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Cut the Cord.

The Complete 2026 Streaming Guide

Everything you need to ditch cable and stream live TV legally — Fubo, Sling TV, DirecTV Stream, sports, devices, troubleshooting, and more.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Cord-Cutting

In 2026, cutting cable is one of the smartest financial decisions an American household can make. The average cable subscriber pays over \$120 a month — before taxes, fees, and equipment rentals. Many pay closer to \$180. Meanwhile, streaming services deliver the same live TV — sports, local channels, news, and entertainment — starting at just \$40 a month.

This guide cuts through the noise. We cover the three biggest live TV streaming services — Fubo, Sling TV, and DirecTV Stream — and give you everything you need to make the switch with confidence: what to sign up for, how to set it up, what to do when something breaks, and how to get the best price.

This guide is for you if:

- You're paying too much for cable and want to lower your bill
- You want live sports without a cable contract
- You've tried streaming but had problems and gave up
- You want to understand the difference between Fubo, Sling TV, and DirecTV Stream
- You want everything in one place — no searching 15 different sites

CHAPTER 1

Why Switch From Cable in 2026?

The Cost Problem

Cable companies have raised prices every year for the past decade. The average cable TV bill in the US is now \$116–\$186 per month depending on your package and provider. Add in equipment rental (\$10–20/mo), regional sports fees (\$10–15/mo), broadcast TV fees (\$20–25/mo), and taxes, and many households pay over \$200 a month for television alone.

Streaming services have no equipment fees, no installation charges, no contract, and no hidden costs. What you see is what you pay.

	Cable (typical)	Streaming
Base price	\$80–\$120	\$40–\$79
Equipment rental	\$15–\$25	\$0
Broadcast/sports fees	\$20–\$40	\$0
Contract	1–2 years	None
Cancel penalty	\$150–\$300	\$0
TOTAL (est.)	\$120–\$185/mo	\$40–\$79/mo

** Streaming estimate based on Sling TV Orange (\$40) to Fubo (\$79). Cable estimate based on Comcast Xfinity and Cox packages.*

What You Keep

- Live sports — NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, World Cup, college football
- Local channels — ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox (in most markets)
- Cable networks — ESPN, CNN, HGTV, FX, and more
- Cloud DVR — record and watch later
- On-demand content — past episodes and movies
- Multiple devices — TV, phone, tablet, laptop

What You Might Lose

- Regional Sports Networks (RSNs) — only DirecTV Stream carries most local team RSNs
- Some niche cable channels not on any streaming service (rare)
- Pay-per-view boxing/MMA events — these require separate purchases on any platform

What You Need to Get Started

To stream live TV smoothly you need:

- Internet connection: 25 Mbps minimum (50+ Mbps for 4K or multiple TVs)
- A device: Smart TV, Fire Stick, Roku, Apple TV, or Google TV
- A streaming subscription: from \$40/month

CHAPTER 2

The Big Three Services Compared

Fubo

Fubo started as a soccer streaming service and has grown into the most sports-focused live TV platform. It carries Fox, FS1, NBC, CBS, ESPN, NFL Network, and Telemundo — making it the only service that carries both the English and Spanish World Cup 2026 broadcasts. Fubo's base plan starts at **\$79/month** and includes unlimited cloud DVR, up to 10 simultaneous streams, and a 7-day free trial.

Best for: Sports households, families, anyone who wants the most channels.

Sling TV

Sling TV is the budget option. Its Orange plan costs **\$40/month** and includes ESPN, ESPN2, Fox, and FS1 — which covers most major sports. The Blue plan also costs \$40 and covers NBC, CBS, and more local channels. You can get both for \$60/month. The main limitation: Sling Orange allows only 1 stream at a time. Cloud DVR is included at 50 hours.

Best for: Budget-conscious viewers, solo users, ESPN + Fox sports fans.

DirecTV Stream

DirecTV Stream is the premium option. It starts at **\$79/month** and goes up to \$169 for its Premier package. Its biggest advantage: it's the only streaming service that carries Regional Sports Networks (RSNs) — meaning you can watch your local MLB, NBA, and NHL team on channels like YES Network, NESN, or Bally Sports. It includes unlimited DVR and unlimited simultaneous home streams.

Best for: Local sports team fans, households that need the most channels.

Full Comparison Table

	Fubo	Sling Orange	DirecTV Stream
Starting Price	\$79/mo	\$40/mo	\$79/mo
Free Trial	7 days	3 days	5 days
Channels (base)	180+	35	75+
ESPN / ESPN2	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fox / FS1	Yes	Yes	Yes

NBC	Yes	No	Yes
CBS	Yes	No	Yes
Telemundo	Yes	No	Yes
TNT / TBS	No	No	Yes
NFL Network	Yes	Add-on	Yes
RSNs	Some	No	Most markets
DVR	Unlimited	50 hrs	Unlimited
Streams	Up to 10	1 stream	Unlimited*

* Unlimited home streams; limited away streams. Check DirecTV Stream's current terms.

