

THE "SERVER" GUIDE

How to get your free Oracle Cloud server, step by step

You commented "server", so here's the full process I promised. Follow it in order and don't skip the "before you start" page. Almost everyone who gets rejected makes one of the mistakes listed there.

2 CPU · 12 GB Arm (Ampere A1) server, free every month	200 GB disk storage, free forever	10 TB outbound data per month
2 Autonomous Databases	US\$300 bonus credit, valid for your first 30 days	₹0 bill, as long as you stay inside the free limits

ALWAYS FREE Compute Arm Compute Instance Arm-based Ampere A1 cores and 12 GB of memory usable as 1 VM or 2 VMs Always Free 1,500 OCPU hours and 9,000 GB hours per month	ALWAYS FREE Storage Block Volume Storage Boot and block volume storage Always Free Up to 2 block volumes, 200 GB total. Plus 5 volume backups.	ALWAYS FREE Networking Outbound Data Transfer Outbound Data Transfer Always Free Up to 10 TB per month	ALWAYS FREE Oracle Databases Autonomous Database Oracle Autonomous Transaction Processing, Autonomous Data Warehouse, Autonomous JSON Database, or APEX Application Development. Always Free
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These are Oracle's own "Always Free" cards from oracle.com/cloud/free (screenshots taken October 2026). The 1,500 OCPU hours and 9,000 GB hours a month work out to 2 CPUs and 12 GB of RAM running all month.

What you need (keep it ready)

- ☐ A laptop or desktop. The sign-up is painful on a phone.
- ☐ An email address you have **never** used for Oracle Cloud before.
- ☐ Your mobile number.
- ☐ A **Visa, Mastercard or American Express** card in your own name. A credit card works best.
- ☐ Your address exactly as your bank has it.
- ☐ About 20–30 minutes, plus some waiting for emails.

What's in this guide

- 1 Before you start: 4 rules
- 2 Create your account (8 steps)
- 3 Log in for the first time
- 4 Create your free server
- 5 Connect to it
- 6 Fixes for common errors
- 7 Keep it free forever

PART 1 Before you start: 4 rules that decide pass or fail

1 One person, one account. Don't retry with a new email.

Oracle's eligibility rules say it plainly: *"Creating or attempting to create multiple free accounts is prohibited."* If your first attempt fails, **don't** make a second account with another email or a family member's card. That's the fastest way to get flagged. Fix the problem (see Part 6) or use the **Chat** link on Oracle's site.

2 Use a card Oracle accepts

From Oracle's FAQ: *"We accept credit cards and debit cards that function like credit cards. We do not accept debit cards with a PIN or virtual, single-use, or prepaid cards."* The card needs a Visa, Mastercard, Discover or American Express logo.

For Indian cards, do this first (2 minutes in your bank app):

- Turn on **international transactions** and **online / e-commerce transactions** for the card.
- Keep your phone nearby for the bank's OTP.
- RuPay-only cards, prepaid cards and one-time virtual cards will be rejected.

You may see a small temporary "authorization" hold on your card. Oracle says these holds are removed by your bank, **usually within 3-5 days**, and you are **not charged** unless you upgrade to a paid account yourself.

3 Your details must match your card, and switch off your VPN

Use your real name, and the same billing address your bank has for that card. Oracle requires contact and billing details to be "accurate, valid, and used with consent". Mismatched details and VPN or proxy connections are the most common reasons sign-ups get rejected.

4 Pick your home region carefully, because it's permanent

Your free server can only be created in your **home region**, and Oracle's docs say *"You can't change this after signing up."* If you're in India, pick one of these two:

REGION (AS SHOWN IN THE LIST)	GOOD FOR
India West (Mumbai)	Lowest latency for most of west and north India. Popular, so free Arm capacity can run out at times.
India South (Hyderabad)	Great for south India and usually a little less crowded. Speeds across India are very similar.

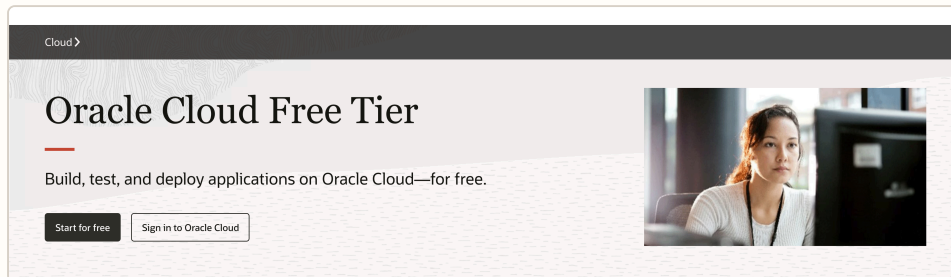
My take: if you're building something for Indian users, choose Mumbai or Hyderabad and don't overthink it. Just don't pick a random far-away region by mistake, because you can't undo it.

PART 2 Create your account

1

Open the Free Tier page

Go to **oracle.com/cloud/free** and click **Start for free**. You can also go straight to **signup.cloud.oracle.com**.



oracle.com/cloud/free. Click "Start for free", not "Sign in".

