BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

# Pandora

Stations, thumbs, free vs. paid, Alexa and the car — explained in plain English, one step at a time

**A plain-English guide for music lovers of every age**

Take your time — you can't break it

*Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech*

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

*For the Pandora app, website, speakers & cars · facts current November 2026*

# What's Inside

This is your guide to Pandora, the music service that plays a "station" built around an artist or song you love and learns your taste from a simple thumbs up or thumbs down. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Every button comes with what it actually does *for you*, and every job comes with slow, numbered steps. Pandora updates its app from time to time, so if a button looks a little different on your screen, look for the same words nearby.

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PART 1

# Getting Started with Pandora

What Pandora is, who owns it, the difference between the free version and the paid plans, and how to create an account and sign in.

CHAPTER 1

# A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Pandora has been around for a long time, and for good reason: you name an artist or a song you like, and it plays music in that same spirit for as long as you care to listen. No building playlists, no hunting for albums. Maybe you've used it for years and want to get more out of it. Maybe a family member just put it on your phone. Either way, this guide is for **you**.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years working with technology, and these days I help folks here in Portage County feel at home with theirs. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain Pandora sitting at your kitchen table: patiently, in plain English, and without trying to sell you a plan you don't need.

## What this guide will do for you

- Show you how to start a station from a favorite singer or song, and teach it your taste with the thumbs.
- Explain the free version and the two paid plans, Pandora Plus and Pandora Premium, with honest prices.
- Walk you through playing Pandora on an Amazon Echo, a Google speaker, Sonos, your TV and your car.
- Help you change plans or cancel, including when you're billed through Apple, Google or Amazon.
- Point out the scams that use music services as bait, and what to do if something stops working.

## The big promise: you can't break it

Nothing you tap in Pandora can harm your phone. A thumbs down by mistake can be undone. A deleted station can be brought back. The worst that usually happens is a song you don't care for, and you can skip it. The few things that truly matter — your password and your payment details — I'll mark clearly.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### Why this matters

Music lifts the mood, fills a quiet house and makes chores and drives go faster. Once Pandora knows what you like, it becomes a radio station made just for you, without a disc jockey talking over the songs.

## And I'm only a phone call away

If anything in this guide leaves you unsure, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question.

Let's start with what Pandora actually is.

***— Bill***

CHAPTER 2

# What Pandora Is, and Where It Works

Pandora is a music service that plays over the internet. Its heart is the **station**: you give it one artist, song or style, and it plays a steady stream of music that sounds similar. You can't always pick the exact next song on the free version, but you can steer it.

## Stations, in plain words

Think of a station as a radio station that only plays music you'd enjoy. Start a "Patsy Cline" station and you'll hear Patsy Cline plus singers in the same vein. Each time you give a song a **thumbs up** or **thumbs down**, that station learns more about what you want. Chapters 6 to 9 cover this step by step.

## Who owns Pandora

Pandora is owned by **SiriusXM**, the satellite radio company, which completed its purchase of Pandora in 2019. The two still run as **separate services** under their own names, with separate accounts, separate billing and separate customer support. Chapter 15 explains how they fit together.

## Where you can listen

- **Phone or tablet** — the free Pandora app for iPhone, iPad and Android.
- **Computer** — any web browser at **pandora.com** (Chapter 20).
- **Smart speakers** — Amazon Echo (Alexa), Google Nest and Google Home speakers, Sonos and others (Chapters 16 to 18).
- **TVs and streaming boxes** — such as Roku, and many Samsung, LG and Vizio TVs (Chapter 19).
- **The car** — Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, Bluetooth, and some car dashboards (Part 5).

GOOD TO KNOW

### One account, everywhere

Your stations and thumbs live in your Pandora account, not on one device. Sign in with the same email and password on your phone, your Echo and your TV, and the same stations appear on all of them.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

## What this does for you

You set up your favorite stations once, and they follow you from the kitchen speaker to the car to the living room TV.

CHAPTER 3

# Free, Plus or Premium: What You Get and What It Costs

Pandora has a free version and paid plans. Many people are perfectly happy with free. Here is the honest difference, so you can decide for yourself.

## The three main choices

| | Free | Pandora Plus | Pandora Premium |
|---|---|---|---|
| Price (direct from Pandora) | Free | About $5.99 a month | About $11.99 a month |
| Ads | Yes, between songs | No ads on stations | No ads |
| Stations and thumbs | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Skips on stations | Limited | No daily limit | No daily limit |
| Listen offline | No | A few stations, chosen for you | Stations, songs, albums, playlists |
| Pick any song to play | Only with a short ad (Premium Access) | Only with a short ad | Yes, on demand |
| Make playlists | Only with Premium Access | Only with Premium Access | Yes |

Prices are as of November 2026, before any sales tax, when you sign up directly on pandora.com. Plus also comes as a yearly plan for about $65.89, and Premium for about $131.89 a year. **Premium Family** gives the full Premium plan to up to six separate accounts for about $19.99 a month (about $219.89 a year). These are the figures reported after this fall's increase; the sign-up page at pandora.com always shows the current price before you pay.

## Prices went up in fall 2026

Pandora raised its prices in 2026. The new rates applied to new subscribers from **September 22, 2026**, and to existing subscribers on bills dated on or after **October 22, 2026**. Yearly plans change at their next yearly renewal. If your bill went up by about a dollar a month this fall, that's likely why.

