

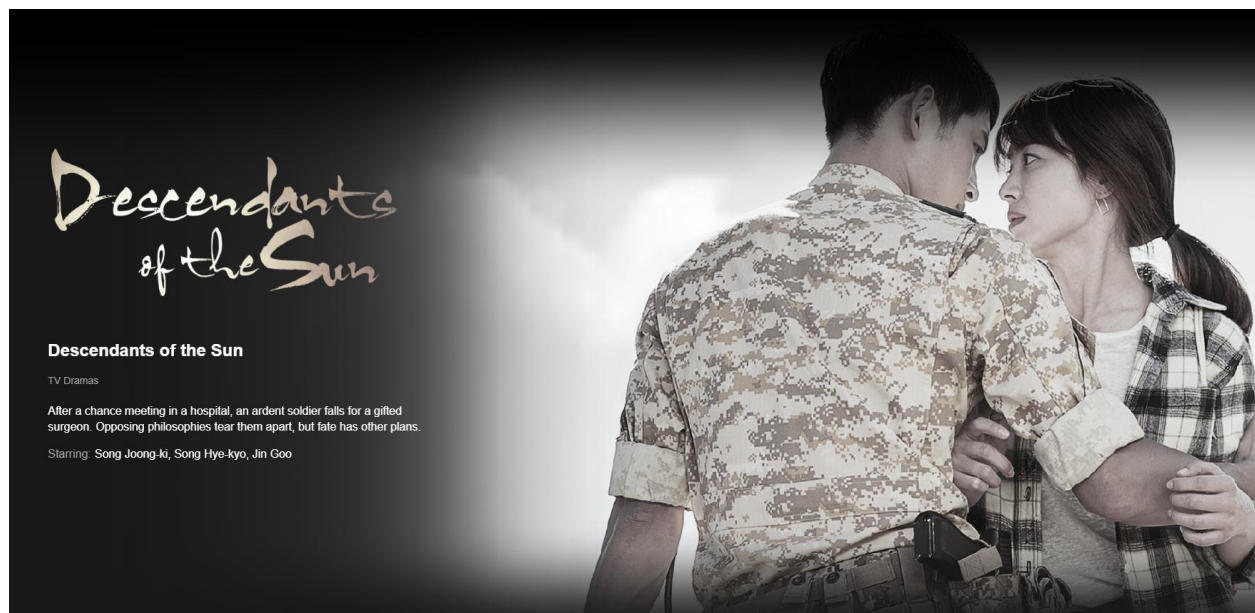
11 September 2022

Week Two – Metrics and Audiences (Due: September 11 at 11:59PM)

**The Korean Wave – A Study Around Metrics and Audiences of 2016 Hit Korean Drama
*Descendants of the Sun***

Giada Roberta Rossi

ODU Lifespan and Digital Communication Graduate Student



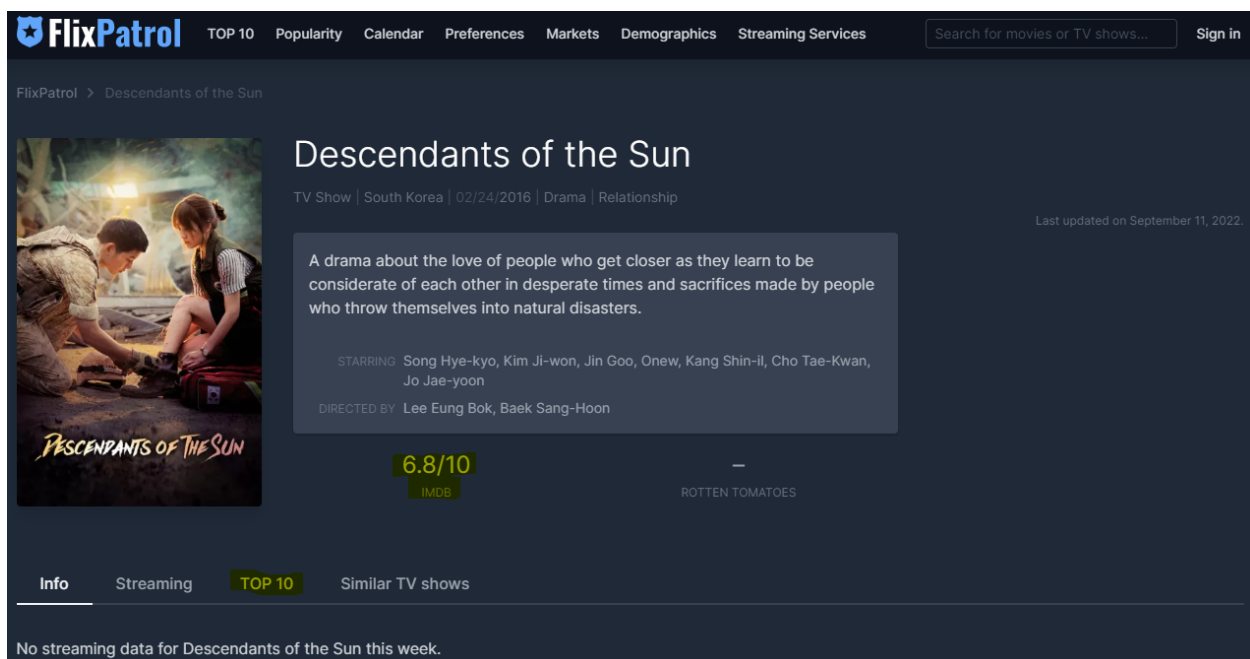
The South Korean original synopsis of Korean drama *Descendants of the Sun* reaches Top 10 TV in Asia after several years from its release.