2

Fill in "Account Information"

Billing Country/Territory	India (or your country)
First Name / Last Name	Exactly as on your card
Email	A fresh email you'll keep using. You'll sign in with it.

Complete the **"I am human"** check if it appears, then click **Verify my email**.

A screenshot of the Oracle Cloud Infrastructure sign-up form. The page has a dark header with the Oracle logo and 'Cloud Infrastructure'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column has a green background and contains the text 'Oracle Cloud Free Tier' and 'Explore Free Tier with a new OCI Account', followed by a list of services: 'AI and Machine Learning', 'Database including: Autonomous Database MySQL and HeatWave', and 'Developer Services: APEX and Java'. Below this is a button that says 'Create Your Free Account Now'. The right column has a white background and is titled 'Account Information'. It contains three input fields: 'Billing Country/Territory', 'First Name', and 'Last Name'. Below these is an 'Email' input field with a small 'i' icon to its right. At the bottom of the form is a button that says 'Verify my email'.

signup.cloud.oracle.com, the first screen of the sign-up form.

3

Confirm your email within 30 minutes

Open the email with the subject **"Confirm your Oracle cloud account"** and click **Click Here**. The link only works for **30 minutes**. Check spam or Promotions if you can't find it. The link takes you back to the form.

4

Set your password, account name and home region

Password	8-40 characters, with at least 1 uppercase letter, 1 lowercase letter, 1 number and 1 special character. No spaces, and don't include your name or email.
Company Name	Optional. Leave it blank if you're an individual.
Cloud Account Name	A short name using only letters and numbers, e.g. <code>rahulcloud24</code> . Write it down. You need it every time you log in.
Home Region	India West (Mumbai) or India South (Hyderabad). This is permanent (see rule 4).

Read the Terms of Use and click **Continue**.

5

Address and phone number

Enter your address **the same way your bank has it** (same city, PIN code and state) and your mobile number, then click **Continue**.

6

Add your card for verification

Click **Add payment verification method**, choose **Credit Card**, enter your card details, approve the bank OTP if asked, then click **Finish**. This is only to verify that you're a real person.

7

Start the trial

Tick the agreement box and click **Start my free trial**. Don't refresh or press back while it's processing.

8

Wait for the welcome email

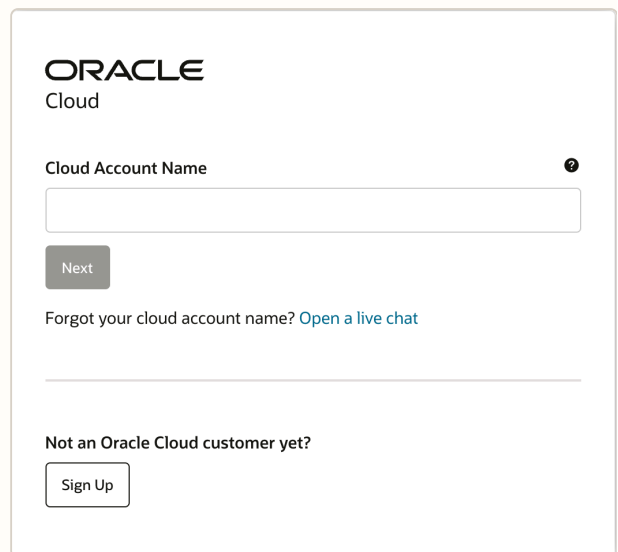
Oracle now sets up your account. It's normally done in a few minutes, but it can take longer. You'll get a **"Get Started"** welcome email when it's ready. If some services look missing right after you log in, Oracle's own advice is to wait a few minutes and check again.

PART 3 Log in for the first time

- Go to **cloud.oracle.com**, type your **Cloud Account Name** (from step 4) and click **Next**.
- Sign in with your email and password.
- Oracle will usually ask you to set up **2-step verification**. Install **Oracle Mobile Authenticator** from the Play Store or App Store and scan the QR code it shows. Keep that app, because you'll need it every time you log in.
- You're now in the **OCI Console**. Check the region name at the top right. It should show your home region.

Forgot your Cloud Account Name?

Search your inbox for the welcome email. It's written there.



Oracle Cloud sign-in page: Cloud Account Name first, then your email and password.

PART 4 Create your free server

First you create a small private network (it's free), then the server itself. Follow the labels exactly. These are the names Oracle uses in the Console.

A Create the network (one time only)

Open the menu (≡ top left) → **Networking** → **Virtual cloud networks** → **Start VCN Wizard** → choose **Create VCN with Internet Connectivity** → **Start VCN Wizard**. Give it any name, keep all the default numbers, click **Next** and then **Create**.