## Where you pay changes the price

If you subscribe *inside the app* on an iPhone, Apple bills you, and the price is higher: about $6.99 a month for Plus and $14.99 for Premium, as reported this fall. Yearly plans and Premium Family aren't sold through Apple at all; they're only available directly from Pandora. Google Play, Amazon and Roku can also bill for Pandora, at their own prices. Signing up on **pandora.com** in a web browser is usually the cheapest way.

TIP

### Not sure which to choose?

If you mostly listen to stations and the ads don't bother you, stay on free. If the ads drive you up the wall, Plus is the smallest step up. Choose Premium only if you want to pick exact songs and albums and build your own playlists.

HEADS UP

### Check before you pay twice

SiriusXM and Pandora bill separately. If you see both on your card statement, make sure you really use both. Chapter 15 explains.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Knowing the real difference lets you pay only for what you use — or nothing at all.

CHAPTER 4

# Creating Your Account and Signing In

You need a free Pandora account to save stations and thumbs. You can make one in the app or on the website in a few minutes.

## Get the app

1. On an iPhone or iPad, open the **App Store**. On Android, open the **Play Store**.
2. Search for **Pandora**. Look for the official Pandora app with the Pandora logo and a very large number of ratings.
3. Tap **Get** or **Install**. The app itself is free.
4. Open the app when it finishes installing.

## Create the account

1. Tap the option to **sign up** or create an account.
2. Enter an email address you check regularly. Pandora sends password resets there.
3. Make a password you don't use anywhere else, and write it on the Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 28.
4. Fill in the few other details it asks for, and agree to the terms.
5. Pandora may ask about artists you like to get you started. Pick a few, or skip it for now.

## Signing in on another device

On a new phone or a computer, choose **Log In** or **Sign In** and use the same email and password. Your stations appear right away. TVs and some speakers use a short code instead; Chapter 19 explains.

STAY SAFE

**Download from the real store only**

Get Pandora only from the App Store, the Play Store, or your TV's own app store. Never install a "Pandora" app from a link in a text, an email or a pop-up ad.

TIP

### Forgot the password already?

That's fine. Tap **Forgot Password** under the sign-in boxes. Chapter 24 walks you through it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

With an account, everything you teach Pandora is saved for good. Change phones, and your stations come right along.

PART 2

# Stations and Thumbs

Find your way around the app, start your first station, teach it with thumbs, try the Modes, and fix a station that has wandered off course.

CHAPTER 5

# Finding Your Way Around the App

The Pandora app has only a few screens you'll use often. Once you know them, the rest is easy.

## The row of buttons along the bottom

Along the bottom of the app is a row of buttons. Their exact names can change with app updates, but you'll find:

- **A home or "for you" screen** with suggestions Pandora thinks you'll like.
- **Search** — the magnifying glass — to look up an artist, song or podcast.
- **My Collection** — your own stations, and on Premium your songs, albums and playlists. This is the screen you'll use most.
- **Your profile** — where you'll find **Settings**, your account and your plan.

## The Now Playing screen

When music is playing, a small bar shows the song at the bottom of the app. Tap it to open the full **Now Playing** screen, with the album picture and the main controls:

| Button | What it does |
|---|---|
| **Thumbs up** | "More like this, please." Teaches the station (Chapter 7). |
| **Thumbs down** | "Don't play this on this station again." Skips the song too. |
| **Play / Pause** | Starts and stops the music. |
| **Skip (arrow to the right)** | Moves to the next song. The free version limits skips (Chapter 11). |
| **Replay (arrow to the left)** | Plays the song again, on paid plans and with some limits. |
| **Three dots** | More choices, such as station settings or sharing. |

TIP

### Make the screen easier to read

Pandora uses your phone's text size. On an iPhone, go to **Settings** > **Display & Brightness** > **Text Size**. On Android, go to **Settings** > **Display** and look for **Font size**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

## What this does for you

Two screens — My Collection and Now Playing — cover nearly everything you'll do every day.

CHAPTER 6

# Creating Your First Station

A station starts from a **seed**: one artist, one song, or a style of music. Pandora does the rest. This is the single most useful thing to learn in Pandora.

## Start a station from an artist or song

1. Open the Pandora app and tap **Search** (the magnifying glass).
2. Type the name of an artist you love, such as **Nat King Cole**, or a song title.
3. Tap the artist or song in the results.
4. Look for a button such as **Play Station** or **Start Station**, or a station with that artist's name, and tap it.
5. Music starts. The new station is saved in **My Collection** automatically, so you can come back to it any time.

## Start a station from a style or mood

You can also search for a kind of music, such as **Big Band**, **Gospel**, **Classic Country** or **Classical**. Pandora offers ready-made genre stations you can start the same way.

## Make a handful of stations

Most people end up with a few favorites: one for relaxing, one for the kitchen, one for the drive. Name each station after its feel if that helps; Chapter 10 shows you how to rename them.

TIP

### Seed with your very favorite

A station works best when its seed is an artist or song you truly love, not just one you like. The closer the seed is to your taste, the fewer thumbs it needs.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

One search and one tap gives you hours of music in the style you love, without choosing a single song.

