ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

Mail-in-a-Box

The Insider's Guide

Free script that turns a cloud server into your own mail server



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among email apps, read from Mail-in-a-Box's own pages.

Made by Mail-in-a-Box project · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

2.0
GPA



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Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from Mail-in-a-Box's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on Mail-in-a-Box's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

2.0

GPA, above 11 of the 122 other email apps we grade

Mail-in-a-Box turns a fresh Ubuntu cloud machine into a working mail server with webmail, an IMAP and SMTP service, contact and calendar sync, spam filtering and a control panel. It also configures DNS records for mail delivery. The software is free; the project's guide estimates about $12 a month for the server.

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about Mail-in-a-Box**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

> **You install it on a fresh machine and act as the sysadmin, with help from a forum and chat room.**
>
> From our grade for ease of use

1 **Best for one script that makes a cloud server a mail server**

Mail-in-a-Box is a free script that sets up a mail server with webmail, DNS and spam filtering on a fresh cloud server.

2 **It is free**

Mail-in-a-Box has no paid plan at all. The software is free; you pay for your own server and domain, which the setup guide puts at about $12 a month plus roughly $17 a year.

3 **It runs on Web**

Web.

4 **Webmail and mail server in one**

Includes Roundcube webmail and an IMAP and SMTP server for phones and desktop mail apps, with contacts and calendar sync.

5 **Automatic DNS and security records**

When the box acts as your nameserver it sets SPF, DKIM, DMARC and MTA-STS records, and can add DNSSEC with DANE.

6 **Control panel and API**

A web panel to add mail accounts, aliases and custom DNS records, run status checks and set up backups, also reachable over a REST API.

7 **A 2.0 GPA, above 11 of 122**

That is against the other email apps we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Keep it**

Mail-in-a-Box is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

Mail-in-a-Box at a glance

PRICING Free	FREE PLAN Yes
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON Web
MADE BY Mail-in-a-Box project, since 2014	CATEGORY Email Apps
OUR GRADE 2.0 GPA, fair	

The report card

Best for one script that makes a cloud server a mail server

Mail-in-a-Box is a free script that sets up a mail server with webmail, DNS and spam filtering on a fresh cloud server. The guide puts the server at about

$12 a month, it can't run at home, and mail sent from your own server may get blocked.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD	Mail-in-a-Box	Graded Nov 13, 2026
SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	C	The software is free, but the guide puts a server at about $12 a month plus a domain at about $17 a year, which lands in the dearer end of the category.
Free plan and trial	C	Free software that still needs a rented server running before anything works.
Features	B	Mail server, webmail, automatic DNS and security records, spam filtering, backups, multiple users and domains. The listing shows no gap in the core job.
Ease of use	D	You install it on a fresh machine and act as the sysadmin, with help from a forum and chat room.
Platforms and integrations	C	A web admin and webmail, with Roundcube, Nextcloud and Let's Encrypt. No apps of its own.
Grade point average		Fair, out of 4.0 **2.0**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who Mail-in-a-Box is for

- ✓ Fits if you want your own mail on your own domain and can run a server
- ✓ Works for people who would rather run one script than configure ten programs

Who it is not for

- ✗ Skip it if you want a home connection to do it, since it needs a cloud server with a clean IP
- ✗ Skip it if you don't want to be the sysadmin
- ✗ Watch out: the page warns that other mail services may block or filter mail from your own server
- ✗ Watch out: it needs a dedicated fresh machine, and manual changes after install are overwritten

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Individuals and small groups who want to run their own mail service
- ✓ Self-hosters who prefer a fixed, ready-made setup over a custom one
- ✓ Friends or families splitting the cost of one shared server

Worth knowing

- ⓘ It cannot run on a home connection: it needs a cloud server with a clean IP, so the guide advises renting a virtual machine.
- ⓘ It must be installed on a fresh machine dedicated to it, and manual changes after install are overwritten.
- ⓘ The page warns that other mail services may block or spam-filter mail sent from your own server.
- ⓘ You act as the system administrator and must fix issues yourself; help comes from a forum and chat room.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

Free

No paid plan at all

Mail-in-a-Box is free to use.

