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The Ultimate Guide to Cable TV Alternatives

Published 2021-08-05 By [Dennis Restauro](#)

Cable TV is expensive. Recent studies have shown that people are spending [over \\$200 per month](#) on their cable TV bundle. With all the TV and movies available through more affordable streaming services online, dropping cable TV is a great way to save thousands.

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How To Watch TV Without Cable

In this article, we'll break down what you need to get rid of cable TV and start watching TV using free and more affordable sources. For streaming TV and movies, you're going to need internet access. We recommend an internet connection speed of [around 25 Mbps streaming](#). There are quite a few places you can find [internet service for under \\$50](#). If you have adequate internet access then you need the following 3 things to watch TV without cable:

1. A streaming device
2. A way to watch local channels
3. A way to watch shows on-demand

Streaming Device

To stream content on any streaming service (live or on-demand) to your TV, you need a streaming device. We find the [Roku Express 4K+](#) is the best value at [around \\$40](#), but you can see our article where [we compare streaming devices](#) to see which streaming device will work for you.

Streaming devices are straightforward to set up. They connect directly to your TV through an HDMI, which every TV made in the past 10 years should have. Once connected and powered on, setting up your streaming device is a matter of following the on-screen instructions. You then download streaming service apps or channels to your streaming device to watch TV and similar to how you would download apps to a smartphone.

Local Channels

We have put together an entire guide on [How To Watch Local Network Channels](#). In brief, you can watch local channels for free [using a TV antenna](#) or you can elect to get local channels along with channels found on cable through a live TV streaming service. [Hulu+Live TV](#) and [YouTube TV](#) are your best options for the local "big 4" networks. We cover these options and more later in this article.

Watching On-Demand

There are countless streaming services available where you can stream TV and movies-on-demand. We've provided a brief description of all the top streaming services available in the sections below.

Live Streaming Services (Cable-like)

People want [live-TV streaming services](#) like [Hulu Live TV](#), [Sling TV](#), [Philo](#), [Fubo TV](#), [DIRECTV STREAM](#), [Vidgo](#), or [YouTube TV](#) when replacing cable TV. This section covers a ton of streaming services for you to choose from that replace the channels you typically see on a cable or satellite TV service.

Before we get into a description of each service, we know many readers are just curious about the channel offerings of each TV streaming service. We've linked those below for your convenience.

- [Hulu Live Channel List](#)
- [YouTube TV Channel List](#)
- [Philo TV Channel List](#)
- [fuboTV Channel List](#)
- [Vidgo Channel List](#)
- [Sling TV Channel List](#)
- [DIRECTV STREAM Channel list](#)

Philo



Philo is the most affordable live streaming service on the market. The company keeps costs low by not carrying sports channels in favor of entertainment channels.

The current channel lineup offers favorites like A&E, AMC, BBC America, Comedy Central, Discovery, Hallmark Channel, HGTV, LifeTime, Nick, History, TLC, and much more for **just \$25 per month**. That price even includes a Cloud DVR, among other features.

For those that don't want to pay for sports channels, Philo offers some cable TV favorites for an affordable monthly price. Try their [1-week free trial](#). Check out our [review of Philo](#) for more information.

Sling TV

Sling TV subscription

Sling TV is a streaming service that also offers live TV over the internet. It's cable TV without the contract or the massive bill. Sling TV offers [promotional pricing](#) to new customers. The service works on most streaming devices, and Sling also offers a [cloud DVR](#). Sling TV also [streams NBC live online](#) along with [Fox](#) in select markets.

For \$35 a month, subscribers will have access to AMC, History Channel, [Disney](#), A&E, Epix, IFC, Lifetime, [ESPN](#), ESPN2, TNT, TBS, [HGTV](#), Cartoon Network, [Disney Channel](#), CNN, and more.

