

Ranked: Best browsers for privacy

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Most web browsers access your geographic location via your IP address to serve local search results. Your browser may also have permission to use your device's built-in camera and microphone. It's certainly convenient, but it's a huge security risk.

A browser is your gateway to the web and the cybercriminals looking to take advantage of you. If you're ready to make a move to a more privacy-focused browser or see if yours makes my list, keep reading.

Best overall browser for privacy: Brave

If you're fed up with trackers, ads, and data-hungry bits of code that follow you across the internet, Brave is the browser for you. Brave's servers don't see or store your browsing data, so it stays private until you delete it. That means your info is never packaged up and sold to advertisers.

The browser's default settings block harmful junk like malware, phishing and malicious advertising and plug-ins that could harm your computer.

Advertising and trackers are blocked by default. Because of all it stops, Brave says it is three times faster than Chrome overall and loads major sites up to six times faster than its competitors.

Brave is free to use, but you can turn on Brave Rewards to give back to the sites you visit most. Once enabled, "privacy-respecting" ads will show to support the content you see. Your browsing history remains private.

What about user experience? It runs on the Chromium source code, which powers Google Chrome, so it will likely feel familiar.

[Download Brave for free here](#). It's also available as an app on [Apple](#) and [Android](#) devices.

Best browser for customizable privacy: Firefox

Mozilla's Firefox bills itself as a fast browser that "doesn't sell you out." Detecting a theme here? Firefox collects very little data, and you don't even need to give your email address to download it.

It also blocks trackers by default, so you don't have any settings to change.

The customization features make Firefox stand out. You can use global protection levels, such as "Strict" or "Standard," or go the custom route. You can choose precisely which trackers and scripts Firefox blocks to get the experience you want.

When it comes to privacy, it's got many bells and whistles: a built-in password manager, breached website alerts, Private Browsing mode and secure form autofill.

Firefox is compatible with Windows, Mac, and Linux, and smartphones to make it easy to sync across all your devices. [Take Firefox for a test drive on your computer by clicking here](#). Or click to download for [Apple](#) or [Android](#).

Best browser for maximum security: Tor

If you're super security-focused, you probably already use a virtual private network or VPN. Want even more anonymity? Turn to Tor. This name started as an acronym for "The Onion Router," and it's popular among computer-savvy circles.

Tor runs your connection through multiple servers across the globe before you reach your destination. Your data is encrypted between each "node," adding layers of protection — hence the onion logo.

Tor has been used for illegal activity online, but the software itself is perfectly legal and shouldn't pose any problems. It's often the route into the Dark Web. [You can read about how to access it and what you'll find](#).

Tor runs on a modified version of the Firefox browser. [You can download Tor here](#).

Best browser for privacy on Mac: Safari

Many people use the browser that came with their computer as a matter of convenience. If you've got a Mac, this is a good thing. Safari blocks cross-site tracking that lets you enjoy the sites you use most without worrying about being followed.

Safari uses Google as its default search browser, which blocks malicious websites and protects you from malware and phishing scams. It blocks pop-ups, too.

Safari's built-in password manager (Keychain) lets you know if a site you saved was involved in a data breach and helps you change your password. [Download Safari here, directly from Apple.](#)

Alternative option: Microsoft Edge

Microsoft said so long to Internet Explorer, and the new Edge is a robust browser with lots of built-in privacy features. It, too, runs on Chromium and feels a lot like Google Chrome.

Edge offers protection from trackers and blocks ad providers from monitoring your activity and learning more about you.

Choose the level of restriction you prefer from three settings, and you can decide which sites to block or not on a case-by-case basis. Want to know what Edge is blocking for a particular site? Click the lock icon to the left of the URL, then click Trackers for a list.

Edge's built-in Password Monitor will alert you if you visit a compromised website and prompt you to change your password to a stronger one. You can make your own or use a suggested password.