> "
>
> **Free software that still needs a rented server running before anything works.**
>
> From our grade for free plan and trial

MAIL-IN-A-BOX

$0

Free software. The setup guide estimates about $12 a month for the cloud server, plus a domain name at about $17 a year.

The free plan

The software is free; you pay for your own server and domain, which the setup guide puts at about $12 a month plus roughly $17 a year.

Read from mailinabox.email on Nov 13, 2026.

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

1

Place it runs: Web

Free script that turns a cloud server into your own mail server. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: open source, self-hostable, calendar, email client.

> **Mail server, webmail, automatic DNS and security records, spam filtering, backups, multiple users and domains.**
>
> From our grade for features

Webmail and mail server in one

Includes Roundcube webmail and an IMAP and SMTP server for phones and desktop mail apps, with contacts and calendar sync.

Automatic DNS and security records

When the box acts as your nameserver it sets SPF, DKIM, DMARC and MTA-STS records, and can add DNSSEC with DANE.

Control panel and API

A web panel to add mail accounts, aliases and custom DNS records, run status checks and set up backups, also reachable over a REST API.

Spam filtering and backups

Spam filtering with greylisting, mail filter rules, TLS certificates from Let's Encrypt and automated backups to Amazon S3 and similar services.

Multiple users and domains

One box can host mail for several users and domain names, with simple static website hosting on the side.

Where it runs

- Web

What it works with

- Roundcube
- Nextcloud
- Amazon S3
- Let's Encrypt

Mail-in-a-Box is made by Mail-in-a-Box project, and has been around since 2014.

PART 04 · STANDING

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

11/122

Other email apps it is graded above

Mail-in-a-Box's GPA of 2.0 is higher than 11 of the 122 other email apps we grade, and level with 17.

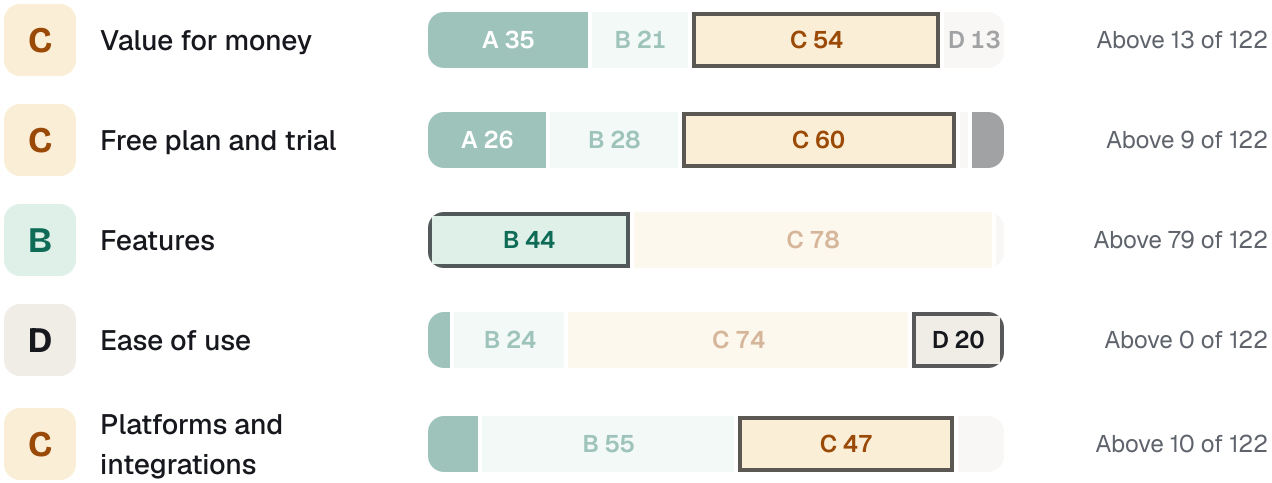
It stands best on features (B, above 79 of 122) and worst on ease of use (D, above 0).