Sling also added a second base package that swaps out the Disney Owned stations for FOX owned stations, including [FS1](#). This package also allows the ability for multiple streams. There are also add-on channels packs and premium channels like [Showtime](#) and Cinemax. Check out our [Sling TV review](#) for more details.

Hulu



Hulu offers both a **Live TV** streaming service and a back catalog of movies and TV. The streaming quality is one of the best around. The live service includes:

- Over 60 broadcast and cable-based channels (including premium channels like HBO)
- Live stream of local ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox in nearly all markets
- The basic package comes with 50 hours of cloud DVR storage with the ability to upgrade if needed.
- Watch on two screens at once. You can upgrade to unlimited screens for \$14.99 per month. This upgrade also gives you three screens while away from your home

network.

- Comes with six customizable profiles
- Includes entire Hulu streaming library

The service costs \$69.99 per month. You can opt to subscribe to the Hulu library instead of the Live TV service for just \$6.99 per month. Hulu also offers loads of original content and a decent back catalog of many past seasons of cable and network TV shows. You can test the live service or the on-demand service by [Signing up to Hulu Live TV](#). For more details, check out our full [review of Hulu](#).

FuboTV



FuboTV is a live online streaming service specializing in live sports while still offering pay-TV channels like A&E, Bravo, [The Weather Channel](#), and more. They offer a Cloud DVR with its starter channel service starting at \$69.99 per month. They also provide live streaming of Fox, NBC, ABC, and CBS in most markets. Other features include:

- ESPN, FS1, and more are available in [fuboTV's channel lineup](#)
- You can watch it on three screens at the same time
- 250 hours of cloud DVR storage
- The FuboTV app is available on major platforms, including AppleTV, AndroidTV, Roku, and Amazon FireTV.

The service offers a [1-week free trial](#). Try it out to see if it will work for you. For more information, check out my [FuboTV review](#).

Frdly TV



Frdly TV is the most affordable live TV streaming service on the market. The service starts at \$6.99 per month and offers around 15 channels live and on-demand with stand-outs like A&E, Lifetime, Hallmark Channel and Insp. They offer a DVR, simultaneous streams, and are supported on most modern streaming devices. You can try a [1-week trial](#) or read our [review of Frndly TV](#) for more information.

YouTube TV



YouTube isn't just for "Youtubers" anymore. Google now offers a [YouTube TV live streaming service](#). The service offers just about every major cable TV channel. It even includes live streaming of ABC, NBC, FOX, and CBS. A subscription to Youtube TV cost \$64.99 per month and includes the following:

- [Local Network Channels](#), and over [70 other channels](#)
- unlimited cloud DVR storage
- stream on three devices at once
- Youtube TV supports Android, iOS, Apple TV, Fire TV, Chromecast, and more. The YouTube TV app has also returned to Roku devices after settling [a dispute between the two companies](#).
- Includes [Youtube TV on-demand](#)

Check out my [review of YouTube TV](#) for all the details and channels available on the service. You can also check your Zip Code on [Youtube TV's Website](#) to see the available channels in your area.

DIRECTV STREAM



DIRECTV STREAM is a streaming service from AT&T that offers live TV over the internet from networks you typically receive with a cable bundle. The service starts at \$69.99 per month for the "Entertainment." The service offers other channel plans.

All DIRECTV STREAM plans include:

- the ability to watch on 20 devices at the same time
- a cloud-based DVR
- channels like ESPN, AMC, HGTV, Discovery, and more

- supported on AppleTV, Android TV, Roku, Amazon FireTV, and more

You can try DIRECTV STREAM by signing up for this [5-day free trial](#). There is no contract and you can cancel at any time. For more information on DIRECTV STREAM see our [DIRECTV STREAM review](#).

Vidgo



[Vidgo](#) is a newer Streaming service that offers fairly competitive pricing over other live streaming services. Vidgo subscriptions start at \$55

A subscription to Vidgo Includes the following:

- Vidgo doesn't force you into a contract, and you can cancel any time
- Stream on 3 devices simultaneously
- Over 70 channels including ESPN
- Vidgo is supported on available on Android, iOS, [Roku](#), Apple TV, Fire TV. You can also stream the service on up to 3 devices at the same time.

