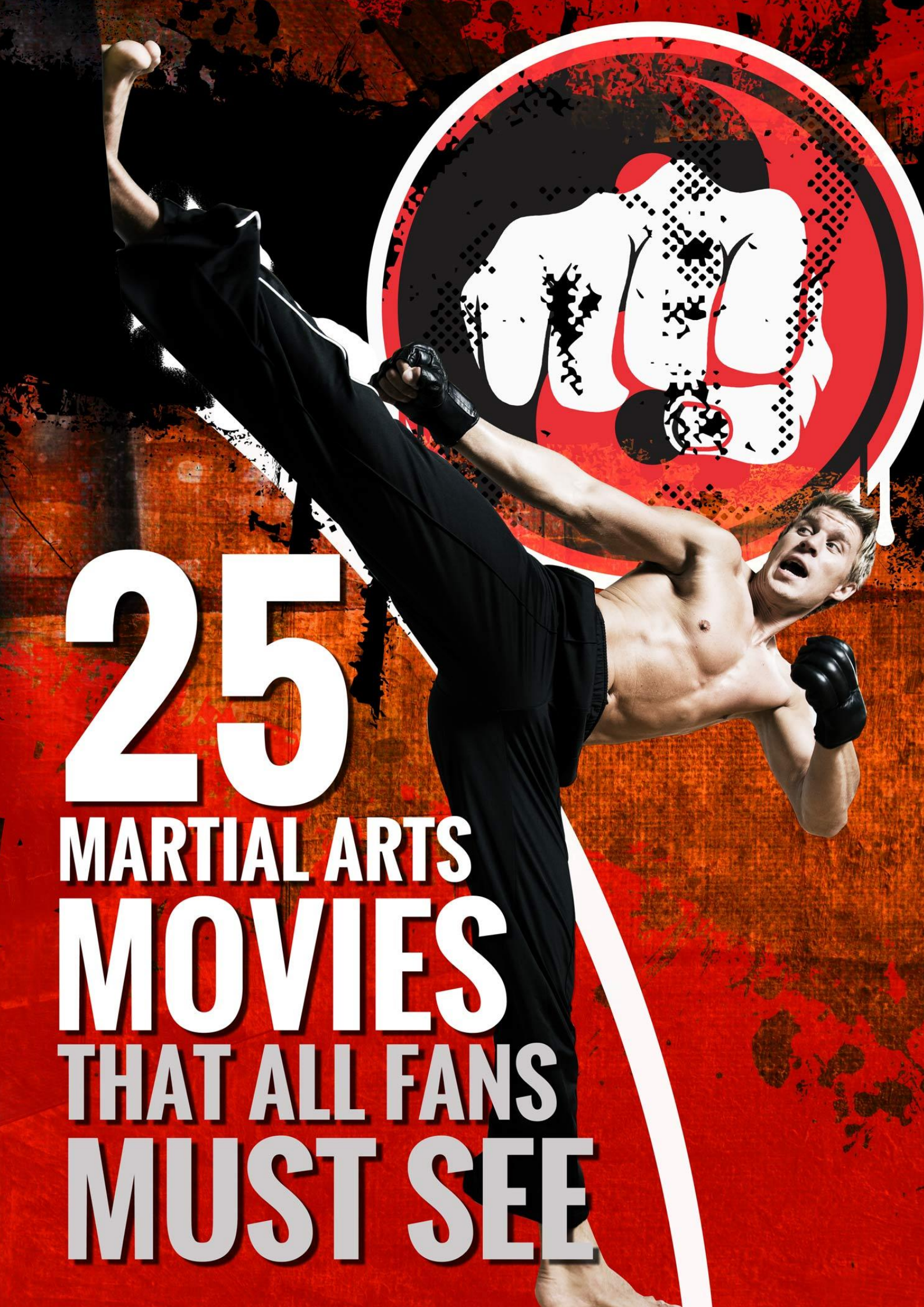

25
MARTIAL ARTS
MOVIES
THAT ALL FANS
MUST SEE

Whether you've been watching martial arts movies for years or if it's a fresh interest you're finding extremely addictive, it can be quite difficult to find good films to watch. Let's face it, martial arts films aren't as popular in mainstream movie media as we'd like so it can take a bit of digging to find the classics and figure out what's worth watching.

