

With OpenAI expanding its offerings into new tiers like ChatGPT Go alongside the well-known ChatGPT Free and ChatGPT Plus, many users in the US and worldwide are asking: *Is ChatGPT Plus really an ad-free tier?* Especially since ChatGPT Free and the recently announced Go plan display ads in the US as of February 2026. In this detailed post, I'll unpack the nuances of ChatGPT Plus pricing, ad experience, VAT/GST considerations, checkout platform pricing variances, and trial availability.



ChatGPT Plus: The \$20/Month US Web List Price

First, let's establish the foundational price: ChatGPT Plus list price is **\$20/month on the US OpenAI web checkout**. This figure is widely published and promoted on OpenAI's official ChatGPT subscription page. <https://suprmind.ai/hub/chatgpt/pricing/chatgpt-plus-price/> But as any seasoned SaaS pricing analyst will tell you, **list price is not always the real price paid**.

The most common auto-renew gotcha? Taxes. VAT or GST varies by state and region, so that \$20 can quickly become \$21.60, \$22.00, or more depending on local rules. I always tell readers to **open the checkout pages on two devices** to compare displayed taxes before finalizing payment — more on that shortly.

ChatGPT Plus vs ChatGPT Free and Go: Ads in February 2026 in the US

It's no secret that ChatGPT Free in the US started displaying ads in February 2026 — a strategic shift by OpenAI to monetize the free-tier traffic without harming core functionalities. The newly revealed *ChatGPT Go* tier also follows suit with an ad-supported model but adds some AI features at a lower cost point.

So, does this mean ChatGPT Plus subscribers also see ads? **No**. The *chatgpt plus ad free tier* aspect means paying the premium monthly fee ensures an ad-free experience on the web and mobile clients. This exclusivity is a core rationale for the \$20/month charge — to remove ads and provide priority access to GPT-4 capabilities.

Pricing Discrepancies: Web Checkout vs iOS vs Android

One frequent point of confusion and frustration is platform pricing differences. OpenAI's price for ChatGPT Plus is \$20/month on the **web checkout**. However, on iOS, the price is often higher (about \$25/month or more) due to Apple's 30% App Store fee. Android prices tend to be closer to the web's \$20, but occasional regional differences apply.

This causes practical challenges for users deciding where to subscribe: should you sign up via the web, iOS, or Android? The recommendation? **do your checkout price comparison on all three platforms before subscribing**. I keep a running list of "auto-renew gotchas" and billing surprises that arise when switching devices or platforms.

Platform	Example Price	VAT/GST Included?	Notes
Web Checkout	\$20/month	No	(added at checkout) Pure list price; local tax depends on region
iOS (App Store)	~\$25/month	Yes	(usually included) Higher due to Apple fees
Android (Google Play)	~\$20-\$22/month	Varies	Closer to web price; some regional adjustments

No Annual Plus Plan: Why That Matters

Unlike many subscription services, OpenAI currently offers only monthly billing for ChatGPT Plus — no annual plan. This might surprise some, given the trend toward discounted annual subscriptions in SaaS, which improve retention and reduce churn.

Why does this matter? It means the \$20/month model is straightforward but limits customer options for locking in a longer commitment at a lower effective rate. On the positive side, it reduces complexity around VAT/GST annual adjustments and pro-rata refunds. But for those contemplating long-term usage, the lack of an annual plan means budgeting monthly without discounts.

Trial Reality: Six Routes, All Offer-Based

OpenAI's approach to trials and offers for ChatGPT Plus is nuanced. Despite periodic rumors, there is no universal free trial auto-activating upon signup. Instead, trial access is granted via promotions or specific routes — essentially "offer-based." Here are the *six primary routes* derived from live testing and user reports:

1. Invitation code or promo from OpenAI or affiliated partners
2. Limited-time trial campaigns announced publicly
3. Trial bundles included with certain hardware or software purchases
4. Cross-promo upgrades for returning free-tier users
5. Free trial offers tied to geographic or demographic targeting
6. Special bundle subscriptions via third-party resellers or enterprise agreements

For all practical purposes, new users contemplating Plus should check for a displayed offer during signup, not assume a free trial. Even then, **setting a calendar reminder 24 hours before the trial ends** is critical to avoid accidental auto-renew charges. This is a classic auto-renew gotcha I always flag.

