

AWS · ORACLE CLOUD · GOOGLE CLOUD

Free Cloud VPS Guide Pack

Step-by-step sign-up and first server on all three free tiers,
with the 2026 limits.

- Which free tier fits you, in one table
- Sign-up and launch steps for each cloud
- The gotchas that cost people money or lock them out

Updated 30-Sep-2026

Companion to the Grounded AI Lab video **Free Cloud VPS in 2026: AWS vs Oracle vs Google Cloud**

Free-tier limits change often. Every section links to the official page, so check it before you rely on a number. Prices are approximate.

Contents

[01](#) Pick one in 60 seconds

[02](#) Before you sign up

[03](#) AWS (Free plan)

[04](#) Oracle Cloud Always Free

[05](#) Google Cloud Free Tier

[06](#) Your first 30 minutes on any server

[07](#) Stay at ₹0

[08](#) Free-tier limits at a glance

01 Pick one in 60 seconds

	AWS	Oracle Cloud	Google Cloud
Free server	t3.micro and up, paid from credit	2 OCPU ARM + 12 GB RAM	e2-micro: 2 shared vCPU, 1 GB
How long	6 months (new accounts)	Forever	Forever (3 US regions)
Credit	\$100 + up to \$100	\$300 trial for 30 days	\$300 for 90 days
Free disk	Paid from credit	200 GB block storage	30 GB standard disk
Best for	Learning the biggest cloud (and jobs)	Most free compute	Google's AI tools + a tiny box

My pick

Oracle for an always-on server (n8n, bots, a small local LLM). Add **AWS** or **Google Cloud** credit when you want to learn their ecosystems. Many learners run two: Oracle for the 24/7 box, credits for experiments.

02 Before you sign up

All three verify your identity. Have these ready:

Item	Why
PAN card or passport	The ID most accepted for Indian users
Mobile number	OTP at sign-up and for 2FA
Credit or debit card	Identity check. You're only charged beyond free limits. Prepaid cards often fail.
Real email	Disposable addresses get flagged
Password manager + 2FA app	Cloud accounts are high-value targets. Turn on 2FA on day 1.
An SSH key	Create one once, use it everywhere (below)

Create an SSH key on your own computer (Windows PowerShell, macOS or Linux):

```
ssh-keygen -t ed25519 -C "my-cloud-key"
# press Enter to accept ~/.ssh/id_ed25519, then set a passphrase
```

You'll paste the **public** half (`id_ed25519.pub`) into each cloud. Never share the private half.

03 AWS (Free plan)

Accounts created on or after **15-Jul-2025** get the new Free plan: **\$100 credit** plus up to **\$100 more** for finishing getting-started tasks, for **6 months** or until the credit runs out. Then the account closes unless you upgrade. Older accounts keep the old 750 hours/month for 12 months.

- 1 Go to aws.amazon.com → **Create an AWS Account**; verify your email and set a root password.
- 2 Choose the **Free plan**, add your card and verify your phone.
- 3 Sign in, turn on MFA for the root user (IAM → Add MFA).
- 4 Create a **Zero spend budget**: Billing and Cost Management → Budgets → Create budget.
- 5 Open **EC2**, choose the **Mumbai (ap-south-1)** or Hyderabad region, click **Launch instance**.
- 6 Pick **Ubuntu Server 24.04 LTS** and a **Free tier eligible** type: **t3.micro** (1 GB) fits the \$100 credit for 6 months; **t3.small** (2 GB) is better for n8n.
- 7 Create a key pair (or import your `.pub` key), allow SSH from **My IP**, set storage to 20 GB gp3, and launch.
- 8 Connect: `ssh -i ~/.ssh/your-key.pem ubuntu@YOUR_PUBLIC_IP`

Full walkthrough

Want every screen, plus n8n with HTTPS? Get the **AWS EC2 Setup Guide** (comment **EC2** on the video).

