

Own your media.

Replace Plex and Emby with Jellyfin.

Stream your own movies, shows and music to any device — with hardware transcoding included for everyone, no subscription and no account.

Who this is for

Anyone with a media library who resents Plex moving remote streaming behind a paywall, comfortable running a small always-on server. A machine with an Intel CPU (Quick Sync) or a GPU helps for transcoding.

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Why move off Plex & Emby

In 2025 Plex moved remote streaming behind a paid subscription, hardware transcoding and mobile sync already needed a Plex Pass, and using your own server still requires a Plex cloud account. Emby locks key features behind Emby Premiere. **Jellyfin** is fully free and open source — no paid tiers, no account, no tracking — and includes hardware transcoding for every user.

What you keep — and gain

Apps for TV, phone, browser and console · your library, organized · hardware transcoding at no cost. What you drop: the subscription, the account, and the usage tracking.

1 · What you need

Use case	Hardware
1–2 streams, direct play	Raspberry Pi 4/5, any modern mini-PC, or an old laptop
1–2 streams, 1080p transcode	Any Intel CPU (last ~7 yrs) with Quick Sync, or Apple Silicon
3–5 streams, 4K transcode	Intel 8th-gen+ Quick Sync, or an Intel Arc / NVIDIA RTX GPU

RAM & disk

4 GB RAM is the minimum, 8 GB comfortable when transcoding. Keep a ~100 GB SSD for the OS, Jellyfin and the transcoding cache; your media can live on any large disk.

2 · Install Jellyfin with Docker

Install Docker with the Compose plugin, then use a minimal `docker-compose.yml`. The `devices` line passes an Intel GPU through for Quick Sync transcoding (for NVIDIA, use the container toolkit and `--gpu all` instead):

```
services:
  jellyfin:
    image: jellyfin/jellyfin:latest
    restart: unless-stopped
    ports:
      - "8096:8096"
    volumes:
      - ./config:/config
      - ./cache:/cache
      - /path/to/media:/media
    devices:
      - /dev/dri:/dev/dri
```

Start it with `docker compose up -d` and open `http://SERVER-IP:8096`.

Checkpoint

You should reach the Jellyfin setup wizard. Make sure your media folder path is mounted read-only or read-write as needed and is visible inside the container as `/media`.

3 · Add your libraries

- Finish the setup wizard and create your admin user.
- Add libraries — Movies, Shows, Music — each pointing at the matching folder under `/media`. Jellyfin scans and fetches artwork and metadata automatically.
- Install the Jellyfin app on your TV, phone or browser and point it at your server address.

4 · Coming from Plex

Jellyfin reads the same on-disk folder structure Plex uses, so you point its libraries at the very same media folders — no need to move or re-encode a single file.

Honest caveat

There is no official importer for Plex watch history, ratings or collections — those don't carry over automatically. Your files and libraries transfer instantly; the personal metadata is the one thing you rebuild over time.

5 · Turn on hardware transcoding

By default Jellyfin transcodes on the CPU, which struggles with 4K. If your hardware supports it, enable acceleration in Dashboard → Playback → Transcoding (Intel Quick Sync / VA-API, NVIDIA NVENC, or AMD AMF). This is the feature Plex charges for — here it's free.

Common snags

Symptom	Fix
Playback buffers on 4K	Enable hardware transcoding; CPU-only can't keep up.
No <code>/dev/dri</code> in container	The device isn't passed through; check the devices: mapping.
Library empty after scan	The media path isn't mounted where the library points.

Found this useful?

This guide is free — pay what you want if it saved you time. More offline & one-time-purchase alternatives to subscription apps, plus other migration guides, at payoncehq.com.

Sources: official Jellyfin documentation (jellyfin.org). Commands and hardware notes current as of 2026; check the project pages for the latest. Independent guide, not affiliated with Jellyfin, Plex or Emby.