CHAPTER 7

# Thumbs Up and Thumbs Down

The thumbs are how you teach Pandora. They are the reason a Pandora station gets better the longer you listen to it.

## What each thumb really does

- **Thumbs up** tells that station, "More like this." Pandora plays songs with a similar sound more often.
- **Thumbs down** tells that station, "Not this one." The song stops, and it **won't play again on that station**.
- Thumbs are **station by station**. A thumbs down on your Christmas station doesn't touch your Sinatra station.

## How to give a thumb

1. While a song plays, open the **Now Playing** screen.
2. Tap the **thumbs up** or **thumbs down** button.
3. The button fills in or changes color to show it took.

TIP

### Use thumbs down sparingly, at first

Thumbs down is the strongest signal. If a song is just "not right now," skip it instead. Save thumbs down for songs you never want to hear on that station.

GOOD TO KNOW

### A few thumbs go a long way

You don't need to rate every song. A dozen or so thumbs on a new station, mostly thumbs up for the songs you love, makes a noticeable difference.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Every thumb makes your station more "you," so it plays more of what you love and less of what you don't.

CHAPTER 8

# Station Modes: Changing How a Station Plays

**Modes** let you change the feel of a station without starting a new one. You can switch modes and switch back at any time.

## The modes, in plain words

| Mode | What you'll hear |
|---|---|
| **My Station** | The normal mode, built from your thumbs. This is where every station starts. |
| **Crowd Faves** | Leans toward the songs other listeners of this station have thumbed up most. |
| **Deep Cuts** | Lesser-known songs from the artists you usually hear on the station. |
| **Discovery** | Brings in artists who don't normally play on the station. |
| **Newly Released** | Leans toward newer songs. |
| **Artist Only** | Only the station's own artist, plus any others you've thumbed up on it. |

## Switch modes

1. Start the station and open its **Now Playing** screen.
2. Look for the station's mode choices, often shown under or near the station name, or under the **three dots**.
3. Tap the mode you want. The next song follows the new mode.
4. To go back to normal, choose **My Station**.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Not every station has every mode

Some stations offer only a few modes, and a small station can "run out" of Deep Cuts. That's normal.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

When a favorite station starts to feel repetitive, Deep Cuts or Discovery freshens it up — and My Station is one tap away.

CHAPTER 9

# Fixing a Thumb and Fine-Tuning a Station

Tapped thumbs down by mistake? Station playing too much of one thing? Every station keeps a list of your thumbs, and you can change any of them.

## Undo a thumb on the song that's playing

If the song is still on the **Now Playing** screen, tap the same thumb again to take it back. For songs from your current listening session, you change the thumb from the Now Playing screen.

## Find and remove an older thumb (Thumb History)

This is easiest on a computer at **pandora.com**:

1. Sign in at pandora.com and open the station's page.
2. Scroll down to **Thumb History**. Thumbed-up songs show first.
3. To see thumbs down instead, click the **Thumbs Down** icon.
4. Point at the song, click the **three dots**, and choose **Delete**. Remove thumbs one at a time; there is no button to erase them all at once.
5. If you see a **Save** button when you're done, click it, or the change may not stick.

## Steer a station that has wandered

- Give thumbs up to the songs closest to what you want, and thumbs down to the ones furthest away.
- Try **Artist Only** or **Crowd Faves** mode (Chapter 8).
- If one artist dominates, remove a few of that artist's thumbs up from Thumb History.
- If nothing helps, start a fresh station from a more exact seed. It's free and takes a minute.

TIP

**Thumbed down your favorite song by mistake?**

No harm done. Remove that thumb in Thumb History, and the song can play on that station again.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Mistakes are never permanent, so you can tap thumbs freely without worrying.

CHAPTER 10

# Renaming, Deleting and Bringing Back Stations

Over time you'll collect stations. Keep the ones you love, tidy away the rest, and don't worry: a deleted station can come back.

## Rename a station

Open the station, tap the **three dots** (or the station's settings), and look for **Edit** or **Rename**. Give it a name that helps you, like "Sunday Morning" or "Dad's Country."

## Delete a station on the phone

1. Open **My Collection** and find the station.
2. Tap its **three dots**, or press and hold the station (on an iPhone you may also be able to swipe it to the left).
3. Choose **Delete** or **Remove**, and confirm.

## Delete a station on a computer

1. At pandora.com, open **My Collection**.
2. Point at the station's picture and click the **three dots**.
3. Choose the option to remove it from your collection.

## Deleted a station by mistake?

Start a station from the same artist or song again. Pandora's support team says a re-created station brings back its earlier thumbs, so you don't lose what you taught it. (That also means deleting and re-creating a station won't give it a fresh start; to wipe the slate, remove the thumbs in Thumb History instead.)

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

A short, tidy list of stations is easier to read on a phone, a speaker or the car screen.

CHAPTER 11

# Skips, Replays and Ads

This is where the free version and the paid plans differ most in everyday use.

## On the free version

- You'll hear **ads** between songs, and sometimes see them on the screen.
- There's a **limit on skips**, counted over the last 24 hours rather than by calendar day. Pandora doesn't publish the exact number, and it can change.
- A **thumbs down counts as a skip**, and so does telling Pandora you're tired of a song.
- When you run out, Pandora may offer to give you **extra skips if you watch a short video ad**. Those extra skips expire about an hour after you get them.
- **Replaying** a song is a paid-plan feature.

