

MK2 FILMS PRESENTS



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
2025 OFFICIAL SELECTION
CANNES CLASSICS

THE GOLD RUSH

A FILM BY
CHARLES CHAPLIN

1925 – USA – B&W – 1.33 – 88' – NEW 4K



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SYNOPSIS

A calm and content Little Tramp seeks his fortune in the hidden gold mines of the Klondike. All calm is quickly lost, however, when another prospector, just as famished as he is, begins mistaking him for a giant chicken.

A presentation by Roy Export SAS with the support of mk2.

4K restoration carried out by Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna at L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory, using elements held by Roy Export, including materials created by Photoplay and from archival material generously provided by the BFI National Archive, Blackhawk Films, the Lobster Films Collection, Das Bundesarchiv, the Filмотeca de Catalunya, the George Eastman Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).



THE RESTORATION OF 'THE GOLD RUSH'

THE GOLD RUSH was released in 1925. Chaplin reissued it with synchronised music and narration in 1942, re-editing the original camera negative. He removed all the titles, rearranged some sequences and discarded several scenes. He also took steps to ensure that all existing prints of the 1925 version were withdrawn. In 1993, Kevin Brownlow and David Gill reconstructed the film by combining the few surviving elements with the 1942 reissue, restoring the film as closely as possible to how Chaplin first released it.

To celebrate the film's centennial, a new worldwide search was launched to locate additional 1925 full-frame material. Following Brownlow and Gill's reconstruction, and thanks to the joint efforts of several film archives around the world, this restoration offers an opportunity to see Chaplin's masterpiece a step closer to its original form.

The restoration was made possible by elements held by Roy Export, including materials originally prepared for Kevin Brownlow and David Gill's 1993 reconstruction and by materials generously made available by the BFI National Archive, Blackhawk Films and the Lobster Films collection, Das Bundesarchiv, Filmoteca de Catalunya, George Eastman Museum, and MoMA - Museum of Modern Art.

The restoration was carried out by Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna at L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory (Bologna), under the aegis of Association Chaplin and Roy Export SAS, with the support of mk2.



ABOUT 'THE GOLD RUSH'

"The first comedy of epic proportions."

Los Angeles Times

"A distinct triumph for Charlie Chaplin."

Variety

"Chaplin's greatest picture."

Vanity Fair

2025 marks the 100th anniversary of Charles Chaplin's THE GOLD RUSH. All Hollywood attended the spectacular premiere at Grauman's Egyptian on 26 June 1925. The stage prologue included Eskimo dancing girls, and a school of seals perched on a craggy arctic-looking glacier, followed by "impressively artistic dances by fascinatingly pretty young women wearing astoundingly rich and beautiful gowns all blending with the Arctic atmosphere and bespeaking the moods of the barren white country" (Los Angeles Evening Herald, 27 June 1925). Other "turns" included artistic ice-skating, a balloon act, a Monte Carlo dance hall scene and a reading of poet Robert Service's "The Spell of the Yukon".

At the Berlin premiere, the film was rolled back so that the "Dance of the Rolls" sequence could be enjoyed for a second time. At the Tivoli Theatre premiere in London, the BBC tried a sort of experiment—to record "*a storm of uncontrolled laughter, inspired by the only man in the world who could make people laugh continually for the space of five minutes, viz., Charlie Chaplin*", an achievement that proved to be an historic moment in film and broadcasting history.

A milestone in his artistry, THE GOLD RUSH was the first of his silent films which Charles Chaplin revived, with the addition of sound, for new audiences. For the 1942 reissue he composed his own orchestral score and replaced the inter-titles with a commentary which he spoke himself. Among the scenes he trimmed from the film was the lingering final embrace with Georgia, with whom he had maintained a long and often romantic friendship. Perhaps some private and personal feelings caused him to replace the kiss with a more chaste shot of the couple walking off, simply holding hands. This final scene of the film was shot on the ship Emma Alexander between Los Angeles and San Diego, including 16 takes for the kissing scene. Chaplin insisted on reshooting the scene, and changing Georgia's costume, so they retook the boat to San Francisco to shoot 19 more takes of the kissing scene. That makes quite a lot of kisses for the scene to have been cut by Chaplin in the end! Georgia Hale would later remember, "*It went on and on, he kept retaking it and retaking it, so then I was quite sure that his feeling for me was more than just a director for a leading lady. And of course, I knew what my feeling was—all my life.*"



ABOUT THE MAKING OF 'THE GOLD RUSH'

The first idea for THE GOLD RUSH came to Chaplin when he was viewing some stereoscope pictures of the 1896 Klondike gold rush and was particularly struck by the image of an endless line of prospectors snaking up the Chilkoot Pass, the gateway to the gold fields. At the same time, he happened to read a book about the Donner Party Disaster of 1846, when a party of immigrants, snowbound in the Sierra Nevada, were reduced to eating their own moccasins and the corpses of their dead comrades.

For the opening of the film, shot on location in the snow country of the Sierra Nevada, Chaplin recreated the historic image of the prospectors struggling up the Chilkoot Pass. Six hundred extras, many drawn from the vagrants and derelicts of Sacramento, were brought by train, to clamber up the 2300-foot pass dug through the mountain snow.

In his autobiography, Chaplin revealed that "simple little tunes" gave him the image for some of his comedies, and recalled Auld Lang Syne set the mood for The Gold Rush. Chaplin used this tune in his 1942 score for the film.

Chaplin shot much of THE GOLD RUSH in the snow in Truckee, California, but was unsatisfied with the result. On returning to his studios in Hollywood, he had mountains built, using 200 tons of plaster, 285 tons of salt, and 100 barrels of flour.

The spectacle of this Alaskan snowscape improbably glistening under the baking Californian summer sun drew crowds of sightseers.

In the cabin sequence when the Tramp cooks his shoe as a Thanksgiving dinner, the shoe was made of liquorice. Chaplin's repeated takes of the same scene meant that the liquorice shoe's laxative effects took their toll on both actors.

One extra in THE GOLD RUSH was a proven centenarian, Daddy' Taylor. Chaplin was so delighted by the old man's energy as a dancer that he gave him a brief scene of his own in the New Year dance sequence.

In THE GOLD RUSH, Mack Swain is so hungry that he believes Charlie is a chicken. In the film we know, the scene only takes place in the cabin. However, production still shows that they actually filmed a chase in the snow. Chaplin himself played the role of the chicken. For one shot another actor took a turn in the chicken costume, but it was unusable: no-one else had Chaplin's gift for metamorphosis. According to Eddie Sutherland, the assistant director: "When he got into it, he was a chicken. Every move was a chicken's." This scene was also a triumph for the cameramen who had to affect the elaborate trick work entirely in the camera.

Chaplin's favourite films changed over the years, but sometimes he would say that he would most like to be remembered by THE GOLD RUSH.



CAST

The Lone prospector	Charlie Chaplin
Big Jim McKay	Mack Swain
Black Larsen	Tom Murray
Hank Curtis	Henry Bergman
Jack Cameron	Malcom Waite
Georgia	Georgia Hale



CREW

Written by	Charles Chaplin
Directed by	Charles Chaplin
Producer	Alfred Reeves
Director of Photography	Roland Totheroh
Original Music	Charles Chaplin
Music Director	Max Terr
Sound	W. M. Dalglish, Pete Decker
Editing	Charles Chaplin, Edward Manson
Production	Chaplin - United Artists
International sales	mk2 films

THE GOLD RUSH

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