This free little guide will show you 25 films that can truly kick start your journey into the world of martial arts films. Below you'll be introduced to the most popular actors in martial arts history through some of the most significant films in the genre.

So I won't waste your time, let's get into it!

One Armed Swordsman

This Shaw Brothers film from 1967 really helped build the studio's popularity and that of Kung Fu movies, kick-starting the golden era. We're introduced to the actor Jimmy Wang Yu, who became a star and one of the most successful Kung Fu film actors of all time after this movie was released.

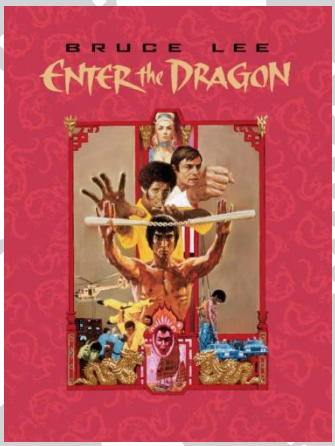


Jimmy Wang Yu plays Fang Kang, the Swordsman who loses his arm during a fight early on in the story but returns to protect his former master from an evil group of Kung Fu fighters.

The film has some of the best classic storytelling styles of any film you'll ever see, with some old school Kung Fu action to back it up. This film was pivotal to the success of the martial arts movie genre.

Enter the Dragon

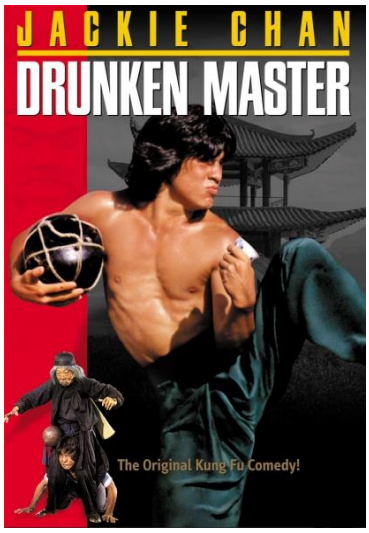
See Bruce Lee at his finest in the film that made in a star (or as he says "a very successful actor") and pop culture icon. Bruce Lee is considered the king of martial arts films and 'Enter the Dragon' is his most successful work.



Bruce plays a character known as 'Lee', a Shaolin Monk and martial arts expert hired by a law enforcement agency to take down a powerful criminal named Mr Hahn. Lee must enter his coveted tournament, go undercover and find evidence of foul play so that he may be legally arrested.

The action in this film is not only intense and exciting but authentic as Bruce weaves in his masterful skill into the fight scenes. This 1973 film is often considered the greatest ever in the Martial Arts genre.

Drunken Master

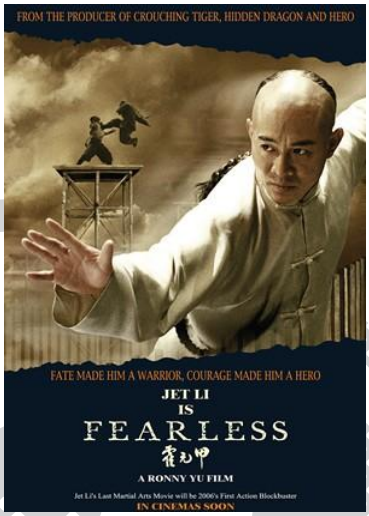


Ever heard of a guy named Jackie Chan? Well if you wanted see just how he caught his rise to fame, than you'll want to see 'Drunken Master' from 1978. This film has an excellent mix of comedy and action as Chan plays 'Wong Fei Hung', studying at his father's martial arts school.