It is not very common for any production, this being a book, a song, a movie or its synopsis, to become a classic. Yet, in an era where the Korean Wave has drastically become “a thing” since the 90’s, and keeps on increasing its rare global popularity, it would be fascinating to analyze one of the best Korean TV shows ever, *Descendants of the Sun*.

Initially culminated by the spread of K-Pop and K-Drama within South Korea and, consequently, across Asia during its first stages of the 90's, first of all thanks to a government, the South Korean, funding start-ups in support of creative industries willing to nurture their popular culture and, contemporary, to the internet, social networking services, and online streaming platforms, the Korean Wave has evolved into a global phenomena ever since.

"[...] showcasing South Korea's "national spirit" and "communitarian culture".[87] The drama also earned plaudits from (former) President Park Geun-hye, who praised the drama for instilling "patriotism" among young Koreans [...]".

First aired on KBS2 and simultaneously in China via iQIYI, *Descendants of the Sun* is a 2016 South Korean television production, starring actors Song Joong-ki and Song Hye-kyo which, like many other forms of "hanguk" (Korean) media phenomenon, has become so hugely popular all around the world that not only has it attained the TOP 10 locally as one of the most-watched TV series but its synopsis has also found local adaptations in the Philippines and Vietnam, and a planned version in China, reaching the TOP 10 TV Shows, as well.



The screenshot shows the FlixPatrol website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: FlixPatrol, TOP 10, Popularity, Calendar, Preferences, Markets, Demographics, Streaming Services, a search bar, and a Sign in button. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'Descendants of the Sun'. To the left is a poster for the show. To the right of the poster, the title 'Descendants of the Sun' is displayed, followed by 'TV Show | South Korea | 02/24/2016 | Drama | Relationship'. Below this, a synopsis is provided: 'A drama about the love of people who get closer as they learn to be considerate of each other in desperate times and sacrifices made by people who throw themselves into natural disasters.' The cast is listed as 'STARRING: Song Hye-kyo, Kim Ji-won, Jin Goo, Onew, Kang Shin-il, Cho Tae-Kwan, Jo Jae-yoon' and the directors as 'DIRECTED BY: Lee Eung Bok, Baek Sang-Hoon'. A rating of '6.8/10' is shown with 'IMDB' and 'ROTTEN TOMATOES' labels. At the bottom, there are tabs for 'Info', 'Streaming', 'TOP 10', and 'Similar TV shows'. A message at the bottom states 'No streaming data for Descendants of the Sun this week.'

