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Best historical romance fiction books of all time

Themes Oyeyola The modern age is getting a little too much? We have a solution. Curl up with a cozy launch blanket and open a romantic novel that combines sexy tales and historical fiction. Soon enough, you'll be swept into a world of duchesses in big dresses and charming rakes with winks in your eyes. In this version of the past, everyone has a happy ending. While Regency England's land nobility has certainly claimed much of the historical romantic genre's real estate assets - including the basis for the Bridgerton series on Netflix, adapted from Julia Quinn's novels - there are lustful stories set in every era. Even tense ones, such as the court of Henry VIII or the Civil War, can be the backdrop for people who gather. These well-researched books are steeped in the details of another era, so you'll gather the realities of life in Colorado in the 1870s or han dynasty China. The settings differ, but the power of the character connection remains the same: after all, love is universal. Another feature of the romantic historical genre is abundance. Many of these books are part of a series, which means you don't really have to leave behind your literary friends (or writing style). Finally, a note: since the historical world of romance is so sprawling, forgive us if we left yours off the list. Let us know in the comments which books you are passionate about, as we will update this story. NPR sites use cookies, similar tracking and storage technologies, and information about the device used to access our sites (together, cookies) to improve viewing, listening and user experience, personalize content, personalize messages from NPR sponsors, provide social media features, and analyze NPR traffic. This information is shared with social media, sponsorships, analytics and other providers or service providers. See details. You can click Your choices below to learn about and use cookie management tools to limit the use of cookies when you visit NPR sites. You can adjust the choices of cookies in such tools at any time. If you click Accept and continue below, you acknowledge that the choices of cookies in such tools will be respected and that you otherwise accept the use of cookies on NPR sites. YOUR CHOICES

Continuing our series of essential readings, we are focusing on romantic novels, from classics to breathless readings by today's masters. We scoured several sources, but the two main ones we built this list on are Happy Ever After: 100 Swoon-Worthy Romances by National Public Radio and Best Top Romance Novels of All Time by Goodread. Note: All links below go to bookshop.org. Bookshop is an online bookshop with the to financially support local and independent bookshops. If you want to find a specific local library to support, find them on the map and they will receive the full profit from your order. Otherwise, your order will contribute to a revenue pool that will be evenly distributed between libraries (even those that do not use Bookshop). Let's go straight to the meat. 1. Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice By far the most beloved love story of all time, Pride and Prejudice is a great place to start. Elizabeth Bennett, mr. Darcy, and the situation is set in the first line: It is a truth universally recognized, that a single man in possession of a fortune, must be looking for a wife. The push? Are you going to get married for love or money? 2. Diana Gabaldon Claire's Outlander is pushed back in time to Scotland in the 1700s, where she meets Jamie Fraser, a Scots warrior who teaches Claire the love she has never known. But she still has a husband in her day, one manifestly different from the wild and wonderful Scotsman. Who will he choose? 3. Jane Eyre of Charlotte Brontë Jane Eyre, orphaned and marginalized, accepts a ruling position for a girl in a rather mysterious situation with a dark and brooding master, Edward Rochester. What secrets do they hide in Thornfield Hall? And what will Jane do once mr. Rochester's dark past is discovered? 4. Away with the wind of Margaret Mitchell Spoiled, the stubborn Scarlett O'Hara finds herself in straight during the Civil War. Her family's fortune and plantation are in tatters, and Scarlett uses every cunning in her toolkit to keep her family and land out of poverty. The infamous Rhett Butler offers you a way out, but will you lose your heart in the process? 5. Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility Another extraordinary story by master Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility shows us two women in love. Marianne Dashwood is impulsive in her love of the charming Willoughby, and Elinor Dashwood is sensitive but struggles to hide her angle with her love for Edward Ferras. 