Vidgo offers [promotional pricing for new customers](#), and there is no contract required so you can cancel at any time. There is also a fairly innovative "Social TV" feature that lets you chat and share live reactions with friends watching the same show. Learn more about this and other features in our [guide to Vidgo](#).

Premium Streaming Services

Premium Streaming Services are streaming services that provide content to a specific network or distributor. Here are the top premium streaming services available now.

Disney+



Disney+ is a Disney owned OTT (over the top) subscription-based streaming service. The service will provide video-on-demand content from Pixar, Marvel, Lucasfilm, National Geographic, and the recently acquired 20th Century Fox.

Not only does the service have original shows like the must-see Star Wars bounty hunter space western, [The Mandalorian](#) and [Marvel's Loki](#) but much much more:

- The entire Disney Movie Vault
- Every Pixar Movie and shorts
- All of Disney's Star Wars movies and TV shows will be moving to Disney+ within its first year of launch
- [30 seasons of The Simpsons](#)
- Over 5,000 episodes of Disney Channel shows (Includes Disney Jr, Disney XD, etc.)
- A ton of Muppets Content
- Original Shows and more which we will cover later in this article

The service costs only **\$7.99 per month**. However, Disney+ also has year-long subscriptions at a discounted price of \$79.99. Be sure to try the Disney+ [1-week free trial](#).

For information on device compatibility, features, deals, and a list of everything available, see our article: [Everything You Need to Know about Disney+](#).

ESPN+

espn+

ESPN+ is not a replacement for ESPN. It's a service that provides premium ESPN content through the ESPN app. On ESPN+, you can watch UFC Fight Night, MLB, NHL, The PGA Tour, World Soccer, College sports, and more. Check out our guide to [what's on ESPN+](#) for more information on the content available.

ESPN+ through the ESPN App supports Roku Players and TVs, Amazon Fire TV devices, Chromecast, Apple TV, Android, iPhone, Samsung TVs, Xbox One, and PS4. An ESPN+ subscription costs only **\$6.99 per month**. There is no contract so you can cancel any time you like. In addition to ESPN, Disney also owns [Hulu](#) and the [Disney+ streaming service](#). You can get **Disney+, Hulu, and ESPN+ just \$13.99** by [signing up here!](#)

Starz

STARZ

Don't want to miss out on hit shows like [Outlander](#) or [American Gods](#)? Check out this [free trial for Starz](#). You can watch Starz on-demand or live without having a cable TV subscription. For information on the Starz app, read my post on watching [Starz Without Cable](#).

Showtime

showtime online

If shows like [Billions](#) on Showtime are more your speed, then no need to worry. There are tons of ways to watch Showtime online. For details, check out my post on how to watch [Showtime without cable](#).

HBO Max

hbo max

HBO Max is the new TV streaming service from AT&T that combines all your favorite HBO Shows and Turner Media shows in one place. HBO Max is replacing HBO Now as more devices become supported on the HBO Max platform. Game of Thrones is over, but there are still many great shows like [Westworld](#) and [Barry](#) on both HBO Max and HBO Now. There are numerous ways to get the service. All of which are highlighted in my posts on watching [HBO Now](#) and [HBO Max](#).

Paramount+

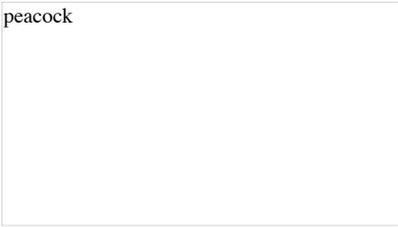
paramount plus

Paramount+ is a streaming service offering TV shows, movies, and exclusive original content from CBS, BET, Comedy Central, MTV, Nickelodeon, Paramount Pictures, Smithsonian Channel, and more. Paramount+ also provides a way to watch your local CBS Network. The service starts at \$5.99 per month and does air commercials. However, they offer a commercial-free plan for \$9.99 per month. For more details, check out my [review of Paramount+](#).

