

Julie & Julia

Columbia Pictures | Starring Meryl Streep, Amy Adams, Stanley Tucci, Chris Messina | Rated PG-13



I've been to a lot of movies, but I experienced something new when I sat down to watch *Julie & Julia*. A good 30 minutes or more into watching the film, I realized I'd been smiling the entire time—and I didn't stop. Sure, this isn't a rip-roaring comedy, but Julia Child's personality, her (lemon) zest and enthusiasm for life made me grin like a Cheshire cat.

Julie & Julia is based on two true stories. Julia Child and Julie Powell are separated by decades, but their lives become intertwined with a common love for food and cooking.

The film briefly chronicles Julia's life before she becomes the person we know: the chef, cookbook author and television personality.

Her story unfolds as she and husband Paul (played by the brilliant actor Stanley Tucci) live in France. Not satisfied to just sit around like the other wives in their circle of friends, Julia is antsy to find something to do. She tries a variety of hobbies, but they leave her unsatisfied. It's not until she starts cooking school that she finds her life calling.

Flash-forward several decades to Julie Powell. She has a loving husband, but feels restless and unfulfilled as she nears 30. She hates her secretarial job and has almost lost hope of ever fulfilling her dream of being a writer (her unpublished novel haunts her). Julie escapes her dreary reality with cooking (and from what we see onscreen, it looks like she's a pretty good cook). When a friend of hers starts a blog, Julie decides she can write one too. Her mission: cook her way through Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French*

Cooking cookbook and blog about it—365 days, 524 recipes. Julie's journey gives her a sense of accomplishment as she rediscovers a joy and passion for life.

Julie & Julia is both entertaining and inspiring. Though her life onscreen isn't perfect, Julia embraces everything and everyone around her with gusto. In fact, her zeal for living challenged me—in a sense, I want to be like her when I “grow up.” I also took note of hers and Paul's marriage; they adore and love each other deeply. He is Julia's biggest supporter and fan. Watching him care for and encourage his wife was especially moving. I have a high standard of what I'm looking for in a future husband; Paul Child just raised that bar even higher.

This film is rated PG-13 for sexuality and language. The romantic gestures in *Julie & Julia* are tame by comparison to other movies with a similar rating. Plus, keep in mind that the couples portrayed onscreen are actually married—which, unfortunately, we don't see too often these days. I will warn you about a few instances of harsh language (including at least one f-bomb)—though many viewers will find these sporadic enough to not detract from the movie's overall quality.

When I tell others about the movies I see, I usually try to not reveal too much of the plot or overhype to the point of disappointment. But I'm convinced I can brag about *Julie & Julia* until I'm blue in the face—or my typing fingers fall off. This is an excellent movie, and one I wholeheartedly recommend to guys and dolls. Bon appétit!