04 Oracle Cloud Always Free

Always Free resource	Limit (updated 30-Sep-2026)
Ampere A1 ARM compute	2 OCPUs + 12 GB RAM in total (halved from 4 + 24 GB in Jun-2026). One server, or split it, e.g. two 1 OCPU / 6 GB servers.
AMD micro VMs	2 × VM.Standard.E2.1.Micro (1/8 OCPU, 1 GB each)
Block storage	200 GB total (boot + data volumes)
Outbound data	10 TB a month
Also free	Load balancer, 2 Autonomous Databases, monitoring

4.1 Sign up

- 1 Go to oracle.com/cloud/free → **Start for free**.
- 2 Pick your **home region** carefully (Mumbai or Hyderabad from India). **It can't be changed later**, and Always Free compute only runs in your home region.
- 3 Verify your card: Oracle places a small temporary hold and releases it.
- 4 Wait for the "account ready" email (can take a few minutes to hours), then sign in.

4.2 Create your free ARM server

- 1 Menu → **Identity & Security** → **Compartments** → create one called `ai-lab`.
- 2 Menu → **Networking** → **Virtual cloud networks** → **Start VCN Wizard** → **Create VCN with Internet Connectivity**.
- 3 Menu → **Compute** → **Instances** → **Create instance** (in the `ai-lab` compartment).
- 4 **Image**: Canonical Ubuntu 24.04 (the aarch64 build is picked automatically for ARM).
- 5 **Shape**: Change shape → **Ampere** → **VM.Standard.A1.Flex** → set **2 OCPUs** and **12 GB** (or less). Look for the **Always Free-eligible** label.
- 6 **Networking**: your new VCN's public subnet; **Assign a public IPv4 address**: yes.
- 7 **SSH keys**: paste your `id_ed25519.pub`.
- 8 **Boot volume**: 50 GB default is fine (up to 200 GB total is free). Click **Create**.
- 9 **Connect**: `ssh ubuntu@YOUR_PUBLIC_IP` (Oracle Linux images use the user `opc`).

“Out of host capacity”?

Free ARM servers are popular, so this error is common. Try another availability domain, try 1 OCPU / 6 GB, or retry at a quieter hour. Many users see fewer errors after upgrading to **Pay As You Go**: Always Free resources stay free, but anything beyond them is billed, so set a budget first. Or let my n8n workflow retry for you: comment **VPS** on the **Cloud Capacity Autopilot** video.

4.3 Open a port (two places)

Oracle blocks traffic twice: in the network **security list** and in the server's own firewall.

- 1 Networking → your VCN → **Security Lists** → Default → **Add Ingress Rules**: source `0.0.0.0/0`, TCP, destination port (e.g. `80`).
- 2 On the server, open the same port in iptables and save it:

```
sudo iptables -I INPUT 6 -m state --state NEW -p tcp --dport 80 -j ACCEPT
sudo netfilter-persistent save
```

Don't enable ufw on Oracle's Ubuntu image

It fights Oracle's preset iptables rules and can lock you out of SSH. Use the two steps above instead.

Keep it busy (or go Pay As You Go)

On free-tier accounts, Oracle can reclaim Always Free servers that sit idle for 7 days (CPU, network and, for ARM, memory all under ~20%). A server that runs real work, like n8n, is fine.

Google Cloud Free Tier

Two separate things: a **\$300 free trial for 90 days**, and an **Always Free** tier that continues after it.

Always Free	Limit
e2-micro VM	1 per month, only in us-west1 (Oregon), us-central1 (Iowa) or us-east1 (South Carolina)
Disk	30 GB standard persistent disk
Outbound data	1 GB a month from North America (excl. China and Australia)
Cloud Run	2 million requests a month
BigQuery	1 TiB of queries a month

5.1 Sign up

- 1 Go to cloud.google.com/free → **Get started for free** and sign in with a Google account.
- 2 Add your card. You won't be charged during the trial unless you choose to upgrade.
- 3 In the console, create a project (e.g. `ai-lab`) and open **Compute Engine**; enable the API when asked.