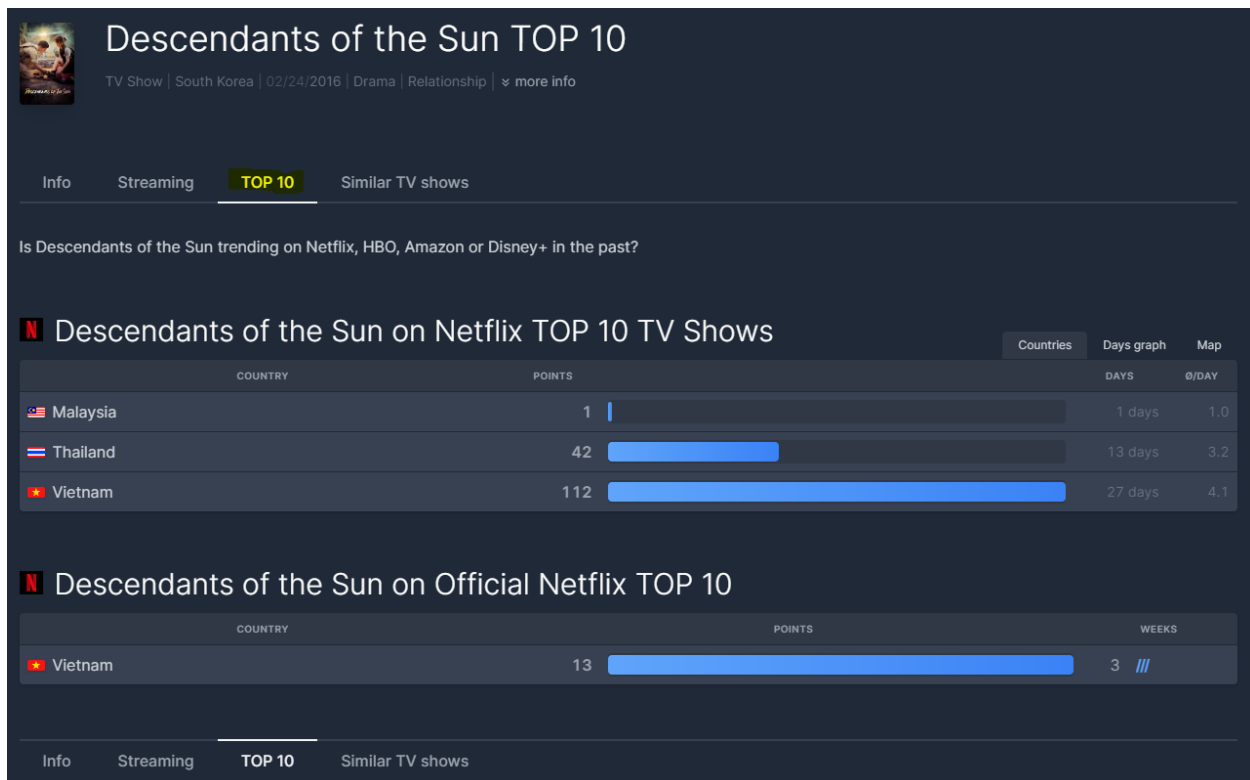
[Adaptation](#) [\[edit \]](#)

Adaptations [\[edit \]](#)

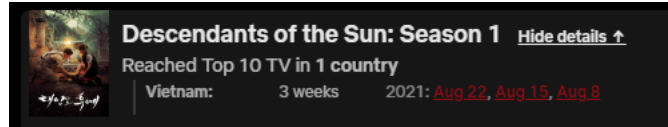
A Chinese [film adaptation](#) produced by Huace Film & TV and directed by [Zhang Yibai](#) is planned.^[14] A book based on the script is also planned for release.^[149]

A Philippine [television adaptation](#) produced by [GMA Network](#) was aired from February 10 to December 25, 2020 for 65 episodes through [GMA Pinoy TV](#), [GMA Life TV](#) and was acquired [Netflix Philippines](#).^[12]

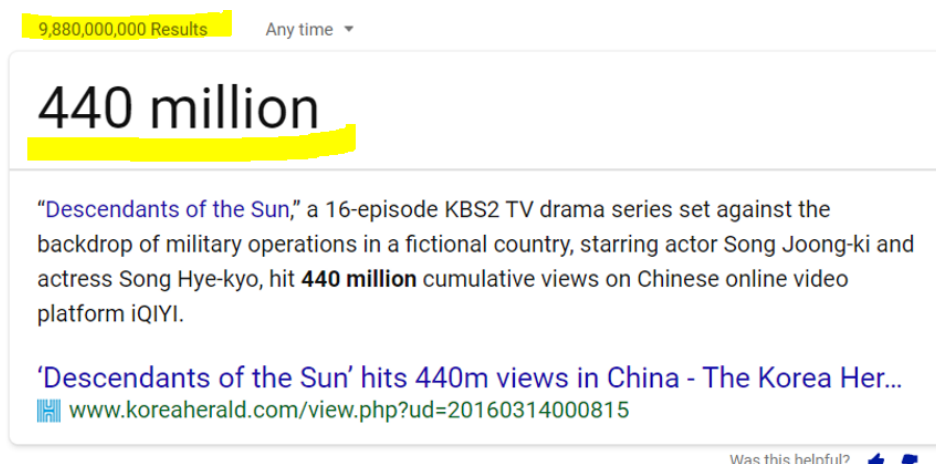
A Vietnamese television adaptation titled "*Hậu duệ mặt trời*" was aired on September 2018 for 48 episodes.^[13]



It is the story of Yoo Si-jiin, the leader of a South Korean Special Forces unit, and trauma surgeon Kang Mo-yeon of Haesung Hospital in Seoul, and the challenges of time and place in which their relationship is fated.