6. Nicholas Sparks' notebook This man can write a love story. An older gentleman visits a woman with a faded memory every morning to read them from a well-worn notebook. The notebook he reads contains the love story of Noah Calhoun and Allie Nelson and Allie's dilemma: marrying her boyfriend or giving up Everything for Noah. 7. Whitney, My Love by Judith McNaught Fresh from her triumphs in Parisian society, Whitney Stone was transported to England to win Paul's heart, his childhood love ... only to be bargained away by his failed father to the handsome, arrogant Duke of Claymore. Although her smoking passion seduces her into a storm of desire, Whitney can't - won't - give up her dream of perfect love. 8. A Knight in Shining Armor by Jude Deveraux The adorable Dougless Montgomery is abandoned in an English church where suddenly a Knight appears in Shining Armor ... since 1500. It is Nicholas Stafford, Earl of Thornwyck, who came to save his damsel in distress. 9. William Goldman's Princess Bride An immigrant father reads to a boy who is recovering from pneumonia that wants to know if the book has sports or is boring. His father says: Fencing. Fight. Torture. Poison. True love. Hate. Revenge. Revenge. Hunters. Bad men. Good men. The most beautiful ladies. Snakes. Spiders. Beasts of all natures and descriptions. Pain. Death. Brave men. Cowardly men. Stronger men. Chases. Escapes. Lies. Truth. Passions. Miracles. And the baby, even if he doesn't know, is going to change forever. 10. After Forever Ends by Melodie Ramone Orphaned by her mother and swept away by her father, fifteen-year-old Silvia Cotton had lived a lonely life. That is, until 1985, when his father moved the family from the Highlands of Scotland to the Midlands of Wales. It is there that she is enrolled in Bennington, a private boarding school, meets the charming and rebellious twins Dickinson, Oliver and Alexander, and her deplorable life changes forever. 11. Lord of Scoundrels by Loretta Chase Jessica Trent's only intention is to free her brother nitwit from the destructive influence of Sebastian Ballister, the infamous Marquess of Dain. He never expects to desire the arrogant and amoral cad. And when Dain's mutual passion puts them in a scandalously compromising, public position, Jessica has no choice but to seek satisfaction. 12. Julie Garwood's bride With the king's edict, Alec Kincaid, the most powerful of the Scottish lairds, must take an English bride. And Jamie, Baron Jamison's youngest daughter, is his choice. From his first taste of the proud and beautiful English lady, Alec felt a burning hunger stir within him. But with his wedding vows, Jamie promises his secret oath: he will never give up his love for this Highland barbarian. 13. Flowers from the Storm by Laura Kinsale The Duke of Jervaux was brilliant and dangerous. Considered desulphurized, reckless and extravagant, he was transparently referred to as J's D in the scandal papers. But sometimes the more womaniser rakehell can be irresistible, and even his most causal attentions fascinated the protégé Maddy Timms. Maddy knows it's his destiny to help him and his only chance to find the real man behind the evil façade. 14. Nobody's Baby But Mine by Susan Elizabeth Phillips Genius physics professor Dr. Jane Darlington desperately wants a baby. But finding a father won't be easy. Jane's super intelligence has made her feel like a monster, and she is determined to spare her son that suffering. Cal Bonner, the legendary quarterback of the Chicago Stars, seems like the perfect choice. Dr. Jane is about to learn a little too late that this good guy is much smarter than he lets go – and he's not going to be used and abandoned by a clever, crazy pattern of kids. 15. Devil in Winter by Lisa Kleypas Evangeline Jenner will become rich once her legacy is due. Since she must first escape the clutches of her unscrupulous relatives, Evie approached the rake Viscount St. Vincent with a more outrageous proposal: marriage! But the proposal for a has one condition: no making love after their wedding night. Sebastian will simply have to work harder on his seductions... O O give up one's heart for the first time in the name of true love. 16. Lover awakened by J.R. Ward A former blood slave, vampire Zsadist still bears the scars of a past full of suffering and humiliation. Anger is his only companion, and terror is his only passion, until he saves a beautiful aristocrat from the evil Lessenante Society. Bella is immediately enchanted by the inconsistent power that Zsadist possesses. Bella must help her lover overcome the wounds of her tortured past and find a future with her. 17. The Duke and I of Julia Quinn At all accounts, Simon Basset is about to propose to the sister of his best friend, the adorable - and quasi-on-the-shelf - Daphne Bridgerton. But it's all an elaborate plan to keep Simon free from society's mothers who think about marriage. And as for Daphne, it will surely attract some worthy suitors now that it seems that a duke has declared her desirable. But as Daphne walks through the ballroom after the ballroom with Simon, it's hard to remember that their courtship is a complete fake. 18. The Bronze Knight by Paullina Simons During the summer of 1941, the Metanov family is living a difficult life in Leningrad. As the German armies advance, their future looks bleak. For Tatiana, love comes in the guise of Alexander, who hides a mortal and extraordinary secret. 