## On Plus and Premium

- No ads on your stations.
- No hourly or daily skip limit on stations, and you can replay songs.
- Even on paid plans, a few songs can't be skipped or replayed because of music-licensing rules. If a skip doesn't work, that's usually why.

TIP

### Out of skips?

Switch to another station; that doesn't use a skip. Watching the short video ad, if offered, also gets you more. Remember that a thumbs down on the free version uses up a skip too.

HEADS UP

### Ads are just ads

An ad inside Pandora that offers a prize, a "free gift" or a warning about your phone is advertising, not a message from Pandora. Don't tap through to enter payment details. Chapter 25 covers scams.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Knowing the skip rules saves frustration, and helps you decide whether ad-free Plus is worth it to you.

PART 3

# More Than Radio

Picking exact songs and making playlists, listening without an internet connection, podcasts, and how Pandora and SiriusXM fit together.

CHAPTER 12

# Picking Exact Songs and Making Playlists

Stations choose the songs for you. Sometimes you want one particular song — the one from your wedding, or a hymn for a Sunday morning. That's called playing **on demand**.

## On Premium: play anything, any time

Pandora Premium lets you search for a song or album and play it right away, as often as you like. You can also build your own **playlists**: lists of songs you choose, in the order you choose.

## On free and Plus: Premium Access

Free and Plus listeners can still play a particular song, album or playlist by turning on **Premium Access**. Pandora asks you to **watch a short video ad**, and then the on-demand features open up for a limited time.

1. Search for the song or album.
2. Tap it. If you're not on Premium, Pandora offers Premium Access.
3. Choose to watch the video, and let it play to the end.
4. Now you can use Premium features for that listening session.

## Make a playlist (Premium, or during Premium Access)

1. Find a song you like, and tap the **three dots** beside it.
2. Choose **Add to Playlist**, then create a new playlist and give it a name.
3. Add more songs the same way. Your playlists appear in **My Collection**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

A playlist of the songs that mean the most to you — for a birthday, an anniversary or a quiet evening — ready with one tap.

CHAPTER 13

# Listening Without the Internet (Offline)

Pandora normally streams over the internet. On paid plans, you can **download** music ahead of time, so it keeps playing on a plane, in a dead zone, or without using up your phone's data.

## Who can download

- Offline listening is for **Plus, Premium and Premium Family** subscribers, in the phone and tablet app — not on a computer, TV or speaker.
- **Plus** downloads a few of your most-listened-to stations (usually three, plus Thumbprint Radio). Pandora picks them for you; you can't swap them.
- **Premium** lets you choose: stations, songs, albums and playlists.
- Each downloaded station holds roughly three hours of music.

## How downloading works

- Pandora won't fill your phone completely: it always leaves the last 500 MB of storage free. If downloads stop early, your phone may simply be nearly full.
- Connect to the internet at least once every **30 days** so Pandora can renew your downloads.
- If your subscription stops, you lose the downloaded music until you subscribe again.

## Before a trip

1. At home on Wi-Fi, open Pandora and look in **Settings** for the offline or download options.
2. Turn on offline listening. On Premium, mark the stations, albums or playlists you want to download. Keep the app open on the screen until the downloads finish.
3. When you lose signal, Pandora switches to what you downloaded. You can also turn on offline mode yourself in Settings.

> **TIP**
>
> **Downloads stuck?**
>
> Turn offline listening off, then on again, and keep Pandora open on the screen while it downloads. That restarts the process.

TIP

### Save your phone's data plan

If your phone plan has a data limit, downloading at home on Wi-Fi means car and travel listening doesn't eat into it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Your music keeps playing on the plane, in the hospital waiting room, or at the cabin with no signal.

CHAPTER 14

# Podcasts on Pandora

A **podcast** is a talk show you can listen to whenever you like: news, history, faith, comedy, true stories, gardening and much more. Pandora has podcasts as well as music.

## Find and follow a podcast

1. Tap **Search** and type a topic or a show's name.
2. Choose the podcast in the results. Its page lists the episodes, newest first.
3. Tap an episode to play it.
4. To get new episodes easily, look for a button to **add** or **collect** the show; it then appears in **My Collection**.

## Shows from SiriusXM

Because SiriusXM owns Pandora, SiriusXM began bringing some of its talk shows to Pandora as podcasts in 2019, often as highlights rather than full live shows. Some big programs stay exclusive to SiriusXM itself, such as Howard Stern's live show.

TIP

### No paid plan needed

Podcasts play on the free version too. You may hear ads, just as with music.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Good company on a walk, a drive or while you fold laundry, in the same app you already use for music.

CHAPTER 15

# Pandora and SiriusXM: How They Fit Together

Many people have SiriusXM in the car and Pandora on the phone, and wonder whether they're the same thing. They're owned by the same company, but they are separate services.

- **Separate accounts.** A SiriusXM login won't sign you in to Pandora, and the accounts can't be merged.
- **Separate bills.** Paying for SiriusXM doesn't include Pandora Plus or Premium, and the other way around.
- **Separate support.** Pandora questions go to help.pandora.com; SiriusXM questions go to SiriusXM.
- **Some shared content.** SiriusXM shows appear on Pandora as podcasts (Chapter 14), and the SiriusXM app offers some Pandora-powered artist stations. Those stations are part of SiriusXM, not your Pandora account.