5.2 Create the free e2-micro

- 1 **Compute Engine** → **VM instances** → **Create instance**.
- 2 **Region**: `us-central1`, `us-west1` or `us-east1`. Any other region is billed.
- 3 **Machine**: series **E2** → **e2-micro**.
- 4 **Boot disk** → Change: **Ubuntu 24.04 LTS**, disk type **Standard persistent disk**, 30 GB.
- 5 Tick **Allow HTTP / HTTPS** traffic only if you'll serve web pages. Click **Create**.
- 6 Click **SSH** next to the VM to open a terminal in your browser.

The disk-type trap

The console defaults to a **Balanced** persistent disk, which is not free. Switch it to **Standard** before you click Create.

When the 90 days end

The trial credit expires. To keep your e2-micro running, upgrade to a paid billing account: you still pay nothing while you stay inside the Always Free limits. Spend the \$300 on things the free tier can't do, like GPU notebooks in Vertex AI.

Your first 30 minutes on any server

The same basics on AWS, Oracle or Google Cloud (Ubuntu):

```
# 1. Update everything
sudo apt update && sudo apt upgrade -y

# 2. Add swap if you have 1-2 GB of RAM
sudo fallocate -l 2G /swapfile && sudo chmod 600 /swapfile
sudo mkswap /swapfile && sudo swapon /swapfile
echo '/swapfile none swap sw 0 0' | sudo tee -a /etc/fstab

# 3. Install Docker (Docker's official script)
curl -fsSL https://get.docker.com | sudo sh
sudo usermod -aG docker $USER && newgrp docker

# 4. Firewall (AWS and Google Cloud; on Oracle use section 4.3)
sudo ufw allow OpenSSH && sudo ufw enable
```

- **SSH keys only.** Cloud Ubuntu images turn password login off by default; keep it that way.
- **Open only the ports you use,** in the cloud's firewall first.
- **Run your first AI app.** On Oracle's 12 GB ARM server, a small local model runs well: `curl -fsSL https://ollama.com/install.sh | sh` then `ollama run llama3.2:3b`. On 1 GB servers, stick to n8n, bots and APIs.

Stay at ₹0

Cloud	Set up a budget alert
AWS	Billing and Cost Management → Budgets → Zero spend budget
Oracle	Billing & Cost Management → Budgets → Create budget (e.g. ₹100) with an email alert
Google Cloud	Billing → Budgets & alerts → Create budget with 50/90/100% email alerts

- Delete what you don't use: servers, disks, snapshots, static IPs. Unattached IPs and disks keep billing.
- Check the billing page once a week for the first month.
- Never paste API keys or passwords into public repos, videos or screenshots.
- Stuck on a charge? Every provider has billing support; open a case quickly.

Free-tier limits at a glance

	AWS	Oracle Cloud	Google Cloud
Server	Free-plan types (t3.micro → m7i-flex.large) paid from credit	A1 ARM: 2 OCPU + 12 GB total · 2 AMD micro VMs	1 e2-micro in us-west1 / us-central1 / us-east1
Duration	6 months or until credit ends (new accounts)	Forever	Forever; \$300 trial for 90 days
Storage	From credit (legacy: 30 GB EBS)	200 GB block	30 GB standard disk
Data out	100 GB / month free	10 TB / month	1 GB / month (from N. America)
Always free extras	Lambda 1M requests / month	Load balancer, 2 Autonomous DBs	Cloud Run 2M requests, BigQuery 1 TiB
Official page	aws.amazon.com/free	oracle.com/cloud/free	cloud.google.com/free

Start free. Build real.

Watch the full comparison and more practical AI builds on **Grounded [AI] Lab**: YouTube, Instagram and Facebook [@groundedailab](#). Limits checked 30-Sep-2026.