Fei Hong is always up to mischief and seems to be a constant disappointment to his father. He gets sent off to study with Beggar Su and learn his style of Drunken Boxing when an Evil man named Thunderleg arrives in town, laying the beatdown on people. Naturally Fei Hung must use his new Drunken Boxing skills to fight Thunderleg in an attempt to stop his violent behaviour.

You'll have a good laugh at this film and gain a true understanding as to why Jackie Chan became so famous after its release.

Fearless

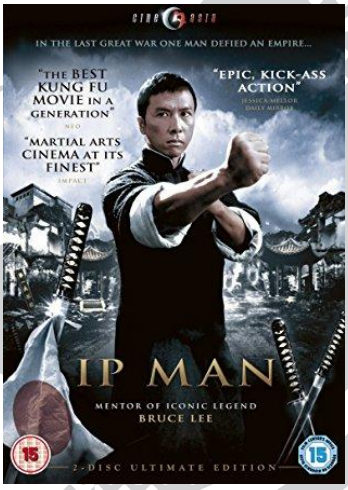


Jumping forward to 2006, we have one of Jet Li's top classics – Fearless. Jet Li plays real life martial artist Huo Yuanjia, following his transformation from an arrogant Kung Fu master to a humble and wise man spreading a peaceful message.

The film has some of the best action you'll see Jet Li perform. But the insightful story as we watch Yuanjia fall from his life as a powerful fighter to downtrodden wanderer is extremely well done. But the film takes a motivational turn as his character grows and becomes the great figure history records him to be.

This film has an excellent balance of powerful themes, storytelling and terrific martial arts action. It's the perfect introduction to the work of one of Kung Fu film's most popular actors – Jet Li.

Ip Man



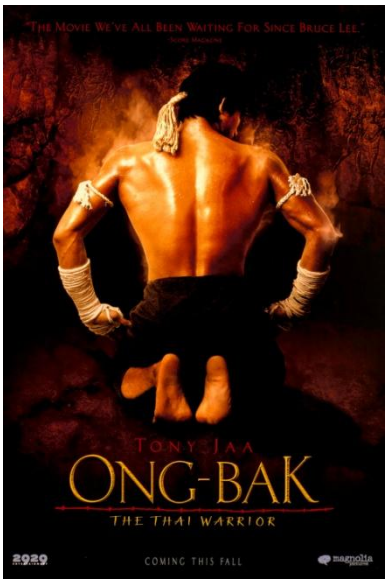
These days in Hong Kong one name rules supreme as the current king of Kung Fu movies – Donnie Yen. The 2008 film 'Ip Man' is without a doubt his most popular film and has made him the icon he is today. Ip Man is also known as the head instructor of the school responsible for training Bruce Lee.

Donnie Yen plays Wing Chun grandmaster and icon Ip Man, telling the story of his early life in Foshan during the Japanese occupation. We follow his struggles as they are forced out of their home and must fight for survival when the Japanese army comes after them.

This film is a modern day classic not to be missed and has some of Donnie Yen's most technical and exciting martial arts fights ever recorded.

Ong Bak

In 2005 Thailand burst onto the movie scene with one of the best martial arts films ever released showcasing Tony Jaa, an actor who performed all of his jaw dropping action sequences without the use of wires or CGI.



Ong Bak tells the story of Ting, played by Jaa, who must travel to Bagkok to recover the stolen head of a local Buddha statue – referred to as “Ong Bak”. He has trouble adapting as the country boy lost in the big city and is constantly being cheated by his new friends there. When they discover the person who has the Ong Bak is linked with a powerful criminal group, Ting must fight his way through the dangerous thugs to recover it – or his village is doomed to bad luck and drought.

With some of the most impressive stunts and use of Muay Thai in an action film, Ong Bak is a necessary film if you want to see the best Thailand has to offer.

36th Chamber of Shaolin

This 1978 film has cemented itself as one of the absolute greatest Kung Fu films ever released.



If you’ve never taken the time to watch a Shaw Brothers produced film, or seen star Gordon Liu in action, than 36th Chamber of Shaolin is a film you want to see.