HEADS UP

### Look at both on your statement

If your card shows charges from both SiriusXM and Pandora, check you're using both. Canceling one doesn't cancel the other. Chapter 23 covers canceling Pandora; our *SiriusXM* guide covers the other.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

No more paying twice for the same thing — or missing a service you thought was included.

PART 4

# Pandora Around the House

Asking Alexa or Google to play your stations, listening on Sonos and other speakers, on the TV, and on a computer.

CHAPTER 16

# Pandora on an Amazon Echo (Alexa)

An Amazon Echo is a speaker you talk to. Once it's linked to your Pandora account, you just say what you'd like to hear. It's one of the easiest ways to enjoy Pandora at home: no phone, no buttons.

## Link Pandora to Alexa (once)

1. On your phone, open the **Amazon Alexa** app.
2. Open **Settings** (you may need to tap **More** first) and look for **Music & Podcasts**.
3. Tap **Link New Service** and choose **Pandora**.
4. Sign in with your Pandora email and password, and allow access.
5. Back in Music & Podcasts, look for **Default Services** and choose Pandora if you'd like Alexa to use it whenever you ask for music.

Amazon has been redesigning the Alexa app along with its newer **Alexa+** assistant, so the buttons may sit in a slightly different place. Look for the words "music" and "link".

## Things to say

| Say | What happens |
|---|---|
| **"Alexa, play Pandora."** | Plays one of your Pandora stations. |
| **"Alexa, play my Patsy Cline station on Pandora."** | Plays a station you already have. |
| **"Alexa, play Glenn Miller radio on Pandora."** | Starts a new station from that artist. |
| **"Alexa, next." / "Alexa, stop."** | Skips the song, or stops the music. |
| **"Alexa, louder." / "Alexa, volume 4."** | Changes the volume. |
| **"Alexa, what's playing?"** | Tells you the song and artist. |

TIP

### Free Pandora works too

You don't need a paid plan to use Pandora on an Echo. With Premium you can also ask for a particular song or album by name.

TIP

### Set Pandora as the default

When Pandora is your default music service, you can drop "on Pandora" and just say "Alexa, play relaxing music."

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Music in the kitchen or by your favorite chair with nothing more than a few spoken words — handy when your hands are full or the phone is in another room.

CHAPTER 17

# Pandora on a Google Nest or Home Speaker

Google's speakers and displays work much the same way as an Echo. You link Pandora in the **Google Home** app, then say "Hey Google" and what you'd like to hear.

## Link Pandora and make it the default

1. Open the **Google Home** app on your phone.
2. Open **Settings** and look for **Music** (it may be under the Google Assistant or services section).
3. Find **Pandora** in the list and tap the link button. Sign in with your Pandora email and password.
4. To use it whenever you ask for music, select Pandora as your **default** service.

## Things to say

- "Hey Google, play Pandora."
- "Hey Google, play my Gospel station on Pandora."
- "Hey Google, play Frank Sinatra radio on Pandora."
- "Hey Google, next song." / "Hey Google, stop."

GOOD TO KNOW

### One account per person

Each person in the house can link one Pandora account to Google's speakers. If several people use the same speaker, Google can tell voices apart when Voice Match is set up for each person.

TIP

### Want to unlink Pandora?

Google won't unlink the service that's set as your default. Choose a different default first, then unlink Pandora.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Your own stations, by voice, in any room with a Google speaker.

CHAPTER 18

# Sonos and Other Speakers

Pandora works with many home speaker systems. Here are the common ones, and the simplest way of all: a Bluetooth speaker.

## Sonos

Pandora is free to add to Sonos. You add it once in the Sonos app, and then your stations appear there.

1. Open the **Sonos** app on your phone.
2. Go to **Settings** and look for the section for services (often **Services & Voice**).
3. Tap **Add a Service**, choose **Pandora**, and sign in with your Pandora account.
4. Your stations now appear when you browse Pandora in the Sonos app. Station Modes work there too.

HEADS UP

### Thumbs missing on Sonos?

In 2026 some people found the thumbs buttons missing from the Sonos app, especially when they started Pandora by voice through Alexa. If that happens to you, update the Sonos app, or give the thumb in the Pandora app on your phone instead. If Sonos shows a sign-in error for Pandora, remove the service in the Sonos app and add it again.

## A Bluetooth speaker

Any Bluetooth speaker can play Pandora from your phone. Pair the speaker with your phone once in the phone's **Settings** > **Bluetooth**, then just start Pandora on the phone. The music comes out of the speaker. Keep the phone within about 30 feet.

## Other speakers

Many other speakers and sound systems have Pandora built in or work with it through their own app. Look in that app's list of music services for Pandora, and sign in with your Pandora account.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

## What this does for you

Better sound than a phone speaker, filling the room you're in — or the whole house.

CHAPTER 19

# Pandora on Your TV

A TV makes a fine music player, especially if it's connected to a soundbar. Pandora has an app for many TVs and streaming boxes, such as Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV (4th generation or newer) and many Samsung smart TVs.

## Sign in with a code

Typing a password with a TV remote is slow, so Pandora shows a short **activation code** on the TV and you enter it on your phone or computer.