The Reader is surely thinking “OK, again one of those boring love stories!”, but is that the case? Unlike towards many others love stories, even the most traditionalist audience has proudly stopped their reluctance towards “the new” and has watched the viral sensation *Descendants of the Sun*, allowing themselves to confirm how well-produced K-Drama can be.



Viewership [\[edit \]](#)

In this table, **the blue numbers** represent the lowest ratings and **the red numbers** represent the highest ratings.


Ep.	Original broadcast date	Average audience share			
		TNmS		AGB Nielsen ^[147]	
		Nationwide	Seoul	Nationwide	Seoul
1	February 24, 2016	12.6% (7th)	12.7% (4th)	14.3% (4th)	14.4% (4th)
2	February 25, 2016	13.5% (6th)	14.5% (4th)	15.5% (3rd)	16.0% (4th)
3	March 2, 2016	21.8% (2nd)	22.7% (1st)	23.4% (2nd)	24.6% (2nd)
4	March 3, 2016	22.9% (2nd)	23.5% (2nd)	24.1% (2nd)	25.1% (2nd)
5	March 9, 2016	24.6% (2nd)	26.3% (1st)	27.4% (1st)	29.2% (1st)
6	March 10, 2016	25.4% (2nd)	27.6% (1st)	28.5% (1st)	29.8% (1st)
7	March 16, 2016	27.0% (2nd)	28.9% (1st)	28.3% (1st)	30.1% (1st)
8	March 17, 2016	25.9% (2nd)	28.7% (1st)	28.8% (1st)	30.5% (1st)
9	March 23, 2016	29.7% (1st)	32.3% (1st)	30.4% (1st)	31.0% (1st)
10	March 24, 2016	28.8% (1st)	31.0% (1st)	31.6% (1st)	33.3% (1st)
11	March 30, 2016	29.1% (2nd)	31.3% (1st)	31.9% (1st)	33.5% (1st)
12	March 31, 2016	31.1% (1st)	33.9% (1st)	33.0% (1st)	34.3% (1st)
13	April 6, 2016	30.4% (1st)	33.7% (1st)	33.5% (1st)	35.0% (1st)
14	April 7, 2016	31.1% (1st)	33.5% (1st)	33.0% (1st)	35.6% (1st)
15	April 13, 2016	31.1% (1st)	35.6% (1st)	34.8% (1st)	37.5% (1st)
16	April 14, 2016	35.3% (1st)	40.5% (1st)	38.8% (1st)	41.6% (1st)
Average		26.3%	28.5%	28.6%	30.1%
Special ^[148]	April 20, 2016	15.3% (5th)	16.6% (4th)	17.7% (4th)	19.5% (3rd)
	April 21, 2016	12.3% (6th)	13.9% (5th)	13.6% (5th)	14.7% (5th)
	April 22, 2016	10.9% (7th)	11.8% (6th)	12.2% (5th)	13.2% (6th)

With the emergence of online streaming, global viewers have helped said Hanguk production explode in popularity while, also, providing industries enough data to compile and measure size of audience through articles, ratings, likes and dislikes, and comments on social media –i.e., Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (to mention some of the Western side of the globe), along with reviews on web portals like IMDb.