Which Should You Choose?

If you want...	Choose
Cheapest option + ESPN/Fox/FS1	Sling Orange — \$40/mo
All sports + NBC/CBS/Telemundo	Fubo — \$79/mo
Local sports team (RSN) coverage	DirecTV Stream — \$79/mo
Solo viewer, budget priority	Sling Orange — \$40/mo
Family with multiple TVs	Fubo or DirecTV Stream
Spanish-language sports coverage	Fubo — includes Telemundo

CHAPTER 3

Sports Coverage Guide

Sports is the number one reason people hesitate to cut the cord. Good news: in 2026, every major sport is available on at least one streaming service. Here's the complete breakdown.

Sport / Event	Fubo	Sling Orange	DirecTV Stream
NFL	Yes	Yes	Yes
NBA	TNT Games: No	TNT Games: No	Yes
MLB	FS1/ESPN	FS1/ESPN	FS1/ESPN/TBS
NHL	ESPN/TNT: partial	ESPN	ESPN/TNT
World Cup 2026	Fox+FS1+Telemundo	Fox+FS1 only	Fox+FS1+Telemundo
College Football	ESPN/ABC/Fox	ESPN/Fox	ESPN/ABC/Fox/CBS
Golf (PGA/Masters)	CBS/NBC/Golf Ch.	Golf Ch. add-on	CBS/NBC/ESPN
Soccer (MLS/EPL)	FS1/ESPN/Univision	FS1/ESPN	FS1/ESPN

World Cup 2026 Streaming

Fox and FS1 carry the most World Cup 2026 matches in English.

Telemundo and Universo carry all matches in Spanish.

Fubo is the only single streaming service with Fox, FS1, AND Telemundo.

Sling Orange (\$40) gets you Fox + FS1 — cheapest English-only option.

NFL in 2026

The NFL is split across multiple networks. Here's where to find each game type:

- Monday Night Football — ESPN (all three services)
- Sunday Night Football — NBC (Fubo, DirecTV Stream; not on Sling Orange)
- Thursday Night Football — Amazon Prime Video only (separate subscription)
- Sunday afternoon games — Fox and CBS (all three services)
- NFL Network games — Fubo and DirecTV Stream include it; Sling requires the Sports Extra add-on

NBA and NHL

TNT and TBS carry a significant share of NBA and NHL games, and neither Fubo nor Sling TV carries TNT/TBS. DirecTV Stream is the only streaming service that includes TNT and TBS. For TNT games on other services, you'll need a separate Max subscription.

College Football and Basketball

College sports are well-covered across all three services. ESPN, ESPN2, ABC, Fox, FS1, and CBS carry the major conferences. Fubo and DirecTV Stream also carry the CBS Sports Network and, in some cases, conference-specific channels. For Big Ten Network and SEC Network, all three services offer them as part of their sports packages.

CHAPTER 4

Setting Up on Your Device

All three streaming services work on the same major devices: Amazon Fire TV Stick, Roku, Samsung Smart TV, Apple TV, Google TV, Android TV, iOS, and Android. Here's how to get set up on the four most popular options.

Amazon Fire TV Stick

The Fire TV Stick (including the 4K and 4K Max models) is the most popular streaming device in the US. Setup is identical for Fubo, Sling TV, and DirecTV Stream:

Press the microphone button. Say the app name (e.g., 'Fubo') or use the search bar.

Select the app. Find it in the Appstore results and tap Download.

Open the app. Select Open after installation completes.

Sign in. Enter your email and password. Tip: create your account on a computer first — easier than typing on a remote.

Start watching. Browse the live channel guide and press Select to tune in.

Fire Stick 4K Tip

The Fire TV Stick Lite and 3rd-gen Fire Stick max out at 1080p. For 4K streaming, use the Fire TV Stick 4K or 4K Max. You'll also need at least 40 Mbps internet for 4K.

Roku

Roku devices (Roku Express, Stick, Streaming Stick+, Ultra) all work with Fubo, Sling TV, and DirecTV Stream. The Roku Channel Store has all three apps available for free.

Press Home. Navigate to Streaming Channels in the sidebar.

Search for the app. Use the search bar and type the service name.

Add the channel. Select Add Channel on the app page.

Launch and sign in. Press Go to Channel, then enter your credentials.