Mail-in-a-Box has no paid plan.

On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 2.0 out of 4. Nothing scores higher for less, though at least one tool matches that score at a lower price.

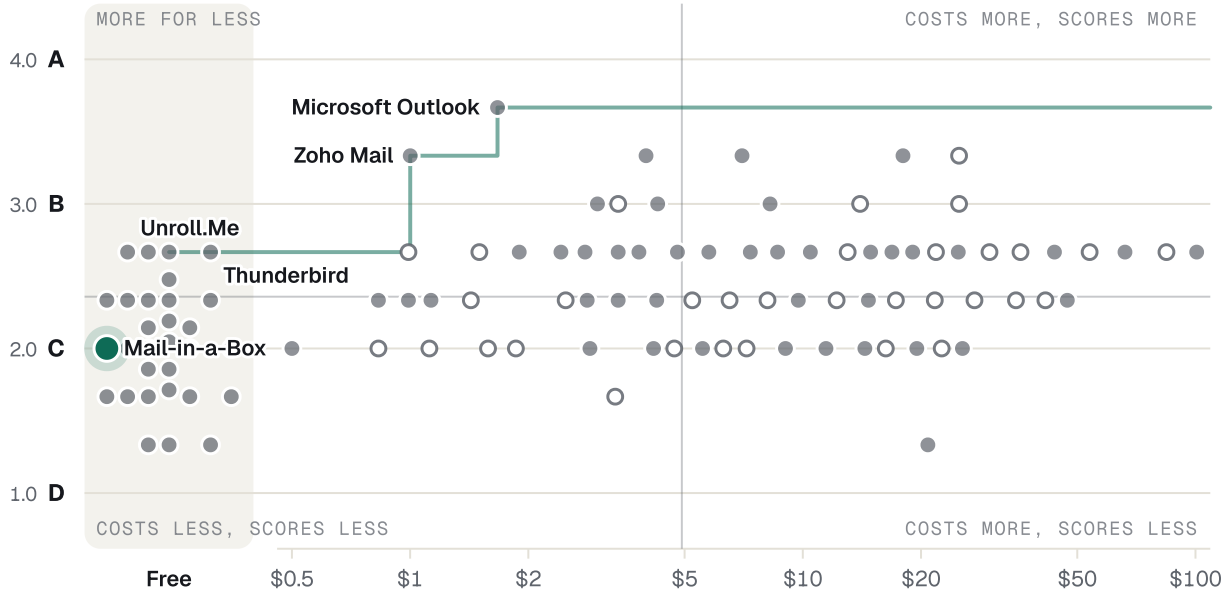
Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 123 email apps we grade, cut by the letter each got. Mail-in-a-Box's own letter is outlined.



Price against what you get

Each dot is one of 107 email apps. Further left costs less; higher up scores better on features, ease of use and platforms. Mail-in-a-Box is the marked dot.



What paid plans start at, a month (each step along is roughly double) ⍰

Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Keep it

Mail-in-a-Box is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces. That makes this kind of software worth paying for, not this one in particular: 94 of the 122 other email apps grade higher.

What you could make

- Calendar: an app builder makes this well.

What you could not

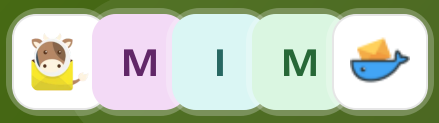
- An email client: sending, receiving, threading and searching years of mail.

- The depth: we grade its features B, which means it covers the whole job.

What this rests on. Mail-in-a-Box's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side



mailcow, Mailu, iRedMail, Modoboa and docker-mailserver

The 5 tools Mail-in-a-Box is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.