Just second to Mr Sunshine

A brilliant drama. War, earthquake, surgery, romance, exotic scenery.....a feast for our eyes. Nowhere to breathe. Simply excellent.

 helpful · 8  1



manicmuse
463 people found this review helpful
Other reviews by this user

Apr 17, 2016
16 of 16 episodes seen
Completed  30

This review may contain spoilers

When I think of Descendants of the Sun, the first thing that comes to mind is cheese! This show is extra cheesy, and honestly I love cheese! Unfortunately, I am also kinda lactose intolerant, so after eating a certain amount of cheese I am left with regrets, and a stomach ache. That's exactly how I felt after watching the last episode. "Cue the rage of a thousand fans"

Overall	6.5
Story	4.0
Acting/Cast	8.0
Music	6.5
Rewatch Value	5.0

★ 10/10

Epic Series That Has Something For Everyone
spasek · 25 October 2017
Warning: Spoilers

21 out of 23 found this helpful. Was this review helpful? [Sign in to vote.](#)
Permalink

★ 9/10

Taeyangui Hooye (Descendants of the sun): I think that also Western audiences could like it.
niutta-enrico · 6 March 2016

It's an inspired Korean television production, with an enjoyable romantic plot, well written dialogue, good acting and adequate budget. As of April 2016 it has been streamed more than 2.3 billion times and its Asian success is so huge that China's Ministry of Public Security posted an official (and threatening) statement to warn against the growing influence of Korean Dramas on Chinese youth.

It's obviously for kids but it can be interesting for anyone willing to know how is it to live now in South Korea, what does it mean to be pretty, young and cool there.

But besides that, the story is catching and well made, with pleasant moments, nice scenery (a great part has been shot in Greece) and good attention for details.

44 out of 52 found this helpful. Was this review helpful? [Sign in to vote.](#)
Permalink

★ 10/10

tremendous height of filmmaking & epic proportions of visual storytelling.
aminifatimaaa · 4 January 2019

This drama is not just aesthetically gorgeous- the cinematography is seriously nothing short of a masterpiece- but also carries a message that is just as beautiful. This is one of the most critically acclaimed dramas of time, with special praise given to the the heart tugging storyline and the beautiful layered performances from the strong cast.

16 out of 18 found this helpful. Was this review helpful? [Sign in to vote.](#)
Permalink

★ 9/10

Reaching “a peaking rating of 40% in South Korea, as well as internationally, *Descendants of the Sun* has been sold to 32 countries and translated into 32 different languages” ([Descendants of the Sun - Wikipedia](#)) contributing, as a result, to the spreading of Korean culture and, therefore, an increase in global tourism not only in South Korea but also in Greece in which scenes were shot.

In the United States of 2016, *Descendants of the Sun* was the most-searched drama on streaming platform Viki; and it was thanks to its global broadcasting with English subtitles on KBS World and its consequence popularity that was added for worldwide streaming on Netflix.

The reason is that one does not need to be a TV dependent, a polyglot linguist, or a cultures fanatic to be amazed by such entertaining K-Drama.

If you are lucky enough to be introduced to incoming classics like the one in discussion by someone openminded and who is willing to share their discoveries, listen to their recommendations and give it a try, as there is always a reason why you admire a person and, therefore, trust their advice.



“K-drama is no longer a delight only enjoyed by Eastern viewers. It's now a supergenre that holds the attention of a worldwide, multinational audience with its fun escapades and uniquely told stories.”

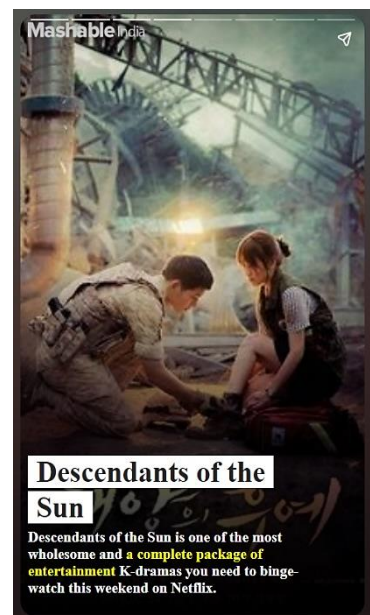
With all of this being said, what makes *Descendants of the Sun* such a great TV show, not only in the East but also elsewhere? Is it the synopsis, the scenery, the actors? What has become viral, and how?

The synopsis definitely contributes to its fame; however, if the storytelling, the costumes, the colors used, the scenography, the episodes and series duration (12-16 episodes of approximately 60-90 minutes per season), and the music are not made to perfection, it might become quite easy, if not obvious, to have to deal with competition in the long run. With that, despite the myriad of adaptations being produced, the original South Korean version has no competitors; it is the Winner of All Times.

Due to its attainable charm, it intrigues the highest audience “by providing easy access to content, approachable and likable characters, and high-quality production” ([Secret to K-pop, K-drama success | Stanford News](#)).

