

# Free streaming options abound

21 November 2019, by James Lileks



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

There are more free streaming channels than you might suspect. Most are low-profile, compared with Netflix or Hulu, but they have more content than you will ever consume in six lifetimes. Since there's no such thing as a free lunch or a free viewing of "Free Willy," you'll have to endure ads, as we all did in the prehistoric network era.

Your options include:

Tubi TV—Described as the "largest independently owned [video service](#)" by Variety magazine, Tubi has more than 12,000 [movies](#) and TV shows from the major studios. A [new deal](#) in 2019 added 400 series and movies from NBCUniversal, including "Ben-Hur"—the 2016 version, not the Charlton Heston warhorse—and TV shows such as the restaurant reality show "Hell's Kitchen." Once you've watched all of those, you can move along to

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Pluto TV—Owned by Viacom, Pluto TV has more than 200 channels, including content from the BBC, Newsmax, CNN and others. There's an all-"Baywatch" channel and one for Comedy Central, in case your binge plans include giggles and giggles. Not interested? Even if the

"Baywatch" episodes have been remastered? Then try ...

Crackle—It's a Sony service with the usual offerings—movies, TV shows and its own in-house shows. The catalog may appeal to people who miss the days before cable—"Seinfeld" lives here, as well as "Archie Bunker's Place" and "Fantasy Island."

Vudu—It's not completely free. You can rent movies before they're released on DVD or buy seasons of TV shows like "Rick and Morty." But there's a robust selection of free stuff, with ads. With a library of 24,000 movies and 8,000 TV episodes, its catalog is one of the largest in the streaming biz. Owner: Walmart.

You might ask: What channel are these services on? That's not how it works, alas—you need to get the app for your device, be it a Roku, Amazon Fire, Google Chromecast, Apple TV or whatever you may have. Depending on the device, it may give you more free options.

Modern "smart" TVs usually include a function for adding apps right to your TV. We'd say "consult your manual," but you probably threw it away, so just google your TV's model number and see how easy it is to add free streaming.

By the way, they're not completely free. You'll have to pay for electricity. Yes, electricity, plus ads—it's enough to make someone just sell the set and go to the library.

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