19. The Flame and Flower of Kathleen E. Woodiwiss A lustful adventurer married to the sea, Captain Brandon Birmingham court contempt and danger when he kidnaps beautiful fugitive Heather Simmons from the tumultuous London pier. But no power on Earth can force him to give up his exquisite prize. Because he is determined to make his sapphire-eyed woman beautiful ... and to take her far, unexplored realm of sensual and passionate love. 20. The Madness of Lord Ian Mackenzie by Jennifer Ashley The Year is 1881. Meet the Mackenzie family: rich, powerful, dangerous, eccentric. His younger brother, Ian, known as Mad Mackenzie, spent most of his young life in an asylum, and everyone agrees that it is decidedly strange. Beth Ackerley, a widow, recently entered a fortune. She decided to take her money and find peace, to travel, to learn art, to sit back and fondly remember her brief but happy marriage to her late husband. And then Ian Mackenzie decides he wants it. 21. Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier The novel begins in Monte Carlo, where the heroine is swept off her feet by widower Maxim de Winter and her sudden marriage proposal. Orphaned and working as a lady's maid, she can barely believe her luck. It's only when they arrive at his huge country estate that he realizes how big the shadow his late wife will cast on their lives- a persistent evil that threatens to destroy their marriage from beyond the grave. 22. Indigo of Beverly Jenkins As a child, Hester Wyatt escaped slavery, but now the dark-skinned beauty is a member of Michigan's Underground Railroad, offering others fugitives a chance at the al he learned to love. When one of her fellow directors takes an injured man into hiding, Hester doesn't hesitate... even after she was told about the price on her head. The man in question is known as the Black Daniel, a vital member of the North's Underground Railroad network. But Hester finds him so rude and arrogant that he questions his vow to hide it. 23. Lorraine Heath Houston Leigh 's Texas Destiny survived the Civil War, though severely scarred both inside and outside. But will she survive a perilous journey along the wild paths of Texas with Miss Amelia Carson, her handsome brother's mail order bride? 24. Judith Merkle Riley's snake garden Left in debt when her philanthropist artist husband is murdered by her mistress's jealous husband, Susanna Dallet must rely on her miniature painter skills to survive her new position at the court of sneaky Cardinal Wolsey. Luckily, there's a rebellious angel and a beautiful but easily ruffled court secretary looking for her. 25. Kidnapped by Amanda Quick Fossil's rector's daughter Harriet Pomeroy, summons the infamous Viscount St. Justin to sleepy Upper Biddleton to hunt down thieves who hid the loot in the caves where she works. Love, intrigue and a lot of old bones can't be far behind. Editor choices Here are our top five personal favorites. Do you agree? Let us know in the comments below! 1. Vanessa North's recently divorced Roller Girl Tina Durham is trying (and failing) to be self-sufficient, until Joanne Joe Mama Delario comes to the rescue. Joe sees something special in Tina and introduces her to things that will change Tina's life. 2. A gentleman's position of KJ Charles Everyone depends on Lord Richard Vane for advice and assistance. But to whom does Lord Richard turn? His waiter, an un peerless genius fixer... and the object of Richard's deepest desires. 3. Zero to the bone of Jane Seville After witnessing a mafia blow, surgeon Jack Francisco is placed in protective custody to keep him safe until he can testify. A hitman known only as D is blackmailed into killing Jack, but when he tracks him down, his conscience will not allow him to kill an innocent man. The couple finds an unlikely ally in each other. 4. Overturning Sarah Waters' velvet Set in Victorian London, Nan King, an oyster girl, is fascinated by the phenomenon of the music hall Kitty Butler, an extraordinary male impersonator stepping on the boards. This is a story of their love and Nan's journey of self-discovery. 5. Fried green tomatoes at Fannie Flagg's Whistle Stop Cafe It is first the story of two women in the 80s, of Mrs Threadgoode with a gray head telling her life story to Evelyn, who is in the sad collapse middle age. The story he tells is also of two women - of the indisputably obsessive tomboy Idgie and her friend Ruth, who in the thirties ran a small place in Whistle Stop, Alabama, a sort of Southern Cafe Wobegon that offers a good barbecue and good coffee and all kinds of love and laughter, laughter, an occasional murder. What did we get lost? Missing your favorite romance on this list? Let us know in the comments below! Looking for more great readings? Check out our other final reading lists: Could you be the next best-selling novel author? Download this free book now: The novel writing training plan So you're ready to write your novel. Excellent. Are you prepared? The last thing you want when you sit down to write your first draft is to lose momentum. This guide helps you understand your narrative arc, plan your plot key points, give shape to your characters, and start building your own world. World.

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