1. On the TV, open its app store (on Roku, the **Channel Store** or **Streaming Store**), search for **Pandora**, and add it.
2. Open Pandora on the TV and choose **Log In** or **Sign In**. A code appears on the screen.
3. On your phone or computer, go to the address the TV shows. It will start with **pandora.com/**, such as **pandora.com/roku**, **pandora.com/samsung**, **pandora.com/apple** or **pandora.com/activate**.
4. Sign in to Pandora there if asked, and type in the code from the TV.
5. Within a few seconds the TV shows your stations.

SCAM ALERT

### Only type the code into pandora.com

If you search the web for "Pandora activate," you'll find look-alike pages run by strangers that copy Pandora's name. Some ask for your password or show a "support" phone number. Type the address exactly as the TV shows it, and check it really says **pandora.com**. Pandora never charges a fee to activate a TV.

TIP

### Code didn't work?

Codes expire after a short time. Go back on the TV and get a fresh code, then try again.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Your favorite stations through the TV's speakers or soundbar, with the album pictures on the big screen.

CHAPTER 20

# Pandora on a Computer

On a computer you don't need to install anything. Pandora plays in your web browser.

1. Open your web browser (such as Chrome, Edge or Safari).
2. Type **pandora.com** in the address bar and press **Enter**.
3. Click **Log In** or **Sign In** and use your Pandora email and password.
4. Your stations appear in **My Collection**. Click one to play it.

## Why a computer is handy

- The big screen makes **Thumb History** easy to read and tidy (Chapter 9).
- It's the simplest place to see your plan and change it (Chapter 23).
- It's where you change your email or password (Chapter 24).

TIP

### Keep the tab open

The music plays only while the Pandora tab is open in your browser. Closing the tab stops it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Music while you work on emails or photos, and a comfortable screen for managing your account.

PART 5

# Pandora in the Car

Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, Bluetooth and the car's own dashboard, plus keeping an eye on your phone's data.

CHAPTER 21

# Apple CarPlay and Android Auto

**Apple CarPlay** (for iPhones) and **Android Auto** (for Android phones) put a simple version of your phone's apps on the car's own screen. If your car has one of them, it's the best way to play Pandora while you drive.

## Getting Pandora on the car screen

1. Make sure the Pandora app is on your phone and you're signed in.
2. Connect the phone to the car: with a USB cable, or wirelessly if your car supports it. The first time, the car screen and the phone walk you through it.
3. On the car screen, find the **Pandora** icon and tap it.
4. Choose a station. You can skip and give thumbs up or down right on the car screen.

## Use your voice

Press and hold the voice button on the steering wheel and ask. With CarPlay you're talking to Siri: "Play my Classic Country station on Pandora." Android Auto uses Google's assistant the same way.

STAY SAFE

### Set it up before you drive

Pick a station while you're parked. Once you're moving, use the steering-wheel buttons or your voice, and keep your eyes on the road.

TIP

### Pandora icon missing from the car screen?

Update the Pandora app on your phone, unplug and reconnect, and restart the phone. On Android, also check that the Android Auto app is up to date. Our *Car Touchscreen & Bluetooth* guide covers connection problems in more depth.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Big, simple buttons on the car screen and voice control, so you can enjoy your stations without picking up the phone.

CHAPTER 22

# Bluetooth, USB and Car Dashboards

No CarPlay or Android Auto? You can still play Pandora in almost any car made in the last fifteen years or so.

## Bluetooth

1. Pair your phone with the car once. On the car's screen, look for **Phone** or **Bluetooth** and **Add device**; on your phone, open **Settings** > **Bluetooth** and choose the car.
2. Start Pandora on the phone **before** you set off.
3. Set the car's audio source to **Bluetooth** (sometimes called **BT Audio**).
4. Many cars let you skip with the steering-wheel buttons.

## Pandora built into the dashboard

Some cars and car stereos show **Pandora** as a choice on their own screen. It still uses the Pandora app on your phone, connected by Bluetooth or USB, for the music and the internet connection. Your car's owner's manual explains the exact steps for your model.

## Mind your data

Every car setup streams through your phone's internet connection. An hour of music uses some of your monthly cellular data. If your plan has a small allowance, paid subscribers can download stations at home on Wi-Fi first (Chapter 13). Your phone's settings show how much data Pandora has used this month.

TIP

### Music stops in dead zones

On a country road with no signal, streaming may pause. Downloads (Chapter 13) keep playing.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Your own stations on every drive, in nearly any car.

PART 6

# Your Account and Your Money

Changing plans, canceling the right way — wherever you're billed — and looking after your password and email.

CHAPTER 23

# Changing Plans or Canceling

Canceling a paid plan doesn't close your account. You go back to the free version and keep your stations and thumbs. The one thing to know first is **who bills you**, because that's where you cancel.

## Step 1: Find out who bills you

Look at your card or bank statement. A charge that names **Pandora** (or PayPal for Pandora) is billed by Pandora. A charge from **Apple**, **Google**, **Amazon**, **Roku** or your phone company means that company bills you. If you signed up inside the app on an iPhone, it's almost certainly Apple.

