Are James Blunt And Emily Blunt Related**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/are-james-blunt-and-emily-blunt-related.pdf
- **Was Remember Me Based On A True Story**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/was-remember-me-based-on-a-true-story.pdf
- **Ess Employee Self Service Costco**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/ess-employee-self-service-costco.pdf
- **The Case For Christianity By Cs Lewis**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/the-case-for-christianity-by-cs-lewis.pdf

TOPIC INDEX

#what • #order • #national • #lampoon • #vacation

DIGITAL EDITION

what-is-the-order-of-the-national-lampoon-vac

DIGITAL EDITION

what-is-the-order-of-the-national-lampoon-vac

DIGITAL EDITION

what-is-the-order-of-the-national-lampoon-vac

DIGITAL EDITION

what-is-the-order-of-the-national-lampoon-vac