

50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee in 2024

BY TIM MOLLOY · | UPDATED: APRIL 18, 2024



Before we get to our list of the 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee in 2024, can we share some quick thoughts on film festival strategy?

A lot of filmmakers have the exact same strategy: Submit to Sundance, SXSW, Cannes, Berlinale, Venice and the Toronto International Film Festival, and prepare for fame and fortune. Unfortunately, this strategy doesn't work out for many of these filmmakers, because – that's right – so many have the same strategy, and programmers can only pick so many films.

To be sure, the festivals above can be a springboard to success and acclaim. But they aren't the only options.

Each year, we prepare our list of 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee in hopes of introducing you to festivals you may not have realized are great matches for you – or re-introducing you to festivals that you might have thought were out of reach, but perhaps aren't.

We look at factors like location, cost, how many films are submitted vs. how many films are chosen, whether a festival can qualify a film for Oscar consideration, and whether it has a screenwriting competition. We also look at how festivals make life easier for filmmakers, by helping with travel costs, offering stipends or screening fees, or simply free meals and drinks. We also highlight large prize packages. And we consider your chances of meeting distributors who can get your film in front of a mass audience.

We don't include Sundance, SXSW, Cannes, Berlinale, Venice and TIFF on this list because if you're reading this, you probably already know they could be your breakthrough. But so can some of the festivals below.

As usual, our list came in at a little over 50, because of ties. Festivals that are Academy Award-qualifying have an "A" next to their name, and those with screenwriting competitions have an "S." And like we always say, not every festival on this list will be perfect for everyone, but we're sure at least one will be perfect for you. Also please note that our presenting sponsor had no editorial input on this list.

And now, here's our 2024 list of 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee.

NEWFILMMAKERS LOS ANGELES

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NFMLA is unlike any other film festival because it isn't just one festival – it's at least a dozen each year, sometimes more, with a shifting focus on different types of filmmakers and a special emphasis and commitment to promoting films from underrepresented storytellers. The festival includes screening at a 500-seat theater, pre- and post-screening receptions, and curated industry meetings for all filmmakers whose films are official selections. NFMLA also promises outreach to journalists, including *MovieMaker* – we feature interviews each month on moviemaker.com. This is a very good festival for discovery, especially given the large number of distributors known to attend, including A24, NEON, Focus, Amazon, Netflix, Open Road, MGM, STX, Universal, Film Mode, Freestyle Digital Media, Entertainment One, Gravitas Ventures, Lionsgate, Participant, Warner Bros. Discovery, 20th Century Studios, Max, Paramount, and many more.

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