It’s a very insightful kung fu film about a man who escapes death from an oppressive military in his town to go train and learn Kung Fu at the Shaolin Temple. All so he can return and free his town. Whilst at the template we’re shown the harsh and creative training routine they have for Shaolin Monks wanting to learn their kung fu in an interesting series of exercises and scenarios.

This film is one of the all time best and is considered Shaw Brothers number one film!

Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon

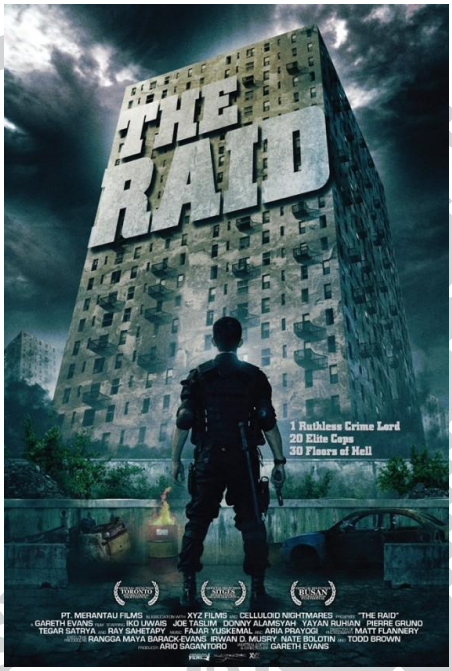


Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* is another of the most famous Kung Fu movies of all time, released in 2000.

This film follows Li Mu bai (Chow Yun Fat) and Yu Shu Lien (Michelle Yeoh) as they must track down a young thief named Jen Yu (Zhang Ziyi) who stole the precious Green Destiny Sword. But this movie more heavily focuses on the forbidden and lost loves of our main characters and tells a heartfelt story with some terrific wire-fu action woven in.

Also starring the legendary actress Cheng Pei Pei as Jade Fox, this film stars some of the most prestigious kung fu actors and actresses of all time and is a timeless classic.

The Raid



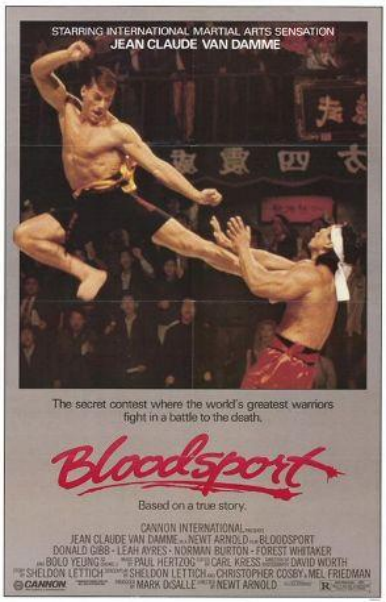
In opposite fashion to Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon, this film focuses on one thing: insane, high intensity action that is as savage and raw as your imagination can fathom!

The Raid follows a SWAT team as they enter a criminally infested building. Once discovered, the building goes on lockdown and all of the criminals within it turn on the team and try to kill them by whatever means necessary.

This film becomes a claustrophobic quest for survival for our team of police officers who fight gun fire, machetes, knives and all kind of weapons in a gritty thriller which is more action packed than any film I have ever seen. It's the perfect introduction into the recent years of martial arts films being produced in Indonesia starring Iko Uwais as Rama, written and directed by Gareth Evans.

This film was made in 2011 and set a new standard for action films everywhere.

Bloodsport



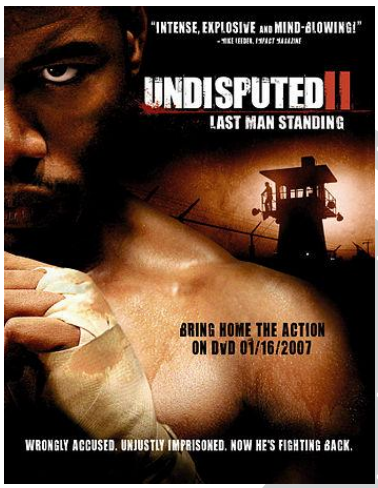
Bloodsport is a film from 1988 which made Jean Claude Van Damme an action star, and is considered one of America's great martial arts classics.