B

Create the instance

Menu → **Compute** → **Instances** → **Create instance**. Then go through the form section by section:

Name	Anything you like, e.g. my-free-server
Placement	Keep the default. Look for the "Always Free-eligible" label.
Image	Click Edit → Change image → Canonical Ubuntu (latest LTS), or keep Oracle Linux . Both are free.
Shape	Change shape → Virtual machine → Ampere → tick VM.Standard.A1.Flex . Set OCPU s = 2 and Memory = 12 GB . Click Select shape .
Networking	Select the VCN you just made and its public subnet . Set Assign a public IPv4 address to Yes .
Add SSH keys	Generate a key pair for me → click Save private key (and Save public key). You can't download these again later.
Boot volume	Default is about 50 GB. You can raise it, but all your disks together must stay within 200 GB to remain free.

Click **Create**. The status goes from **Provisioning** to **Running** in a minute or two. Copy the **Public IP address** shown on the instance page.

Seeing "Out of capacity" / "Out of host capacity"?

That's normal and doesn't mean you did anything wrong. It means Oracle's free Arm servers in your region are full right now. Jump to Part 6, fix #1.

PART 5 Connect to your server

On Mac, Linux or Windows 10/11, open Terminal or PowerShell in the folder where you saved the private key:

```
chmod 400 ssh-key-2026-10-25.key # Mac / Linux only
ssh -i ssh-key-2026-10-25.key ubuntu@YOUR_PUBLIC_IP
```

Use your own key file name and IP address. The username is **ubuntu** for Ubuntu images and **opc** for Oracle Linux. The first time, type **yes** and press Enter. When you see the server's prompt, you're in.

Windows "permissions are too open" error

Right-click the key file → Properties → Security → Advanced. Remove inherited permissions so only your own user has Full control, then try again.

PART 6 Fixes for the errors people actually hit

1 "Out of host capacity" when creating the server

Oracle's FAQ explains this as a *"temporary lack of Always Free shapes in your home region"*. What works:

- **Try again later.** Early morning and late night (IST) tend to work better. Keep the form filled in and just click **Create** again.
- **Start smaller:** create it with **1 OCPU / 6 GB**. That's still free, and you can make a second 1 OCPU / 6 GB server later.
- If your region shows more than one **availability domain**, try another one. The Mumbai and Hyderabad regions have one each, so for them retrying is the fix.

2 Card declined or "error processing transaction"

- Check that international and online transactions are ON for the card, then try again on the same form.
- Make sure the name and billing address match your bank exactly, and turn off any VPN.
- Try a different card **in your own name**, ideally a credit card.
- Still stuck? Click **Chat** on oracle.com. Oracle's support team handles sign-up problems there. **Don't** open a new account.

3 The verification link has expired

The email link only lasts 30 minutes. Go back to the sign-up page, enter the same details and click **Verify my email** again to get a new link.

4 I can't find the free shape or some services are missing

A new account can take a few minutes to be fully set up in every region. Wait, log out and back in, and check that the region at the top right is your home region. Free servers only show up there.

PART 7 Keep it free forever

RULE	WHAT TO DO
Stay inside the free limits	Use a maximum of 2 OCPUs and 12 GB of RAM in total across your Arm servers, and 200 GB of disk in total. Anything you create beyond that uses up your US\$300 credit and is deleted when the trial ends .
Before day 30	Delete anything that isn't Always Free. If your Arm servers add up to more than 2 OCPU / 12 GB when the trial ends, Oracle disables all of them and deletes them after 30 days.
Don't leave the server idle	Oracle may reclaim an Always Free server if, over 7 days, its CPU (95th percentile), network and memory use are all below 20%. Run something real on it: a website, a bot, a VPN, a database.
Log in at least once a month	Oracle's rules say accounts left idle for 30 days or more may be treated as abandoned.
Don't click "Upgrade" casually	A Pay As You Go account keeps everything free that's within the limits, but it bills you for anything above them , and you can't downgrade later. If you ever upgrade, set a budget alert first.

Here is how Oracle Cloud Free Tier works

1

Start with a **US\$300 cloud credit**.*
You'll have 30 days to use it to test your applications on all OCI services, in addition to Always Free Services in your Free Tier account.

2

At any time during or after the 30-day period,* switch to a **Pay As You Go** account. Pay only for services that exceed the monthly free amounts from Always Free Services.

3

If you do nothing after 30 days, you'll continue to get Always Free Services in your Free Tier account.

oracle.com/cloud/free, "Here is how Oracle Cloud Free Tier works". Step 3 is the key line: if you do nothing after 30 days, you keep your Always Free services.

That's the whole process. Bookmark this, take it slow, and if you get stuck on a step, DM me the screenshot of the error and I'll tell you what to do. And if this helped you, share the reel with that one friend who keeps paying for hosting.

@anothermodernhuman

Sources (checked October 2026): oracle.com/cloud/free · oracle.com/cloud/free/faq · docs.oracle.com, "Always Free Resources" · docs.oracle.com, "Sign Up for the Free Oracle Cloud Promotion" · docs.oracle.com, OCI Getting Started tutorial. Oracle can change its limits and screens at any time. If something looks different, the steps stay the same, so look for the same button names. This guide isn't affiliated with Oracle.