It is a mix of anything imaginable, a unique bundle which incorporates action, suspense, comedy, friendships, corruption, betrayal and, obviously, pure romance (Note that the main characters married sometime after the release of the TV show) but, also, a gorgeous scenery, which is of Greece at the 80%, topics like charity, multiethnicity, plurilingualism, and the military.

Additionally, due to the absence of scenes relevant to sexual intercourse, the production results approachable to all ages. On top of that, the original soundtrack of *Descendants of the Sun* showcases a playlist which, by capturing a large global audience, “topped local music charts” and not only.



“The original soundtrack of *Descendants of the Sun* topped local music charts. Preorders for the soundtrack album surpassed the 10,000 mark, and eventually sold over 60,000 copies. The album was released in two volumes, with some songs released as singles beforehand.”

It is not a case that, for instance, the Filipino adaptation has retained the same exact OST. After all, it is true that “what makes pizza a good pizza is the dough”; however, if good ingredients are not used, it will still not make a good pizza.

When an item is properly made, there is no age, no cultural stereotype, *no language barrier*: If a movie is to become globally popular, it will, and will reach the highest peaks.

“Korean media pour tremendous resources into their dramas. Dramas are collaborative productions that attend to every last detail to ensure a positive viewing experience that is also wholesome and family friendly. Viewers are assured to get good shots of Korean food, fashion, street life, and gorgeous countryside landscapes.”

My daughter and I have already watched it approximately three times and, each time, have experienced suspense, butterflies in our belly, felt curious, and acquired cultural knowledge.

Do you want to experience the same?

Go ahead TODAY, and [watch it on Hulu](#) or any other streaming platform until you can!

Not interested yet (I still get goose pumps!)? [Watch the trailer NOW!](#)

Questions

1. “Would it be 2016 without this drama? No. It still remains no. 1 due to how successful it became in and out of South Korea”



26. **Descendants of the Sun** (2016)
TV-14 | 60 min | Action, Comedy, Drama
★ 8.3 ☆ Rate
This drama tells of the love story that develops between a surgeon and a special forces officer.
Stars: Song Joong-ki, Song Hye-Kyo, Jin Goo, Kim Ji-Won
Votes: 15,874
[Watch on Freevee](#)
[Watch Free on Freevee](#)

Would it be 2016 without this drama? No. It still remains no. 1 due to how successful it became in and out of South Korea

- Have you watched it yet? Can you rely to what the reviewer stated?

- If not, would you have been part of the fanatic mass, and commented posts around *Descendants of the Sun*, if you had watched it in 2016, the year of its apex?

2. Will the other versions make the same success or might ruin the original's reputation?

- What makes a good production?
- What would make you fan of a viral TV show?

Consider watching two of the many trailers, the original South Korean version and the Pilipino one.



References

All links and images are clickable

- [Watch Descendants of the Sun | Netflix](#)
- [Netflix Top 10 - Global](#)
- [Korean wave - Wikipedia](#)
- [Descendants of the Sun - Wikipedia](#)
- https://kdrama.fandom.com/wiki/Descendants_of_the_Sun/OST#:~:text=The%20original%20soundtrack%20of%20Descendants%20of%20the%20Sun,volumes%2C%20with%20some%20songs%20released%20as%20singles%20beforehand
- [Why Are Korean TV Series \(K-Drama\) So Popular Now? 4 Reasons - whatNerd](#)
- [descendants of the sun popularity 440 - Search \(bing.com\)](#)
- [Descendants of the Sun \(TV Series 2016\) - Descendants of the Sun \(TV Series 2016\) - User Reviews - IMDb](#)
- [GMA-7's 'Descendants of the Sun' adaptation makes it to Netflix' Top 10 shows in the country | GMA News Online \(gmanetwork.com\)](#)
- ['Descendants of the Sun' hits 440m views in China \(koreaherald.com\)](#)
- [Watch Descendants of the Sun Streaming Online | Hulu \(Free Trial\)](#)
- [Popular Korean Dramas in 2016 - IMDb](#)
- ['My Secret Romance' To 'Descendants Of The Sun', Best Feel-Good Romantic K-Dramas To Watch This Weekend \(mashable.com\)](#)
- [Descendants of the Sun \(TV Series 2016\) - IMDb](#)
- [Descendants of the Sun TOP 10 • FlixPatrol](#)
- <https://youtu.be/UkNnJBE3k9M>
- [Secret to K-pop, K-drama success | Stanford News](#)

Soundtrack

- <https://youtu.be/kdr254E5faA>