## Step 2: Cancel in the right place

| If you're billed by… | Cancel here |
|---|---|
| **Billed by Pandora** | Sign in at **pandora.com** on a computer, open your **Profile**, then **Settings**, and look for **Subscription**. Choose the option to cancel or switch plans. |
| **Billed by Apple (iPhone or iPad)** | Open **Settings**, tap **your name** at the top, then **Subscriptions**. Tap **Pandora** and **Cancel Subscription**. |
| **Billed by Google Play (Android)** | Open the **Play Store**, tap your profile picture, then **Payments & subscriptions** > **Subscriptions**. Tap Pandora and **Cancel**. Or visit play.google.com/store/account/subscriptions. |
| **Billed by Amazon** | On amazon.com, open **Your Account** > **Memberships & Subscriptions**, find Pandora and cancel. |
| **Billed by Roku** | Sign in at **my.roku.com**, open your subscriptions, and choose **Unsubscribe** next to Pandora. |

Pandora's own terms say that if you bought your plan through Apple, Google Play, Roku or another outside service, you must use that service's tools to manage or cancel it. Pandora can't cancel it for you, and your plan may not even show up on pandora.com.

HEADS UP

### Deleting the app doesn't cancel

Removing Pandora from your phone stops nothing. The charge continues until you cancel in the right place.

TIP

### Switching to save money

If you subscribed through Apple, you'll usually pay less by canceling there and signing up again on pandora.com once the Apple plan runs out (Chapter 3). Yearly plans, only offered directly, save a bit more.

GOOD TO KNOW

### When does it stop?

Usually you keep the paid features until the end of the period you've already paid for, then you're moved to the free version. Your stations stay.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

No more paying for something you don't use — and no surprise charges from a company you forgot was billing you.

CHAPTER 24

# Password, Email and Sign-In Trouble

Your Pandora account is just an email address and a password. Keep both current and you'll rarely have trouble.

## Forgot your password

1. On the Pandora sign-in screen, tap **Forgot Password?** under the boxes.
2. Type the email address you use for Pandora.
3. Check that email inbox (and the spam or junk folder) for a message from Pandora with a reset link.
4. Open the link and make a new password. Write it on the Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 28.

## Change your email or password

- **In the app:** tap **Profile**, then **Settings**, then **Account**. Make the change and tap **Save**.
- **On a computer:** at pandora.com, click your **Profile** in the upper right, choose **Settings**, then **Account**, and save your changes.

HEADS UP

### Changing to a new email? Update, don't start over

Moving to a new email address? Change the email on your existing account. Don't make a brand-new account: Pandora can't move a subscription, stations or thumbs from one account to another.

## Can't sign in at all?

- Check the email address for a typo, and try the other email addresses you've had.
- Use **Forgot Password?** rather than guessing again and again.
- For anything else, use Pandora's official help site, **help.pandora.com**.

STAY SAFE

### Never share your password

Pandora's real support team won't ask for your password by email, phone or text. Anyone who does is not Pandora.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

## What this does for you

A current email and a password you can find means you're never locked out of your music.

PART 7

# Staying Safe and Fixing Problems

The scams that borrow Pandora's name, and what to do, in order, when the music won't play.

CHAPTER 25

# Pandora Scams and How to Spot Them

Popular services make popular bait. Scammers send messages that look like they're from Pandora, hoping you'll tap a link and type in your password or card number. Here's what they look like.

## The common tricks

- **"Your payment failed" or "your account is suspended."** An email or text with a link to "update your billing." The link goes to a fake sign-in page that steals your password and card.
- **A fake receipt.** "Thank you for your Pandora Premium purchase," for a charge you never made, with a link or a phone number to "cancel" or get a refund.
- **"Your account was hacked."** A message urging you to reset your password through its link.
- **Fake "cancel Pandora" phone numbers** on web pages that look like help articles. The person who answers is not Pandora.
- **Look-alike activation pages** for TVs (Chapter 19).
- **Pandora jewelry deals.** Pandora is also the name of a jewelry company, which has nothing to do with the music service. Fake "Pandora clearance" shopping sites use that name too.

SCAM ALERT

### A billing email with a link? Don't tap it

Close the message. Open the Pandora app or type **pandora.com** yourself and look at your account. If you're billed by Apple, Google or Amazon, check there instead (Chapter 23). If everything looks fine, the message was fake.

SCAM ALERT

### Nobody from Pandora will call you

Pandora won't phone you about your account, ask for a gift card, or ask to connect to your computer. Anyone who does is a scammer — hang up.

## If you already clicked or typed something

1. Change your Pandora password right away (Chapter 24). If you use that same password anywhere else, change it there too.
2. If you typed in a card number, call the bank number on the back of the card and tell them.
3. If you let someone connect to your computer, turn the computer off and call for help.
4. Report the scam to the Federal Trade Commission at **reportfraud.ftc.gov**.

FROM BILL

### Not sure? Ask before you click

If a message about Pandora worries you, call me at **(330) 200-8042** before you tap anything. Checking costs far less than fixing.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Knowing the tricks means you can enjoy your music without worrying about every email.

CHAPTER 26

# When Pandora Won't Play

Most Pandora trouble comes down to the internet connection or an app that needs a fresh start. Work down this list in order; most problems are fixed by step 3.

