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Lucie Arnaz reveals tidbits from 5 of her mom's classic 'I Love Lucy' episodes

"I Love Lucy" episodes like you've never seen them before are coming to the big screen, in living color.

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By Randee Dawn

"Oh Luuuuucy!"

Beginning in the 1950s, that cry from "I Love Lucy's" Ricky Ricardo signaled something hilarious was happening on TV. Fans of the early classic black-and-white sitcom followed the antics of stars Lucille Ball (as Lucy Ricardo) and Desi Arnaz (as Ricky) as they got into one scrape after the other, setting the standard for television sitcoms for decades to come.



Lucille Ball in "I Love Lucy." CBS

And thanks to reruns, fans have never really had to stop laughing at "Lucy." In August, they'll get a chance to check out five colorized classic episodes that feature a chocolate-making disaster, a truly wretched "health" drink, and a visit with a Hollywood legend as part of a special big-screen Fathom event.

Lucie Arnaz was just 6 weeks old when the show went on the air. "Mom thought it would last a couple of weeks and we'd have some fun home movies," she told TODAY. "But it took off – and they never looked back."

Lucie Arnaz and Lucille Ball in 1965. CBS Photo Archive / Getty Images

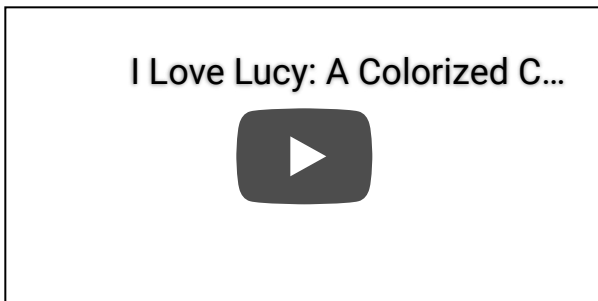
Arnaz grew up watching from the sidelines, then watching the reruns, and as the show prepares to hit the movie screens, she gave us some behind-the-scenes scoop on each of the episodes coming to a theater near you.

Here's what we learned:

No wonder Lucy couldn't say "Vitameatavegamin" – it was 23% alcohol! CBS

"Lucy Does a TV Commercial" (originally aired: May 5, 1952)

Better known as the "Vitameatavegemin" episode! Always eager for the spotlight, Lucy steps in as a spokesperson for the health drink by that name, and discovers it not only tastes terrible ... it's made of 23 percent alcohol!



"I asked my mother what was in that bottle, and it was apple pectin," recalled Arnaz. "If you ever tasted it, you'd know why she made that face. And she didn't want to taste it until they did the scene! Talk about method acting. But she did it in one shot, no pickup (shots) and it's brilliant."

Lucy and Ethel (Vivian Vance) were great at recipes, not so great at accounting. CBS

"The Million-Dollar Idea" (originally aired: January 11, 1954)

After creating a delicious salad dressing, Lucy and her BFF Ethel try selling "Aunt Martha's Old-Fashioned Salad Dressing," but trip up on the math of it all.

"This was the first TV show ever shown to the armed services," according to Arnaz. "It's also one of episodes where Ethel's middle name changed. Once she was 'Vivian Roberta Jones,' then she became 'Louise' and then 'Mae.' The writers would decide to put their aunt's name in an episode one week, and they'd just change it. They didn't even have reruns back then!"

Of course, reruns ultimately gave "Lucy" its legendary status; the show aired for decades after it ended in 1957. "My father had no idea what would happen when he sold the show back to CBS," said Arnaz. "They gave us \$4.5 million, and that was like a billion bucks in those days. They were able to buy a studio."

Turns out "I Love Lucy" was a \$4.5 million idea!

The bread got bigger in the oven, but how did the pan manage to grow? CBS

"Pioneer Women" (originally aired: March 31, 1952)

The Ricardos face off with the Mertzes (that's Ethel and her husband Fred) to see if they can live like early pioneers. Lucy makes a loaf of bread that ... well, let's just say it expands nicely in the oven.

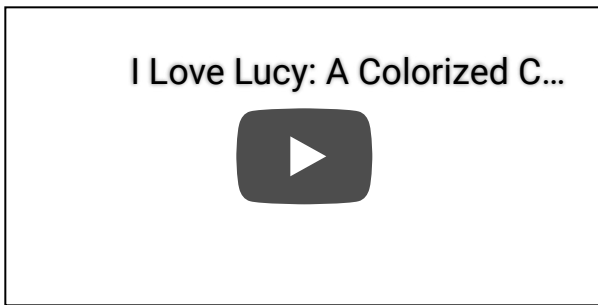
"My dad had some great physical comedy in this episode," said Arnaz. "Unfortunately, he slipped on some rice in one scene and broke a couple of ribs. That did not stop the show, though. They went right on with the show. Never! Not unless someone was dead. We hardly had a blooper reel, because we did not believe in stopping."

Where to put all the extra chocolates? In your cheeks, of course. CBS

"Job Switching" (originally aired: September 15, 1952)

If you've ever seen a "Lucy" clip, you've probably seen the one where she's stuffing chocolates into her mouth, trying to keep up with a very busy conveyor belt. Working in a candy factory was just not for Mrs. Ricardo.

The worker behind her was an actual See's Candy employee, who worked at the local farmer's market, recalled Arnaz. The worker knew more about candy than acting, and was really reluctant to take direction when told to slap chocolate onto Lucy's face. "You can see when the woman swings at her, she's biting her tongue to keep from laughing," she says.



As for what was in the candies? Not apple pectin, that's for sure: These were the real thing.

Lucy went to Hollywood and got a little nosy. CBS

"L.A. at Last" (originally aired: February 7, 1955)

Lucy claims the spotlight yet again by journeying to Hollywood and ends up stalking Oscar-winner William Holden by hiding behind a potted plant in a restaurant.

Ball and Holden had appeared in the 1949 film "Miss Grant Takes Richmond" together, but he was promoting another film ("Love is a Many-Splendored Thing") when the show needed a big-name guest star to represent Hollywood. "Many of those stars wanted to be on the show," said Arnaz. "It was getting a lot of press and it was a No. 1 show for a while."

Lucie Arnaz at "The Boys in the Band' 50th Anniversary Celebration" in New York City in 2018.

Walter McBride / WireImage

Overall, having two show business parents really shaped Arnaz as a person. "They were simple people with really great values, about taking care of business and being good family people," she said. "They didn't have big egos, which is astounding to me, to live under the microscope like they did. They didn't feel like stars."

"I Love Lucy: A Colorized Celebration" will appear on screens on Aug. 6, via Fathom Events. You can purchase tickets [here!](#)



Randee Dawn



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