

## 20 Years With The Simpsons

Matt Groening, created the animated sitcom, "The Simpsons" for Fox Broadcasting Company. The idea came from the lobby of James L. Brooks's office and that's how this popular adaptation of a dysfunctional family came about. Even the characters were named after his own family members, with the exception of lead character Bart.

On April 19, 1987, "The Simpsons" made their first appearance as shorts in The Tracey Ullman Show. When the initial submission was made, only basic sketches were handed in expecting they would be refined in production stages but they were left as is and that's the reason why despite modification over the years the Simpsons still have a very rudimentary façade. On December 17, 1989, "Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire" was the half-hour premiere show.

The Simpsons has been debated since the start with lead character Bart often going scot-free despite wrong doings and this portrayed him as a poor role model for youngsters. It's portrayal of the middle class American lifestyle symbolized by family members Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, and Maggie Simpson. The backdrop of the show is the fictional town of Springfield, which is filled with characters, and events that are an animated and inspired from American society. Homer Simpson the father is employed as a safety inspector at Springfield Nuclear Power Plant. Often his job is at risk as a result of his casual and comic nature. His wife, Marge is a conventional American housewife and mother. Their 3 children are Bart, a ten-year-old menace, Lisa, an aware 8 year old activist and the baby Maggie, who hardly speaks but does communicate by sucking on a pacifier. They have a dog called Santa's Little Helper, and a cat, called Snowball II. Over the years, the show has celebrated even ts but the characters have not aged since the start of the show.

The Simpsons have influenced mainstream society in more ways than one. Language and terms used in this animated sitcom has made its transition into popular everyday vernacular. To the extent that Homer Simpsons popular use of the expression 'D'oh!' is listed in the Oxford English Dictionary without its apostrophe. Even the use of the term 'excellent' pronounced as 'eexcelllent' in the show is used by people around us. The term 'cheese-eating surrender monkeys'" referring to the French has been used by popularly by conservative National Review columnist Jonah Goldberg in 2003, when the French opposed the invasion of Iraq proposal. And soon it was popular lingo amongst journalists.

The Simpsons is a legendary show in respect to prime time television programs. This is because initially animated shows were thought to be for kids and airing a complete animated program on prime time for universal viewing was a bold step. Though thought to be an expensive idea, The Simpsons were aired successfully because they cut down on expenses by using Korean animation studios for in-betweening, coloring, and filming. The success of The Simpsons show prompted many others to start animated shows of this nature and for prime time viewing. In its time it has certainly been a pioneering show if its type and still stands tall. In fact the Simpsons are so respected that when South Park achieved success on television they aired an episode "Simpsons Already Did It" as homage to its predecessor.

The Simpsons have been awarded at many occasions. Their booty consists of 23 Emmy Awards, 24 Annie Awards and a Peabody Award. The TIME magazines 1998 publication commemorating the 20th Century's greatest achievements in arts and entertainment, named The Simpsons as the last century's best television series, along with naming Bart Simpson in the list of the century's 100 most influential people. Incidentally Bart was the only imaginary character on the list. At the turn of this century the Simpsons won a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. They have also been acclaimed as the greatest television show of the 1990s, 2001's 100 Greatest Kids' TV shows, and 2005's 100 Greatest Cartoons. Homer Simpson has been recognized as the forerunner in 2001's 100 Greatest TV Characters. Other awards include the TV Guide's 50 Greatest TV Shows of All Time, and a mention in the TIME's list of 100 Best TV Shows of All Time.

In 2004, they became the longest-running American animated sitcom in the United States. Regardless of criticism over the years, The Simpsons maintains a huge viewer base. The shows first season enjoyed an average of 13.4 million viewers, and the 17th season had an average of 9.2 million viewers per episode, respectively. The Simpsons Movie made \$74 million in its opening weekend in the US.

In the end of the last century a number of US public schools banned 'The Simpsons' merchandise and t-shirts. In spite of the ban, their merchandise still continued to be popular and generated US\$2 billion in revenue in its first 14 months of sales. Their popularity paved the way for them in turning into a billion-dollar merchandizing industry.

Merchandise includes everything you can imagine, from t-shirts to posters. The iconic characters have inspired unique editions of board games, including Clue, Scrabble, Monopoly, Operation, and The Game of Life. Trivia and card games have also been introduced. There are Simpsons comic books and related publications, including 9 comic book series from Bongo Comics publication. The comics have also been made available in book form and there's episode guides too. There's numerous soundtrack and other musical releases including music that's not been aired on the show. You can purchase The Simpsons Movie DVDs and DVD boxsets. You can buy video of episodes that have been aired. Seasons one to ten have been

released on DVD in many continents. You can even buy The Simpsons video games. This includes The Simpsons, The Simpsons: Bart vs. the Space Mutants, The Simpsons Road Rage, The Simpsons Hit & Run and The Simpsons Game (2007).

### About the Author

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