2.4 GPA

mailcow

Free

Dockerized open-source mail server with a web admin UI.

Mail-in-a-Box and mailcow compared in full

M

2.0 GPA

Mailu

Free

Free Docker-based mail server with webmail and admin UI.

- Mail-in-a-Box also covers calendar.
- Mailu also covers dMARC.

Mail-in-a-Box and Mailu compared in full

I

1.8 GPA

iRedMail

Free plan · from $499/yr

Open-source mail server installer for Linux and BSD.

- Only Mail-in-a-Box lists a web app.
- Only iRedMail lists a Linux app.

Mail-in-a-Box and iRedMail compared in full

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2.2
GPA

Modoboa

Free

Open-source mail server with a web admin panel and webmail.

Mail-in-a-Box and Modoboa compared in full



1.8
GPA

docker-mailserver

Free

Self-hosted mail server packaged as a Docker container.

- Only Mail-in-a-Box lists a web app.
- Only docker-mailserver lists a Linux app.
- Mail-in-a-Box also covers calendar and email client.

Mail-in-a-Box and docker-mailserver compared in full

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

12

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is Mail-in-a-Box free?

Yes. Mail-in-a-Box is free to use.

How much does Mail-in-a-Box cost?

Mail-in-a-Box lists one plan. Mail-in-a-Box: $0.

What platforms does Mail-in-a-Box work on?

Mail-in-a-Box is available on Web.

Does Mail-in-a-Box have an Android app?

No Android app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Mail-in-a-Box is listed for Web.

Does Mail-in-a-Box have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Mail-in-a-Box is listed for Web.

Is Mail-in-a-Box open source?

Yes. Mail-in-a-Box is open source, according to its own site.

What does Mail-in-a-Box integrate with?

Mail-in-a-Box's listing names Roundcube, Nextcloud, Amazon S3 and Let's Encrypt.

Who makes Mail-in-a-Box?

Mail-in-a-Box is made by Mail-in-a-Box project. It dates from 2014.

What are the alternatives to Mail-in-a-Box?

The closest alternatives to Mail-in-a-Box in our directory are mailcow, Mailu, iRedMail, Modoboa and docker-mailserver.

How does Mail-in-a-Box compare with other email apps?

Mail-in-a-Box's GPA of 2.0 is higher than 11 of the 122 other email apps we grade, and level with 17.

Is Mail-in-a-Box good value for money?

ToolGPA grades Mail-in-a-Box C for value for money. Mail-in-a-Box has no paid plan.

Could I make my own version of Mail-in-a-Box?

Mail-in-a-Box is free, so making your own would save you nothing. And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from Mail-in-a-Box's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from the Mail-in-a-Box project's own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by Mail-in-a-Box project. Prices change, so check mailinabox.email before you buy.

mailinabox.email/

mailinabox.email/guide.html

PART 07 · ABOUT

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721

Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at **toolgpa.com**.

7,721	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

Mail-in-a-Box, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/mail-in-a-box

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

Quoting this guide?

Please name ToolGPA and link to the live page, so readers can check the figures for themselves:

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ToolGPA, "Mail-in-a-Box: The Insider's Guide",
checked Nov 13, 2026.
https://toolgpa.com/tools/mail-in-a-box
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Know someone choosing between email apps?

Send them this guide: toolgpa.com/tools/mail-in-a-box/guide

ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded email apps after Mail-in-a-Box, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Email Apps Insider's Guide

Every one of the 126 email apps we grade, compared

Microsoft Outlook Insider's Guide

Microsoft's email and calendar app for desktop, mobile and web

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AOL Mail Insider's Guide

Free webmail with news and weather in a companion mobile app

3.2 GPA

BlueMail Insider's Guide

Cross-platform email client with a unified inbox and built-in AI

3.2 GPA

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Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what Mail-in-a-Box's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Mail-in-a-Box is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by Mail-in-a-Box project. Prices and plans change: check mailinabox.email before you buy.