

The Paragon Multimedia DVD, VHS Collection

Title: **Casablanca**



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Information

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Library Image



Casablanca

Humphrey Bogart Ingrid Bergman Paul Henreid

A HAL B. WALLIS PRODUCTION

Casablanca

STARRING CLAUDE RAINS CONRAD VEIDT SYDNEY GREENSTREET PETER LORRE
Directed by MICHAEL CURTIZ

Theatrical release poster by Bill Gold

Directed by	Michael Curtiz
Screenplay by	Julius J. Epstein Philip G. Epstein Howard Koch
Based on	<i>Everybody Comes to Rick's</i> by Murray Burnett Joan Alison
Produced by	Hal B. Wallis
Starring	Humphrey Bogart Ingrid Bergman Paul Henreid Claude Rains Conrad Veidt Sydney Greenstreet Peter Lorre ^[1]
Cinematography	Arthur Edson
Edited by	Owen Marks
Music by	Max Steiner
Production company	Warner Bros. Pictures
Distributed by	Warner Bros. Pictures
Release dates	November 26, 1942 (Hollywood Theatre) January 23, 1943 (United States)
Running time	102 minutes ^[2]
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$878,000 ^[3] –\$1 million ^{[4][5]}
Box office	\$3.7 ^[6] –6.9 million ^[4]

Storyline

In December 1941, American expatriate Rick Blaine owns a nightclub and gambling den in Casablanca. "Rick's Café Américain" attracts a varied clientele, including Vichy French and Nazi German officials, refugees desperate to reach the neutral United States, and those who prey on them. Although Rick professes to be neutral in all matters, he ran guns to Ethiopia during the Second Italo-Ethiopian War and fought on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. Despite feigning indifference, he demonstrates sympathy for the refugees' plight and disdain for the repressive, fascist regimes.

Petty crook Ugarte boasts to Rick of "letters of transit" obtained by murdering two German couriers. The papers allow the bearers to travel freely around German-occupied Europe and to neutral Portugal; they are priceless to the refugees stranded in Casablanca. Ugarte plans to sell them at the club and persuades Rick to hold them. Before he can meet his contact, Ugarte is arrested by the local police under Captain Louis Renault, the unabashedly corrupt prefect of police. Ugarte dies in custody without revealing that Rick has the letters.

Then the reason for Rick's cynical nature—former lover Ilsa Lund—enters his establishment. Spotting Rick's friend and house pianist, Sam, Ilsa asks him to play "As Time Goes By". Rick storms over, furious that Sam disobeyed his order never to perform that song again, and is stunned to see Ilsa. She is accompanied by her husband, Victor Laszlo, a renowned fugitive Czechoslovak Resistance leader. The two need the letters to escape to America, as German Major Strasser has come to Casablanca to arrest Laszlo.

When Laszlo makes inquiries, Signor Ferrari, an underworld figure and Rick's friendly business rival, divulges his suspicion that Rick has the letters of transit. Laszlo returns to Rick's cafe that night and tries to buy the letters. Rick refuses to sell, telling Laszlo to ask his wife why. They are interrupted when Strasser leads a group of German officers in singing "Die Wacht am Rhein". Laszlo orders the house band to play "La Marseillaise". When the bandleader looks to Rick, the latter nods, and Laszlo leads the band in proud defiance. Patriotic fervour grips the crowd, and everyone joins in, drowning out the Germans. Fearing the spirit Laszlo can inspire, Strasser demands that Renault close the club.

Black-and-white film screenshot of a man and woman as seen from the shoulders up. The two are close to each other as if about to kiss.

Bogart and Bergman

Later, Ilsa confronts Rick in the deserted café; when he refuses to give her the letters, she threatens him with a gun but then confesses that she still loves him. She explains that when they met and fell in love in Paris in 1940, she believed her husband had been killed while attempting to escape from a concentration camp. While preparing to flee with Rick from the city during the Battle of France, Ilsa learned Laszlo was alive and hiding near Paris. She left Rick without explanation to nurse her sick husband. Rick's bitterness dissolves. He agrees to help, letting her believe she will stay with him when Laszlo leaves. When Laszlo unexpectedly shows up, having narrowly escaped a police raid on a Resistance meeting, Rick has waiter Carl spirit Ilsa away. Laszlo, aware of Rick's love for Ilsa, tries to persuade him to use the letters to take her to safety.