The film follows Frank Dux (Van Damme) as he enters a secret underground Kumite (martial arts tournament), filling the place of master's deceased son. We follow Dux as he fights to win the tournament whilst facing a ruthless champion named Chong Li and also evading the military, who are after him after he goes absent without leave.

The film is a fun story based on the unverified claims of real life martial artist Frank Dux. It's perhaps the perfect introduction into 80's martial arts films and the work of Jean Claude Van Damme.

It has its flaws but is still considered a classic of the genre.

Undisputed 2



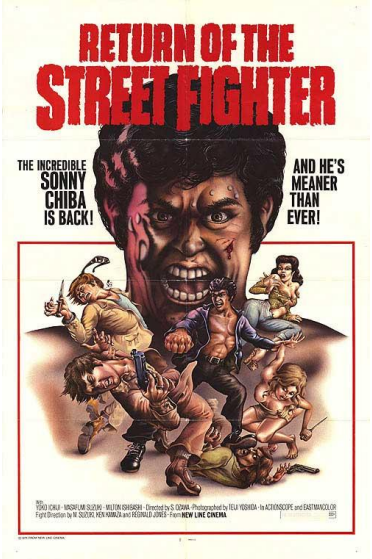
Here's a film which has caused a major boom within the martial arts film genre!

This film launched the careers of Michael Jai White and Scott Adkins by showcasing their incredible physical talents onscreen, making them two of the biggest names in modern martial arts movies. Simultaneously the film is also responsible for the iconic Scott Adkins character 'Boyka' which has earned a cult following and the lead in two very popular sequels.

Undisputed 2 tells the story of former boxing heavyweight champion George Chambers, as he is set up while filming a commercial in Russia. He is thrown into jail and forced to fight for his freedom against the prison fight champion Boyka. From here we watch a boxer evolve into a mixed martial artist so that he step up and fight for his release.

The action in this film is excellent and the perfect introduction to Isaac Florentine's films and those starring Adkins and Jai White.

The Street Fighter



Unique is one word to describe this film, which introduces to the world the ever popular Sonny Chiba.

If you're looking for fake gore and highly animated performances, than this 1974 classic will do the job!

Sonny Chiba plays Tsurugi, a badass for hire who is negotiating a job to kidnap a girl. When the negotiation goes sour, Tsurugi decides to protect the girl to spite the negotiators, and all hell breaks loose as this unstoppable Karate tough guy tears down bad guy after bad guy trying to get by him.

This really is a unique film and Chiba has his own stand out charisma. If you like this film, chances are you'll be looking for more Sonny Chiba afterward!

Dragons Forever



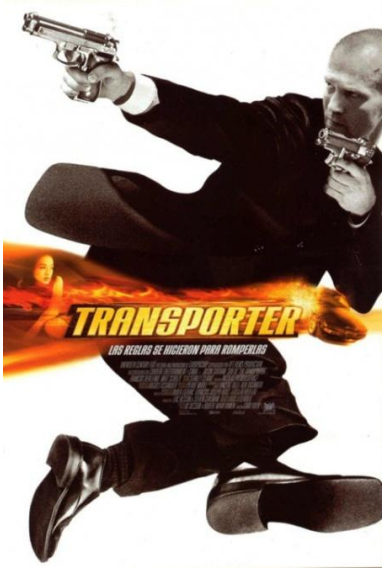
This film is my recommendation for witnessing the three dragons in action – Jackie Chan, Yuen Biao and Sammo Hung. All three are legends of Hong Kong cinema and have the highest level of stunt work and acrobatic movement in their fight sequences.

Released in 1988, Dragons Forever follows three friends (you guessed it, played by the three dragons) who get caught up in a legal battle with a large company that happens to be selling drugs on the down low.

Whilst trying to gain the attention of some of the women fighting in the case, these three end up fighting these drug dealers to save themselves from danger.

