ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

Vanilla

The Insider's Guide

Mac app that hides menu bar icons, with a one-time Pro upgrade



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among desktop utilities, read from Vanilla's own pages.

Made by Matthew Palmer · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

2.8
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 Vanilla's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on Vanilla'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

2.8

GPA, above 116 of the 186 other desktop utilities we grade

Vanilla is a small Mac app that hides icons in the menu bar so the bar looks cleaner. The free version covers hiding and showing icons. Vanilla Pro, a one-time purchase, adds a keyboard shortcut, a section for completely removed icons, auto-hide and start at login.

To get you started, here are **9 things to know about Vanilla**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

1 **Best for a cleaner Mac menu bar**

Vanilla hides menu bar icons on a Mac, and the free version does that.

2 **What it costs**

Paid plans start at $10 one-time for Vanilla Pro.

3 **There is a free plan**

Vanilla is free and hides menu bar icons. Pro adds extra features on top.

4 **It runs on macOS**

macOS.

5 **Hide menu bar icons**

Hides the icons you pick from the Mac menu bar; the vendor's page says to download it, launch it and follow the prompts.

6 **Keyboard shortcut (Pro)**

Sets a custom shortcut that toggles the menu bar icons and desktop icons.

7 **Completely removed icons (Pro)**

A section for icons that stay out of sight and appear only when Vanilla's preferences window is open.

8 **A 2.8 GPA, above 116 of 186**

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

9 **Your call**

It depends on the utility: a converter or a calculator is an afternoon.

Vanilla at a glance

PRICING Free plan, from $10 one-time for Vanilla Pro	FREE PLAN Yes
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON macOS
MADE BY Matthew Palmer	CATEGORY Desktop Utilities
OUR GRADE 2.8 GPA, good	

The report card

Best for a cleaner Mac menu bar

Vanilla hides menu bar icons on a Mac, and the free version does that. But the keyboard shortcut, auto-hide and start at login are Pro at $10, and it's Mac only.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD	Vanilla	Graded Nov 13, 2026

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	A	Free to hide icons, and Vanilla Pro is $10 one-time with a 30-day money-back guarantee.
Free plan and trial	B	The free version hides and shows icons. The shortcut, removed-icons section, auto-hide and start at login are Pro.
Features	C	It hides menu bar icons and does that one job fully, a smaller job. The extras sit in Pro.
Ease of use	B	Install and click: nothing to set up. No store rating is on record.
Platforms and integrations	C	Mac only. The pages state no macOS version requirement.
Grade point average		Good, out of 4.0 **2.8**

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 Vanilla is for

- ✓ Fits if your Mac's menu bar is crowded, especially with a notch
- ✓ Works for people who just want to hide icons with no fuss

Who it is not for

- ✗ Skip it if you use Windows or Linux, as only Mac is covered
- ✗ Tight if you want start at login, since that is Pro at $10
- ✗ Too light for you if you want more than hiding icons
- ✗ Watch out: the pages state no macOS version requirement, and screen recording permission is linked from the page

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Mac users who want a tidier menu bar without paying
- ✓ People who want one price for several of their own Macs
- ✓ Mac laptops with a crowded menu bar

Worth knowing

- ⓘ Mac only. The pages read state no macOS version requirement, though help pages cover Catalina and later and notched MacBooks.
- ⓘ The keyboard shortcut, removed-icons section, auto-hide and start at login are all Pro-only.
- ⓘ The vendor's page links a screen-recording permission help page; the permission details were not read.

PART 02 · PRICING

What it costs

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

$10 one-time

To start. There is a free plan too

Vanilla has a free plan. Paid plans start at $10 one-time for Vanilla Pro.

> **The shortcut, removed-icons section, auto-hide and start at login are Pro.**
>
> From our grade for free plan and trial

VANILLA

$0

Free app for hiding menu bar icons on a Mac.

VANILLA PRO

$10

one-time purchase

One license code activates up to 10 Macs. 30-day money-back guarantee.

The free plan

Vanilla is free and hides menu bar icons. Pro adds extra features on top.

Read from matthewpalmer.net 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: macOS

Mac app that hides menu bar icons, with a one-time Pro upgrade. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: one-time purchase, menu bar app.

> **It hides menu bar icons and does that one job fully, a smaller job.**

From our grade for features

Hide menu bar icons

Hides the icons you pick from the Mac menu bar; the vendor's page says to download it, launch it and follow the prompts.

Keyboard shortcut (Pro)

Sets a custom shortcut that toggles the menu bar icons and desktop icons.

Completely removed icons (Pro)

A section for icons that stay out of sight and appear only when Vanilla's preferences window is open.

Auto-hide (Pro)

Hides icons again automatically five seconds after you toggle them in Vanilla.

Start at login (Pro)

Launches Vanilla when you log in to the Mac.

Where it runs

macOS

What it works with

Its own pages name no integrations.

Vanilla is made by Matthew Palmer.