## The fix-it list

1. **Check the internet.** Open a web page on the same phone or device. If it won't load, the problem is the Wi-Fi or signal, not Pandora.
2. **Close Pandora and open it again.** On an iPhone, swipe up from the bottom and hold, then swipe Pandora away. On Android, use the recent-apps button and swipe Pandora away.
3. **Restart the phone or device.** Turn it off, wait ten seconds, turn it on.
4. **Update the app** from the App Store or Play Store.
5. **Sign out and back in** in the app's Settings.
6. **Delete and reinstall the app.** Your stations are saved in your account, so nothing is lost (downloads will need to download again).

## Specific problems

| Problem | Try this |
|---|---|
| **Music stops after a while** | On the free version, Pandora may ask "Are you still listening?" Tap to keep going. |
| **Sleep timer doesn't stop the music (Android)** | In the phone's **Settings** > **Apps** > **Pandora** > **Battery**, choose **Unrestricted**. |
| **Can't skip** | You've used your free skips (Chapter 11), or a licensing rule blocks that song. |
| **Downloads missing** | Connect to the internet; downloads need renewing every 30 days (Chapter 13). |
| **Echo or Google won't play Pandora** | Unlink and relink Pandora in the Alexa or Google Home app (Chapters 16 and 17). |
| **Sonos shows a sign-in error** | Remove Pandora in the Sonos app and add it again (Chapter 18). |
| **Not on the car screen** | Update the app, reconnect the phone (Chapter 21). |
| **Wrong songs on a station** | Fix thumbs or try a Mode (Chapters 8 and 9). |

TIP

### Is Pandora itself down?

Now and then the problem is at Pandora's end, and everyone is affected. If nothing works on any device, wait an hour and try again before you change anything.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

A calm, step-by-step plan, so a silent speaker is a five-minute fix rather than a mystery.

PART 8

# When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary of everything in this guide.

CHAPTER 27

# When to Call Bill

Most of what's in this guide you can do yourself, at your own pace. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time and worry. Here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

## Times it's well worth a call

- **Getting Pandora on every device at once** — the phone, the Echo or Google speaker, the TV and the car — all signed in to the same account with the same stations.
- **Sorting out the bills.** Working out who is charging you (Pandora, Apple, Google, Amazon, SiriusXM), canceling what you don't use, and moving to the cheapest way to pay.
- **Linking Pandora to Alexa or Google** and setting up a music alarm or a bedtime routine.
- **Car trouble** with CarPlay, Android Auto or Bluetooth that won't connect.
- **A message you're not sure about** — a billing email, a refund call, or a "support" number you found online.
- **Setting up Pandora for a parent**: a handful of favorite stations, the text made bigger, and simple written instructions.

## What working with me is like

I work at your pace, explain what I'm doing in plain words, and never talk down to anyone. I'll tell you honestly when a paid plan isn't worth your money. I've been doing this kind of work for more than 30 years, and I serve Portage County, Ohio, in person, and folks farther away by remote help.

FROM BILL

### How to reach me

Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This guide is yours to keep for free; if you'd like a hand, I'm only a phone call away.

GOOD TO KNOW

### You may meet Sophie first

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you might be greeted by **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time. A real person — me — does the actual help.

Thank you for taking the time to learn Pandora. Start a station from a favorite, give it a few thumbs, and enjoy the music.

***— Bill***

CHAPTER 28

# Your Pandora Cheat-Sheet

The whole guide, boiled down to one page.

## The essentials

| Topic | Remember |
|---|---|
| **Start a station** | Search an artist or song, then play its station. It saves itself. |
| **Thumbs up** | "More like this" — on that station only. |
| **Thumbs down** | "Never on this station." Undo in Thumb History. On free, it uses a skip. |
| **Modes** | My Station, Crowd Faves, Deep Cuts, Discovery, Newly Released, Artist Only. |
| **Free** | Ads, limited skips, no downloads. |
| **Plus** | About $5.99 a month direct. No ads on stations; a few stations offline. |
| **Premium** | About $11.99 a month direct. Any song, playlists, downloads. |
| **Cheapest way to pay** | On pandora.com, not inside the iPhone app. |
| **Canceling** | Cancel where you're billed: Pandora, Apple, Google, Amazon or Roku. |
| **Alexa** | "Alexa, play my ___ station on Pandora." |
| **Google** | "Hey Google, play ___ radio on Pandora." |
| **TV sign-in** | Enter the TV's code only at a pandora.com address. |
| **SiriusXM** | Same owner, separate account and separate bill. |
| **Billing email with a link** | Don't tap. Open the app or pandora.com yourself. |

## Write it down once

| Keep handy | |
|---|---|
| Pandora email address | _____ |
| Pandora password (keep this page private) | _____ |
| My plan (Free, Plus, Premium, Family) | _____ |
| Who bills me (Pandora, Apple, Google, Amazon, Roku) | _____ |
| Monthly or yearly price, and renewal date | _____ |
| My favorite stations | _____ |
| Devices signed in (phone, Echo, TV, car) | _____ |

## When something's wrong, in order

1. Check the internet: does a web page open?
2. Close Pandora and open it again.
3. Restart the phone, speaker or TV.
4. Update the Pandora app.
5. Sign out and back in.
6. Still stuck? Look at Chapter 26, then call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

SCAM ALERT

**Strange billing message or phone call?**

Don't tap the link and don't call the number in the message. Check your account yourself in the Pandora app, or where you're billed.