



STAR TREK

STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE (1979) (132m) **1/2 D: Robert Weis. C: William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelly, James Doohan, Walter Koenig, Nichelle Nichols, George Takei, Persis Khambatta, Stephen Collins.

In the 23rd century, famed and retired Starfleet Federation Admiral James T. Kirk (Shatner) and company are reinstated to the equally acclaimed starship U.S.S. Enterprise (now refurbished with a new captain and crew) in order to intercept a massive alien object hurtling toward Earth.

Lengthy, tiresome, and threadbare, but given a spike of energy by the magnetism of its stars as well as some outstanding set pieces. Jerry Goldsmith's now classic score and special effects (Douglas Trumbull and John Dykstra) are high points to a film mostly catered to enthusiasts.

Followed by a slew of sequels and television programs.



Network television and home video versions run 143m and are rated PG.  

STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KAHN (1982) (113m) ***1/2 D: Nicholas Meyer. C: William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelly, James Doohan, Walter Koenig, George Takei, Nichelle Nichols, Bibi Besch, Merritt Buttrick, Paul Winfield, Kirstie Alley, Ricardo Montalban, John Vargas.

Genetically engineered superhuman (a deliciously snarling Montalban) apprehends a federation starship and—with vengeful crew in tow—seeks out Admiral Kirk to even the score for abandoning him on a desolate planet years earlier (from the original television series to be exact: “Space Seed” episode, which was broadcast in 1967).

Exciting sequel surpasses the original in every aspect. Superbly paced and well written science-fiction make for exceptional entertainment with a steady showing of camaraderie on screen. Also noteworthy for James Horner's sweeping score, which put him on the map.

Alley's film debut.

Originally released as **STAR TREK: THE WRATH OF KAHN**.  



STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK (1984) (105m) *** D: Leonard Nimoy. C: William Shatner, DeForest Kelly, James Doohan, Walter Koenig, George Takei, Nichelle Nichols, Merritt Buttrick, Robin Curtis, Christopher Lloyd, Leonard Nimoy.

A band of Klingon insurrectionists (lead by Lloyd) have retrieved vital intel regarding a self-sustaining planet—The “Genesis Project”—and plot to use its secrets against the federation as a weapon. Meanwhile, Admiral Kirk illegally confiscates the Enterprise in hopes to relocate a lost crew member.

The grimdest chapter of the saga to be sure, but Nimoy (in his theatrical feature-film debut as director) is able to construct a satisfying bridge between **THE WRATH OF KAHN** and **THE VOYAGE HOME** with brain and brawn.

Lloyd is a formidable, if not altogether noteworthy, Klingon commander.



Alley is replaced by Curtis in the role of Saavik.

Miguel Ferrer makes an uncredited appearance.  

STAR TREK IV: THE VOYAGE HOME (1986) (119m) **** D: Leonard Nimoy. C: William Shatner, DeForest Kelly, Leonard Nimoy, James Doohan, Walter Koenig, George Takei, Nichelle Nichols, Catherine Hicks, Robert Eisenstein, Brock Peters, Mark Lenard, John Schuck.

After illegally acquiring and destroying the Enterprise to save his lost ally, Admiral Kirk is expected to face judicial ramifications for his impertinence—at the mercy of his Starfleet Federation superiors. However, as he and his loyal constituency travel to Earth for what awaits them, the planet is under siege by an alien probe.



Ironic that the best entry in this science-fiction chronicle would primarily occur in a twentieth-century San Francisco, shifting focus from its archetypal space-age jargon to a more character driven drama. Shatner and company have never been more appealing and the film is refreshingly hearty with dashes of humor strewn throughout; this trek manages to effortlessly convey an ecological message without any hindrance to its sense of fun.

Nimoy also shares storytelling credit.  

STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER (1989) (107m) ** D: William Shatner. C: William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelly, James Doohan, Walter Koenig, George Takei, Nichelle Nichols, Laurence Luckinbill, Charles Cooper, David Warner, Rex Holman, George Murdock.

Contrived sequel has Captain Kirk (now demoted for his dismissal of Starfleet Federation regulations recounted in “The Search For Spock”) joining forces with an eccentric yet overpoweringly influential Vulcan (Luckinbill) who is consumed with finding God supposedly located at the center of the galaxy.

Shatner's directorial debut (he also serves story credit) is far from incompetent, but this ostentatious foray into existentialism bites off way more than it can chew. Muddled and uneven, this is also the most “episodic” installment in the series. The return of Jerry Goldsmith's classic theme is welcome, however.

For fans only.  

STAR TREK VI: THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY (1991) (110m) ***1/2 D: Nicholas Meyer. William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelly, James Doohan, Walter Koenig, George Takei, Nichelle Nichols, Kim Cattral, Christopher Plummer, David Warner, Mark Lenard, Kurtwood Smith, John Schuck.

Annihilation of the Klingon race is all but inescapable, and a retiring Captain Kirk (knowingly prejudiced against the Starfleet Federation's former nemesis) reluctantly agrees to host their chancellor (a barely recognizable Warner) only to be framed for his assassination.

Meyer's, who helmed **THE WRATH OF KAHN**, spares nothing in delivering a climactic and heartfelt conclusion to a superior space saga. Plummer is magnificent as the treacherous Chang, and subplot involving Captain Sulu allows the often underutilized Takei to shine. Christian Slater appears uncredited.

Network television and home video productions include 2 minutes of added footage.  

RATING GUIDE:
**** Excellent
*** Good
** Average
* Poor