When the police arrest Laszlo on a trumped-up charge, Rick persuades Renault to release him by promising to set him up for a much more serious crime: possession of the letters. To allay Renault's suspicions, Rick explains that he and Ilsa will leave for America. When Renault tries to arrest Laszlo as arranged, Rick forces him at gunpoint to assist in their escape. At the last moment, Rick makes Ilsa board the plane to Lisbon with Laszlo, telling her that she would regret it if she stayed, "Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but soon and for the rest of your life." Strasser, tipped off by Renault, drives up alone. When Strasser ignores Rick's warnings and attempts to stop the plane, Rick shoots him dead. When policemen arrive, Renault pauses, then orders them to "round up the usual suspects."

He suggests to Rick that they join the Free French in Brazzaville. As they walk away into the fog, Rick says, "Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

Cast

The play's cast consisted of 16 speaking parts and several extras; the film script enlarged it to 22 speaking parts and hundreds of extras. The cast is notably international: only three of the credited actors were born in the United States (Bogart, Dooley Wilson, and Joy Page). The top-billed actors are:

Humphrey Bogart as Rick Blaine

Ingrid Bergman as Ilsa Lund. Bergman's official website calls Ilsa her "most famous and enduring role". The Swedish actress's Hollywood debut in *Intermezzo* had been well received, but her subsequent films were not major successes until *Casablanca*. Film critic Roger Ebert called her "luminous", and commented on the chemistry between her and Bogart: "she paints his face with her eyes". Other actresses considered for the role of Ilsa included Ann Sheridan, Hedy Lamarr, Luise Rainer, and Michèle Morgan. Producer Hal Wallis obtained the services of Bergman, who was contracted to David O. Selznick, by lending Olivia de Havilland in exchange.

Paul Henreid as Victor Laszlo. Henreid, an Austrian actor who had emigrated in 1935, was reluctant to take the role (it "set [him] as a stiff forever", according to Pauline Kael), until he was promised top billing along with Bogart and Bergman. Henreid did not get on well with his fellow actors; he considered Bogart "a mediocre actor"; Bergman called Henreid a "prima donna".

The second-billed actors are:

Claude Rains as Captain Louis Renault

Conrad Veidt as Major Heinrich Strasser. Veidt was a refugee German actor who had fled the Nazis with his Jewish wife, but frequently played Nazis in American films. He was the highest paid member of the cast despite his second billing.

Sydney Greenstreet as Signor Ferrari

Peter Lorre as Signor Ugarte

Also credited are:

Curt Bois as the pickpocket. Bois had one of the longest careers in cinema, spanning over 80 years.

Leonid Kinskey as Sascha, the Russian bartender infatuated with Yvonne. Kinskey told Aljean Harmetz, author of *Round Up the Usual Suspects: The Making of Casablanca*, that he was cast because he was Bogart's drinking buddy. He was not the first choice for the role; he replaced Leo Mostovoy, who was deemed not funny enough.

Madeleine Lebeau as Yvonne, Rick's soon-discarded girlfriend. Lebeau was a French refugee who had left Nazi-occupied Europe with her husband Marcel Dalio, who was a fellow *Casablanca* performer. She was the last surviving cast member until her death on May 1, 2016.

Joy Page, the step-daughter of studio head Jack L. Warner, as Annina Brandel, the young Bulgarian refugee

John Qualen as Berger, Laszlo's Resistance contact

S. Z. Sakall (credited as S. K. Sakall) as Carl, the waiter

Dooley Wilson as Sam. Wilson was one of the few American-born members of the cast. A drummer, he had to fake playing the piano. Even after shooting had been completed, producer Wallis considered dubbing over Wilson's voice for the songs.