This film has an excellent blend of comedy and incredibly intense action. The finale of the film has some jaw dropping acrobatics, precise stunt work and features a few more legends of the martial arts, including Yuen Wah and Benny Urquidez.

The Transporter



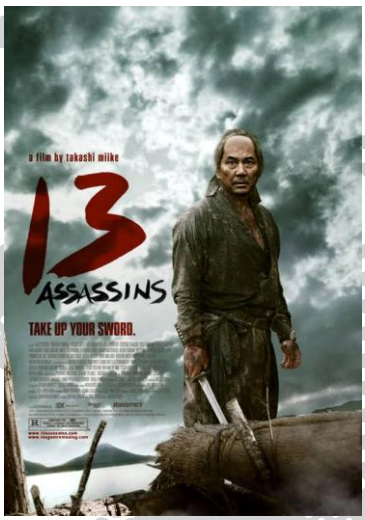
The Transporter is a film from 2002 which seemed to come out of nowhere, showcasing the incredible martial arts of Jason Statham, who was known mainly for starring in Guy Ritchie's gangster films.

Statham plays Frank Martin, a retired ex-military officer who now operates as 'The Transporter' – offering a high class service that will transport anyone or anything to a predetermined destination. His service caters heavily to the criminal underworld.

But when a job goes wrong Frank finds himself working with a young woman to free a container of refugees from a group that tried to kill him. So he sets out using his martial arts to teach them a lesson.

This a fun film that carries a balanced level of character and action as we meet and watch Frank do what he does best – kicking ass and driving fast cars. If you're a fan of Statham (or not) and haven't seen this film then you need to check it out!

13 Assassins

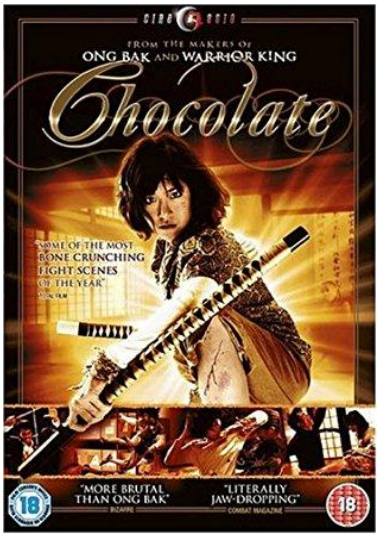


13 Assassins is a 2010 film which remakes the original 1963 classic of the same name. The movie has some heavy samurai themed action which is driven with a powerful motive.

Basically, we follow a group of men who decide to kill a local lord who is completely sadistic and evil. After torturing, raping and murdering without any sense of remorse, he drives some locals to take action in order to protect the people around them and deliver some justice.

It all plays out quite well and the film hits hard when we're exposed to the activities of the evil lord. The film culminates in an epic finale packed with sword fighting action. It's a must see film from Japan!

Chocolate



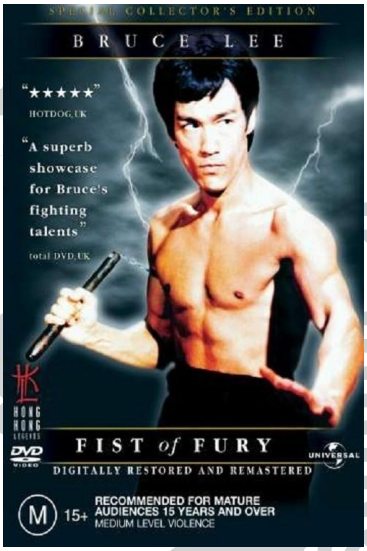
Chocolate is a film which introduces the awesome martial arts of Thailands Yanin Jeeja, in a unique film which, like Ong Bak, acts as a bit of a showreel for the talents of our lead star.

Yanin Jeeja plays Zen, a girl with some mental disabilities who also has a photographic memory – what she sees, she can mimic.

When her mother becomes very sick, she learns of many men who owe here a lot of money. So after watching fighters and kung fu films, she heads out into the world to collect with violent consequences.