Check out this [7-day free trial](#) to see if you like it. There is no contract so you can cancel anytime.

Peacock

peacock



[Peacock](#) is an over the top streaming service from NBCUniversal, with video-on-demand and some live events. While most TV Shows and movies are from the NBCUniversal libraries, there is also a lot of third-party content available from Lionsgate, Starz, Warner Bros, A&E Networks, ViacomCBS, Paramount, Cinedigm, and more. The service has a free, premium, and ad-free option. Check out our [review of Peacock](#) for more details.

Discovery+

discovery plus

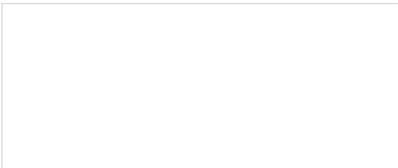


Discovery+ is an on-demand subscription-based streaming service that offers on-demand content from several TV networks and exclusive original shows. Discovery+ offers content from Discovery Inc. owned networks while partnering with A&E Networks, the BBC's Natural History collection, Group Nine, and more. Discovery+ service offers shows from networks like HGTV, Discovery Channel, Lifetime, History and many more.

After a 1-week free trial, a [subscription](#) to Discovery+ costs **\$4.99 per month** for an ad-supported plan. However, subscribers can opt for an ad-free experience for **\$6.99 per month**. See our [review of Discovery+](#) for more details.

On-Demand Streaming Services

Amazon Prime



For vast libraries of movies and TV shows before the current season, I recommend getting the [30-day free trial to Amazon Prime](#). Another big reason to get Amazon Prime is the option of adding [Showtime](#) and [Starz](#) with your subscription. For just \$8.99 per month, you have every TV show and movie offered by Starz and Showtime just as if you had the network with a cable provider.

Not only do you have access to stream over 40,000 hit movies and TV shows, but you get free music, books, and unlimited photo storage as well. Your membership also includes free 2-day shipping from Amazon.com regardless of the order size. Some metropolitan areas offer 2-hour shipping. For more information, check out all the benefits you receive in our [Review of Amazon Prime Video](#).

Netflix

netflix

Netflix – Netflix has loads of content at a low price. Most TV shows wind up on streaming after a season airs. There are also movies and a whole host of children’s programming available. The pricing is reasonable at \$13.99 a month for unlimited HD streaming to two TVs simultaneously. See [our review of Netflix](#) for more information on plans, pricing and more. If you are comfortable waiting a few months for a TV series, Netflix may be all you need.

Hulu On-Demand Library

hulu

While Hulu’s on-demand streaming library is included when you subscribe to Hulu + Live TV, you can also get access to Hulu on-demand through [its own subscription](#) starting at \$6.99 per month. This will provide access to [Hulu Originals](#) like [The Handmaid’s Tale](#), [Shrill](#), and [The Act](#), along with popular TV shows on network and cable TV and the ability to subscribe to HBO, Showtime, Starz, and Cinemax.

Funimation

funimation

Funimation is a Japanese Anime streaming service that streams current and classic anime to English-speaking viewers all over the world. While the service has some classic anime like *Cowboy Beebop*, it also has recent favorites like [Attack on Titan](#) and [Demon Slayer](#). The service offers a no-commitment [14-day free trial](#), so you can cancel any time. If you decide to keep the service, plans start at \$5.99 per month. See our [review of Funimation](#) for more details.

Free TV and Other Options

Pluto TV

pluto tv

Pluto TV partners with various content providers to offer free TV and movies. The content is broken down into channels within Pluto TV. For example, if you like news Pluto TV offers NBC News, MSNBC, Sky News, Bloomberg, and more. There is also Crime Network, Funny AF, and IGN. As of the publish date of this article, there are over [250 channels available on Pluto TV](#). For more details check out our guide: [What is Pluto TV?](#). You can also check out [their website](#) to get an idea of what they offer.