Where it stands

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

116/186

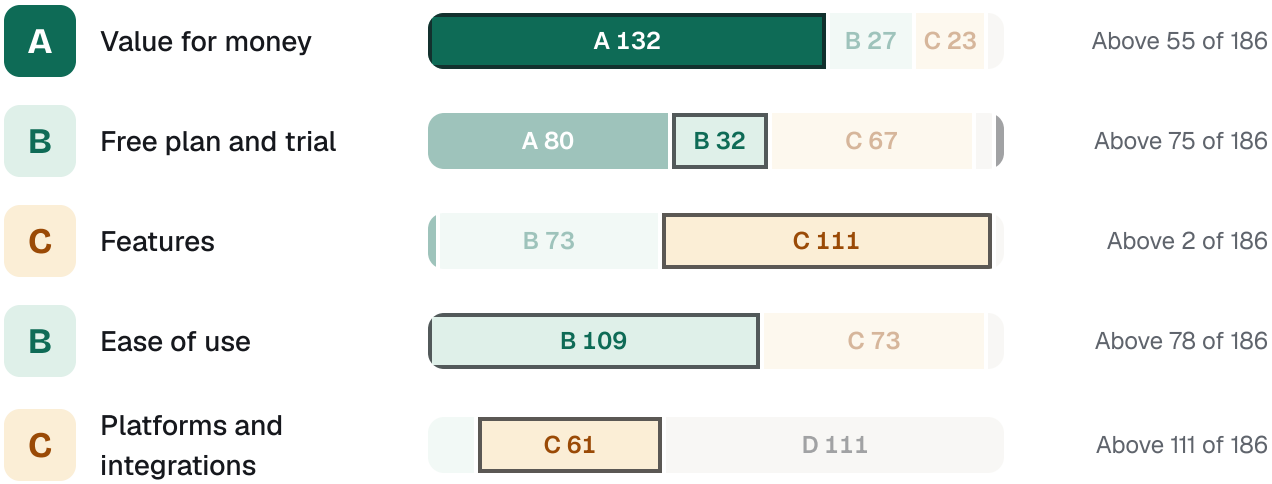
Other desktop utilities it is graded above

Vanilla's GPA of 2.8 is higher than 116 of the 186 other desktop utilities we grade, and level with 37.

It stands best on value for money (A, above 55 of 186) and worst on features (C, above 2).

Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 187 desktop utilities we grade, cut by the letter each got. Vanilla's own letter is outlined.



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.

Your call

It depends on the utility: a converter or a calculator is an afternoon.

Vanilla sits between: not beyond making, and not a weekend's work either. What you would give up is listed below. Whether that is worth the price is your call. At $10, paid once, it costs less than the weekend it would take to replace, which is the argument for keeping it.

What you could not

- ✕ A native app living in the menu bar.
- ✕ A real app for macOS. Something home-made would be a web page.

What this rests on. Vanilla'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



Bartender, Ice, Thaw and Hidden Bar

The 4 tools Vanilla is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.



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Bartender

Free trial · from $19.99/yr

Menu bar manager for macOS that hides and organizes items.

- Vanilla has a free plan. Bartender does not, though it has a free trial.
- Bartender also covers workflow automation and clipboard manager.

Vanilla and Bartender compared in full



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Ice

Free

Menu bar manager for hiding and arranging Mac menu items.

- Vanilla can be bought with a one-time purchase.
- Ice is open source, according to its own site.

Vanilla and Ice compared in full



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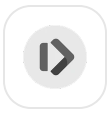
Thaw

Free

Free, open-source menu bar manager for macOS.

- Vanilla can be bought with a one-time purchase.
- Thaw is open source, according to its own site.

Vanilla and Thaw compared in full



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GPA

Hidden Bar

Free

Free, open-source utility that hides macOS menu bar icons.

- Vanilla can be bought with a one-time purchase.
- Hidden Bar is open source, according to its own site.

Vanilla and Hidden Bar compared in full

PART 06 · QUESTIONS

Quick answers

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

10

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 Vanilla free?

Vanilla has a free plan. Vanilla is free and hides menu bar icons.

How much does Vanilla cost?

Vanilla lists 2 plans. Vanilla: $0.

What platforms does Vanilla work on?

Vanilla is available on macOS.

Does Vanilla have an Android app?

No Android app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Vanilla is listed for macOS.

Does Vanilla have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Vanilla is listed for macOS.

Is Vanilla open source?

Vanilla is not described as open source on its own site, as read on Nov 13, 2026.

Who makes Vanilla?

Vanilla is made by Matthew Palmer.

What are the alternatives to Vanilla?

The closest alternatives to Vanilla in our directory are Bartender, Ice, Thaw and Hidden Bar.

How does Vanilla compare with other desktop utilities?

Vanilla's GPA of 2.8 is higher than 116 of the 186 other desktop utilities we grade, and level with 37.

Could I make my own version of Vanilla?

It depends on the utility: a converter or a calculator is an afternoon.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from Vanilla'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 Matthew Palmer'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 Matthew Palmer. Prices change, so check matthewpalmer.net before you buy.

matthewpalmer.net/vanilla/

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

Vanilla, kept up to date

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

toolgpa.com/tools/vanilla

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, "Vanilla: The Insider's Guide",
checked Nov 13, 2026.
https://toolgpa.com/tools/vanilla
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Know someone choosing between desktop utilities?

Send them this guide: toolgpa.com/tools/vanilla/guide

ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded desktop utilities after Vanilla, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Desktop Utilities Insider's Guide

Every one of the 187 desktop utilities we grade, compared

Just Color Picker Insider's Guide

Free portable color picker and editor for Windows and macOS

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LocalSend Insider's Guide

Open-source file sharing between nearby devices, no cloud

3.2 GPA

Mos Insider's Guide

Free Mac menu bar utility for smooth mouse wheel scrolling

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 Vanilla'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. Vanilla is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by Matthew Palmer. Prices and plans change: check matthewpalmer.net before you buy.