This film has some terrific action which shows off Jeeja's talents. But she also does a fantastic acting job, creating a film which is well rounded and interesting to watch. If you like Tony Jaa's work, check this out for something similar!

Fist of Fury



While Enter the Dragon proved to be Bruce Lee's most successful film, many critics and fans believe Fist of Fury to be his best work. Packed with Lee's level of action and attention to detail, Fist of Fury also goes into more political and personal themes of oppression.

Released in 1972, Fist of Fury follows a young Kung Fu student named Chen Zhen, who suspects his master was murdered.

After encountering an oppressive group of men from the Japanese Military, Chen investigates them and things start to heat up. Before long Chen is on the run from the Japanese and the police, but still goes after those responsible with ruthless resolve.

It's a Bruce Lee film, so the action is fantastic and is one of the very few films in which we get to witness one of the greatest martial artists of all time perform his craft. I watch this film at least once a year!

SPL: Killzone

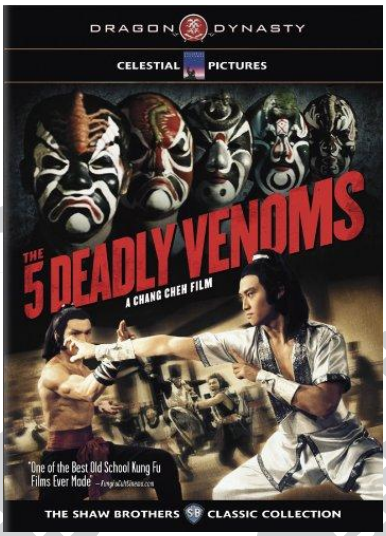


Before Donnie Yen solidified himself as one of the best Kung Fu stars in history with Ip Man, he had another surge of success with the release of the 2005 film SPL: Killzone.

This film is a thriller about a team of cops trying to take down a seemingly unstoppable crime lord named Wong Po. When the head of the team retires Donnie Yen's character Ma steps in to take over. But shortly afterwards an assassin appears who starts to kill off the team, making the investigation more dangerous.

This film is a dark thriller which builds up and ends with some insane martial arts fight during its finale. If you're looking for some of the best action ever recorded, then watch this film!

Five Deadly Venoms



This classic Shaw Brothers film was released back in 1978, and introduced a team of actors coined "The Venoms" after the success of this film.

We follow a young Kung Fu student as he must venture into the world at his master's request. His mission is to track down his master's previous students, determine who are good and who are evil – and then team up with the good kung fu students to defeat the evil ones.

This film has an interesting style and a diverse mix of action as each character has a unique Kung Fu style. It's a fun film from the golden era of Kung Fu.

Hero

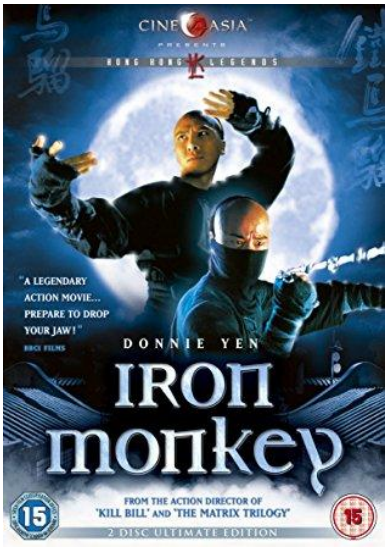


We've got another Jet Li classic here with the classic film from 2002 'Hero', where there are heavier themes at play in this film and it has more 'wire fu' style action included throughout.

Jet Li plays a man called 'Nameless', who killed 3 assassins who attempted to murder the King of Qin. The King decides to meet Nameless after this and the two discuss how everything unfolded. But the story doesn't seem to add up, and the King becomes suspicious of Nameless.

This film is shot and flows so beautifully but also has some fun action sequences, including an iconic fight between Jet Li and Donnie Yen. This one is for the fans of films with deeper meaning instead of just action.

Iron Monkey



So we're back with another Donnie Yen film! This 1993 film, Iron Monkey, is the first big surge that boosted Donnie Yen's career in the Kung Fu Film industry.