Notable uncredited actors are:

Marcel Dalio as Emil the croupier. Dalio had been a star in French cinema, appearing in Jean Renoir's *La Grande Illusion* and *La Règle du Jeu*

Helmut Dantine as Jan Brandel, the Bulgarian roulette player married to Annina Brandel

Gregory Gaye as the German banker who is refused entry to the casino by Rick

Torben Meyer as the Dutch banker who runs "the second largest banking house in Amsterdam"

Corinna Mura as the guitar player who sings "Tango Delle Rose" (or "Tango de la Rosa") and later accompanies the crowd on "La Marseillaise"

Frank Puglia as a Moroccan rug merchant

Richard Ryen as Colonel Heinze, Strasser's aide

Dan Seymour as Abdul the doorman

Gerald Oliver Smith as the Englishman whose wallet is stolen

Norma Varden as the Englishwoman whose husband has his wallet stolen

Much of the emotional impact of the film, for the audience in 1942, has been attributed to the large proportion of European exiles and refugees who were extras or played minor roles (in addition to leading actors Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt and Peter Lorre), such as Louis V. Arco, Trude Berliner, Ilka Grünig, Ludwig Stössel, Hans Heinrich von Twardowski, and Wolfgang Zilzer. A witness to the filming of the "duel of the anthems" sequence said he saw many of the actors crying and "realized that they were all real refugees". Harnetz argues that they "brought to a dozen small roles in Casablanca an understanding and a desperation that could never have come from Central Casting". Even though many were Jewish or refugees from the Nazis (or both), they were frequently cast as Nazis in various war films, because of their accents.

Jack Benny may have appeared in an unbilled cameo, as was claimed by a contemporary newspaper advertisement and in the Casablanca press book. When asked in his column "Movie Answer Man", critic Roger Ebert first replied, "It looks something like him. That's all I can say." In a later column, he responded to a follow-up commenter, "I think you're right. The Jack Benny Fan Club can feel vindicated"

Certification

Argentina:Atp Australia:PG Australia:A (original rating) Australia:PG (1984, re-rating) Brazil:12 Brazil:Livre (Blu-ray rating) Brazil:Livre (original rating) Canada:G (Manitoba/Nova Scotia/Quebec) Canada:PG (Ontario) Chile:TE+7 (re-release) Chile:TE+7 (2015, re-rating) Denmark:A Ecuador:TP (self-applied) Egypt:PG (self-applied) Finland:S France:Tous publics Germany:6 Germany:6 (Blu-ray rating) Hong Kong:IIA (video rating) Hungary:12 Iceland:L India:U Ireland:G Ireland:G (Blu-ray rating) Ireland:G (DVD rating) Ireland:G (1945, cut) Ireland:(Banned) (1942) Israel:8+ Italy:T Japan:PG-12 (video rating) Japan:G (2009) Malaysia:P13 Mexico:B Netherlands:AL New Zealand:PG Nigeria:G Norway:16 (original rating) Norway:11 (2002, re-rating) Norway:10 (1992, re-rating) Peru:Apt Philippines:PG-13 (MTRCB, video rating) Poland:12 (self-applied) Portugal:M/12 (Qualidade) Russia:6+ Saudi Arabia:G Singapore:PG (video rating) South Africa:PG (video rating) South Korea:12 (1999) South Korea:15 (1989) Spain:A Sweden:15 (original rating, cut) Sweden:7 (re-release) Sweden:15 (1957, uncut) Taiwan:PG-12 (2020) Thailand:Not Rated (self-applied) Turkey:G (self-applied) United Kingdom:U United Kingdom:U (Blu-ray rating) United Kingdom:U (DVD rating) United Kingdom:U (2006, re-release) United States:TV-PG (TV rating) United States:Approved (certificate #8457) United States:PG (1992, certificate #31772) United Arab Emirates:PG-15 (self-applied)

Sex & Nudity

None

Violence & Gore

Mild

Profanity

None

Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking

Mild

Drugs: None

Frightening & Intense Scenes

None

MPAA Rated PG for mild violence

