MR.PLANB FIELD GUIDE · VMWARE

VMware vs Hyper-V 2026: Licensing and Features Sheet

Ledger scores, licensing rules, a feature matrix and when to choose each, as of October 2026.

Updated **2026-10-29** · Full guide: www.mrplanb.com/comparisons/vmware-vs-hyperv

> Hyper-V suits Windows-centred small and mid-size teams, because the hypervisor comes with a Windows Server licence and carries much less commercial risk. VMware suits large or mixed estates that need vSAN, NSX and the deepest feature set, but only under Broadcom's subscription-only, per-core licensing. VMware is the more complete product and Hyper-V is the safer purchase.

93.1 vs 80.7
capability out of 100, VMware vs Hyper-V

63.9 vs 64.5
Ledger Index, VMware vs Microsoft, nearly level

23 vs 12.0
commercial risk out of 25, lower is better

16 cores
minimum VMware licenses per processor

Scores side by side

Index and capability are out of 100. Risk and lock-in are out of 25, AI out of 20. For risk and lock-in, lower is better.

Platform	Index	Capability	Risk	Lock-in
VMware vSphere / VCF	63.9	93.1	23	15.5
Microsoft Hyper-V / Azure Local	64.5	80.7	12.0	16

Feature matrix

Area	VMware vSphere	Microsoft Hyper-V
Licence model	Subscription only, per core (VVF or VCF)	Role in Windows Server; Azure Local is a monthly subscription
Central management	vCenter	Windows Admin Center, Hyper-V Manager, SCVMM
Live migration and HA	vMotion and vSphere HA	Live migration and Failover Clustering, up to 64 nodes
Hyperconverged storage	vSAN	Storage Spaces Direct
Networking	NSX, part of VCF	Windows Server SDN with Network Controller
Disaster recovery	vSphere Replication and Live Recovery	Hyper-V Replica (RPO as low as 30 seconds), Azure Site Recovery
Security	vTPM, VM encryption, confidential VMs	Shielded VMs, Host Guardian Service, Secure Boot, vTPM
Automation	REST APIs, Terraform, Ansible	PowerShell, PowerShell Direct, Windows Admin Center

Licensing rules

	VMware	Hyper-V
Basis	Per core, subscription only	Per core, minimum 8 per processor and 16 per server
Minimum	16 cores per processor, even if disabled in BIOS	8 per processor, 16 per server
Editions	VVF includes vSphere, vCenter, 0.25 TiB vSAN per core; VCF adds NSX and 1 TiB vSAN per core	Standard covers 2 OS environments; Datacenter unlimited
Price	No public list; quotes via Broadcom partners	16 cores: USD 1,176 Standard, USD 6,771 Datacenter, plus CALs
Extras	Refreshed vSphere Standard reported, not published	Azure Arc pay-as-you-go: USD 33.58 per core per month

Choose VMware if

- ☐ You depend on NSX, vSAN or the largest third-party ecosystem.
- ☐ You run thousands of VMs, or mixed Linux and Windows estates at scale.
- ☐ You need the deepest automation, DR orchestration and GPU support.
- ☐ You can absorb subscription pricing and renewal risk.

Choose Hyper-V if

- ☐ You are invested in Windows Server, Active Directory and Azure.
- ☐ You want a perpetual licence and low commercial risk.
- ☐ Your workloads are mostly Windows and your team knows PowerShell.
- ☐ You want to avoid a separate hypervisor bill.

Scale limits and free options

- Windows Server 2025 maximums: a generation 2 VM up to 2,048 virtual processors and 240 TB of memory.
- A host can have 2,048 logical processors and run 1,024 VMs; a failover cluster can have 64 nodes and 8,000 running VMs.
- Mr.PlanB has not benchmarked either platform. Day-to-day performance depends more on storage, networking and drivers.
- Free ESXi 8.0 Update 3e is limited to 2 CPUs per host and 8 vCPUs per VM, with no official support.
- Hyper-V Server 2019 ends support on 9 January 2029 and no later version was found. Hyper-V also ships in Windows 11 Pro for desktop use.

Sources and notes: VM Platform Ledger 2026 · Microsoft Learn and Windows Server 2025 pricing and licensing pages · Broadcom VVF and VCF program documents (June 2026)