Tubi

tubi tv

Formerly known as Tubi TV, Tubi offers free TV and Movies. The service offers a good balance of big-budget movies, cult classics, along with some stuff you’ve likely never heard off. The service is a bit heavy on the ads compared to other free services. However, movies and TV are in high definition when available. For more details, check out

our [review of Tubi](#) or visit [their website](#).

CW App

the cw online

The CW App lets anyone watch the current seasons of CW shows free. You don't even need a cable TV login. It works on all major streaming devices, including Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, Chromecast, Android, and iOS. Check [here](#) for more information.

roku channel

Roku put out its own free channel. It's worth having on your home screen as you can always find a quality movie to watch. In addition to movies and TV on The Roku Channel, the channel also aggregates content from American Classics, Fandor, FilmRise, Nosey, OVGuide, Popcornflix, Vidmark, and YuYu. The Roku Channel also has its own original content and provides a way to consolidate other premium streaming services into one location. Check out our [review of the Roku Channel](#) for more details.

More Free Content

There is just too much out there to list everything, but below is a list of places to start looking for free content online.

- Check out our list of the [Best Free Roku Channels](#).
- Services like [YouTube](#) and [Vimeo](#) offer heaps of free content.
- See how to [watch news for free](#)
- In my post on [free TV online](#), I cover excellent free services like [Crackle](#), [ConTV](#), and more.

Many services also offer free trials if you want to binge on content. For example, [CuriosityStream](#) allows you to [watch free documentaries online](#) for seven days. After that, it's only \$2.99 per month.

List Of All Streaming Services

For your convenience we have an updated list of all streaming services we've covered below. The link takes you to our coverage of that specific streaming service.

Live TV Streaming Services

- [Hulu TV](#)
- [fuboTV](#)
- [Philo](#)
- [Frndly TV](#)
- [Vidgo](#)
- [DIRECTV STREAM](#)
- [Sling TV](#)
- [YouTube TV](#)

Premium Streaming Services

- [Disney+](#)
- [ESPN+](#)
- [Paramount+](#)
- [HBO Max](#)
- [Apple TV+](#)
- [Prime Video](#)
- [Funimation](#)
- [Netflix](#)
- [HBO](#)
- [Showtime](#)
- [Starz](#)
- [Peacock](#)
- [Discovery+](#)
- [DAZN](#)
- [AMC+](#)
- [Acorn TV](#)
- [Sundance Now](#)
- [BritBox](#)
- [CuriosityStream](#)
- [Quibi](#)

- [Shudder](#)
- [Boomerang](#)
- [Noggin](#)
- [KlowdTV](#)

Free TV Streaming Services

- [Crackle](#)
- [Tubi TV](#)
- [Pluto TV](#)
- [Facebook Watch](#)
- [VRV \(Verve\)](#)
- [CrunchyRoll](#)
- [Comet](#)
- [ConTV](#)
- [Stirr](#)
- [Topic](#)
- [Kanopy](#)
- [Hoopla](#)
- [HappyKids.TV](#)
- [Classix](#) (subscription is free, but app is a \$3.99 one time fee)

We also have a page dedicated to [Free Streaming Services](#).

Need More Information?

If this article didn't answer your specific question, head over to our [Home Page](#)! It will guide you to affordable internet providers, streaming services to meet your needs, information on antennas, and many more tools and resources to help you save money on TV and Internet access.

For tips and tricks on cutting the cord and other tech topics be sure to join our [Facebook Page](#).

Join Millions of Cord Cutters

For the latest information on cord cutting, affordable internet, and cord cutting deals subscribe to our weekly email newsletter. It's 100% Free! Simply enter your email below and click "Subscribe Now!"

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