

Cloud Backup Comparison 2026: Choosing Sheet

Six services side by side, five questions to ask, and which setup fits a phone, a laptop, a family, a small business or a homelab.

Updated **2026-10-29** · Full guide: www.mrplanb.com/storage/cloud-backup-options

Most online backup services started as sync tools, and sync copies deletions everywhere. Compare how long old versions are kept, whether encryption is end to end, how many devices a plan covers, how big restores work and the yearly price. For anything you would hate to lose, pay for a plan and keep more than one copy under the 3-2-1 rule.

6

services compared: Google Drive, IDrive, Dropbox, MEGA, pCloud, OneDrive

20 GB

most free storage, from MEGA

5

questions to compare any backup service

3-2-1

rule: three copies, two media, one offsite

Six services side by side

Prices checked October 2026, before tax. They vary by country, so confirm on each provider's page.

Service	Free	Paid from	Watch out for
Google Drive	15 GB	\$1.99/mo (Google One)	Space shared with Gmail and Photos
IDrive	5 GB	\$79.50/year	Small free tier
Dropbox	2 GB	\$9.99/mo (Plus, billed yearly)	Basic syncs on three devices only
MEGA	20 GB	€4.99/mo (Pro Lite)	Bonus storage expires after a year
pCloud	Up to 10 GB	\$49.99/yr (Premium)	Starts at 2 GB; encryption is a paid add-on
OneDrive	5 GB	\$1.99/mo (365 Basic), \$9.99/mo (Personal)	Syncs deletions

Five questions to ask any service

- ☐ How long are old versions and deleted files kept? Many free plans keep deleted files about 30 days.
- ☐ Is the encryption end to end? MEGA does this on every plan; IDrive and pCloud offer it as an option or add-on.
- ☐ How many devices does one plan cover?
- ☐ How do restores work for a lot of data? Can it restore a point in time or ship a drive?
- ☐ What does the space you need cost per year, with a year of growth included?

Sync, storage and backup are different

Cloud sync Keeps the same files on every device. A delete or overwrite travels everywhere within seconds.	Cloud storage Keeps files online so you can open them from anywhere.
Cloud backup Keeps versioned copies, holds deleted files for a set time and restores files as they were last Tuesday.	Sync with versioning You can get close by turning on version history and folder backup, but know which tool you are using.

Which setup fits you

Who	Do this
Phone photos	Use the built-in backup (Google Photos or iCloud), then copy originals to a computer or drive every few months
One laptop	OneDrive or Google Drive folder backup, plus a second copy that does not sync deletions (IDrive or MEGA)
Family	One plan covering several devices; check how long deleted files are kept
Small business	Admin controls, retention you set, one copy ransomware cannot reach, and a tested restore
Homelab or NAS	Proxmox Backup Server, ZFS snapshots, or LTO locally; a cloud bucket for the offsite copy

Free versus paid

- Free plans protect a handful of documents and let you try a service.
- Limits show quickly: small storage, short version history, fewer devices, no support.
- Paid plans add space, longer retention, more devices and large-restore options.
- A paid plan of a few dollars a month is cheap insurance for anything you would be upset to lose.
- Whatever you pick, keep more than one copy.

Sources and notes: Provider pricing pages, prices checked October 2026 per the page · Mr.PlanB cloud backup comparison