The film follows a masked man named Iron Monkey, who robs from the rich and gives to the poor. When Donnie Yen's character Wong Kei-ying and his son Wong-Fei Hung come to town, he is accused of being Iron Monkey. When Iron Monkey finally attacks, Wong chases him down so he can clear his name and free his now imprisoned son.

This film is a fun classic which has some excellent action and showcases Donnie Yen's work in his prime.

Seven Samurai



This film is one of the earliest and most recognised classic films of all time – not just Martial Arts films.

This epic 3½ hour film from 1954 is the work of the revered Akira Kurosawa. It tells the story of seven samurai who band together to protect a village of a group of ruthless bandits. They set traps, form plans and wait for the inevitable attack, ending in an epic finale of classic samurai action.

If you're really looking for historical movies, check out this classic as it is one of the earliest and most recognised martial arts films ever made!

Kung Fu Hustle



2004's Kung Fu Hustle is one of the most popular kung fu comedies of all time, with outstanding visual gags and performances. This film is the perfect introduction to actor, writer, director and producer Stephen Chow.

Chow plays Sing, a man who arrives in a small town pretending to be a part of the 'Deadly Axe Gang'. After some unsuccessful attempts gain some respect, the real Axe Gang arrives and starts to trouble the town. So Sing decides to team up with 3 mysterious kung fu masters living in the town to fight back.

If you're looking for a laugh and some over the top visual comedy, Kung Fu Hustle fits the bill perfectly. It's an extremely well done film and perfect to unwind with.

Shogun Assassin

Shogun Assassin is an English dubbed film released in America in 1980. It is a mix of the first two 'Lone Wolf and Cub' movies and is another cult classic with a loyal fan following.

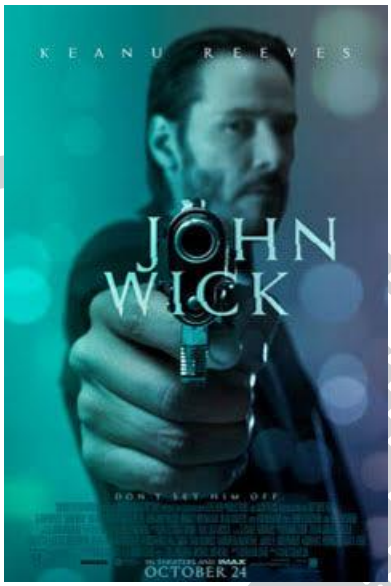


The film is about a powerful man in the Tokugawa Shogunate, Ogami Itto, turning on his master after his wife is brutally murdered. He travels the countryside with his son Daigoro whilst being chased by the Shogun's men.

Packed with fake gore and tonnes of blood, the inventive action of the Lone Wolf and Cub series is presented perfectly in this film, which was made for English Speaking audiences. For more of Japan's best work, check out this film or the any one of the 'Lone Wolf and Cub' movies.

John Wick

John Wick is a film about a man who turns from his old murderous ways in the criminal underworld to clean up his act and settle down with his new wife. But after his wife's death, he is gifted a puppy as her last request. When the puppy is killed by a local thug, Wick (Keanu Reeves) drops the clean life and exacts his vengeance, stopping at nothing in this mysterious criminal underworld.



Packed with action and a creative use of martial arts concepts in the gun fighting sequences, John Wick is a film which proves to be extremely unique in every aspect of its delivery. With the unique 'gun fu' style of action and the almost fantasy like criminal universe the film takes place in, John Wick is a film that every martial arts fan needs to see. If you want something different, watch this movie!

THANK YOU AGAIN!

Thank you for subscribing and downloading this free E-book. I hope it's helped get you started and given you a wide range to start exploring the genre of martial arts action films. *Keep an eye out in your inbox regular email updates and film recommendations.*

LOOKING FOR MORE?

Go to ***martialartsactionmovies.com/movieguide/*** to check out our comprehensive guide to Martial Arts films. *Have an excellent day and keep kicking ass!*