Samsung Smart TV

Samsung Smart TVs from 2017 onward (Tizen OS) support all three streaming services. Older Samsung TVs may not support these apps at all. If yours doesn't, plug in a Fire Stick or Roku via HDMI

CHAPTER 5

Fixing Common Problems Fast

Streaming issues fall into a few predictable categories. Here are the fastest fixes for the most common problems.

Buffering and Freezing

Buffering is almost always an internet speed or network issue.

- Test your speed at fast.com. You need 20+ Mbps for HD, 40+ for 4K.
- Restart your router: unplug it for 30 seconds, then plug back in.
- Move your streaming device closer to the router, or use a wired Ethernet adapter.
- Close other apps and pause other downloads on your network.
- Lower the video quality setting inside the streaming app (Settings > Video Quality).

App Crashes or Won't Load

- Force-close the app completely (don't just back out — use the app switcher).
- Wait 10 seconds, then reopen. Many crash issues resolve with a proper force-close.
- Restart the device (unplug from power for 60 seconds for a full reset).
- Clear the app's cache: on Fire Stick, go to Settings > Applications > Manage Installed Applications > [App Name] > Clear Cache.
- If it still crashes on launch: uninstall the app, restart the device, then reinstall.

Can't Sign In

- Double-check your email and password at the service's website first (browser, not the app).
- Reset your password if needed — do this from a browser, not the app.
- Check that your subscription is active: log in to the website and verify billing status.
- If the app says 'Too many devices': sign out from all devices in your account settings, then sign back in.

Black Screen

A black screen with audio usually means an HDMI handshake issue:

- Unplug the HDMI cable and plug it back in firmly.
- Switch to a different HDMI port on your TV.
- If using a streaming stick, try a different HDMI extender cable.
- Disable HDMI-CEC in your TV settings temporarily.

Internet Speed Requirements

Video Quality	Minimum Speed	Recommended
Standard HD (720p)	10 Mbps	15 Mbps
Full HD (1080p)	15 Mbps	25 Mbps
4K Ultra HD	25 Mbps	50+ Mbps
Multiple TVs at once	50 Mbps	100+ Mbps

Is the Service Down?

If you've tried everything and the problem persists, check the service's status page before spending more time troubleshooting:

- Fubo status: fubo.tv/status
- Sling TV status: sling.com/status
- DirecTV Stream status: directv.com/status
- More detailed fixes by device: fubo4k.tv

CHAPTER 6

Getting the Best Deal

Use the Free Trial Strategically

All three services offer free trials — Fubo gives 7 days, DirecTV Stream 5 days, and Sling TV 3 days. If there's a major event coming up (Super Bowl, World Cup, NBA Finals), you can sign up the week before, watch for free, and cancel before the trial ends if the service doesn't meet your needs. Just set a calendar reminder the day before your trial expires.

Annual vs. Monthly Plans

Fubo offers an annual plan that saves roughly \$20/month compared to paying monthly. If you're confident you'll stick with the service for a year, annual billing is worth it. DirecTV Stream and Sling TV are month-to-month only.

Add-Ons Worth Considering

Sling TV Sports Extra — +\$11/mo — adds Golf Channel, NFL Network, NBA TV, NHL Network, Tennis Channel

Fubo Elite plan — +\$20/mo over base — adds 250+ channels, Showtime

Spanish-language add-on (most services) — +\$5–\$10/mo — adds Univision, Galavision, beIN Sports en Español

When to Switch Services

Streaming services are month-to-month, which means you can switch whenever it makes sense. Common reasons to switch:

- Sports season is over (e.g., cancel in March after college basketball, resubscribe in August for NFL)
- A better deal or new service launches
- The service raises prices
- Your viewing habits change (new job, kids, fewer sports)

The Savings Add Up

Saving \$40–\$100 per month by switching from cable adds up fast:

- \$50/month savings = \$600/year
- \$80/month savings = \$960/year
- \$100/month savings = \$1,200/year

Over 5 years, cutting cable can save you \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Q8. What happens if I cancel a streaming service?

You're billed month-to-month, so you can cancel anytime with no penalty. Your access continues until the end of your current billing period. There are no cancellation fees on any of the three services covered in this guide.

Q9. Is Fubo 4K actually available?

Fubo offers 4K streaming for select live events (certain sports, some on-demand content). You need a 4K-compatible TV, a 4K streaming device (Fire Stick 4K, Roku Ultra, Apple TV 4K), and an internet connection of 40+ Mbps. 4K is not available for all channels.

Q10. Where can I get more help with streaming issues?

fubo4k.tv has free troubleshooting guides for every major streaming service and device. All guides are regularly updated and free to access — no signup required.