Summary and Recommendations

- **ChatGPT Plus remains an ad-free experience even though ChatGPT Free and ChatGPT Go show ads in the US starting February 2026.**
- The \$20/month US web price is the baseline, but always expect local VAT/GST on top and verify your total before paying.

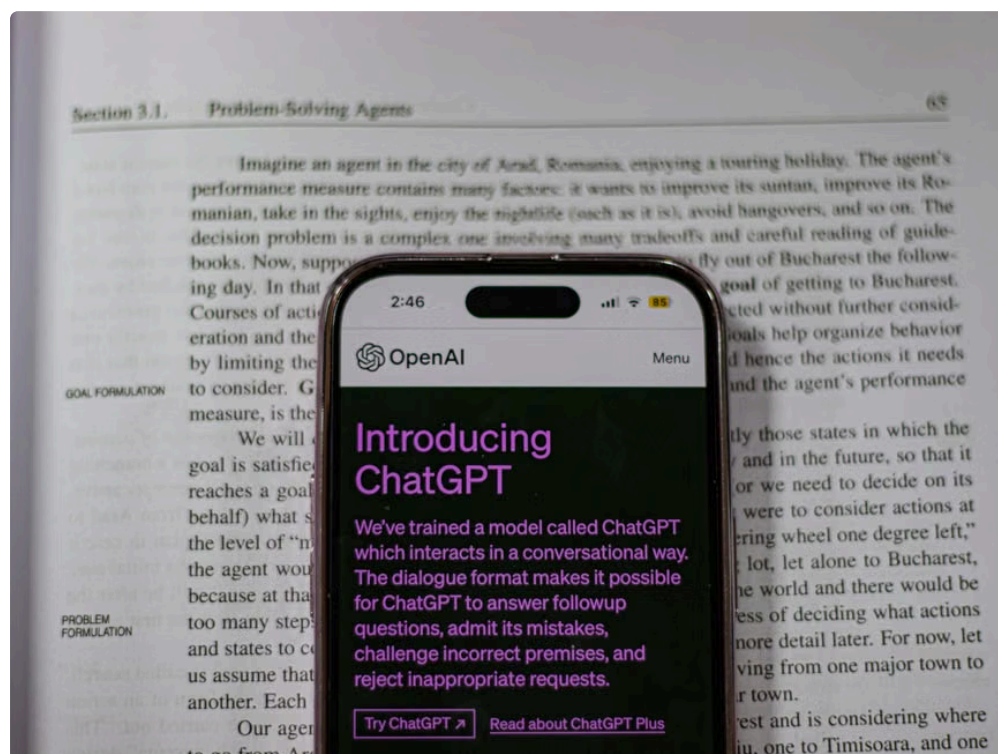
- Prices differ significantly across platforms due to fees and tax handling, so compare web vs iOS vs Android before subscribing.
- No annual plans exist yet for Plus, so plan for monthly auto-renew payments without discounts or long-term commitment.
- Free trial paths are offer-based, with six known routes—never assume an automatic free trial. Use calendar reminders to avoid surprises.
- *Always open checkout on two devices before paying — it's the simplest way to catch unexpected charges or tax variations.*

Final Note: Auto-Renew Gotchas and What to Watch For

From my 11 years of auditing subscription SaaS checkout flows, auto-renew surprises and tax opacity are the top causes of user frustration. OpenAI's current ChatGPT Plus flow is transparent relative to industry norms, but vigilance pays off:

- Check the final checkout page for ads disclosures or “ad-free” clauses explicitly stated.
- Watch for VAT/GST added on top of list prices at payment time.
- Compare price and tax across web, iOS, Android devices before committing.
- Set calendar reminders when redeeming trials to avoid unexpected charges.
- Confirm available ChatGPT tiers (Free, Plus, Go) and their ad status periodically—they may evolve.

If you're considering subscribing to ChatGPT Plus for its ad-free, higher-performance tier, taking these steps before payment ensures a smooth and frustration-free experience.



Reminder: Open your checkout on two devices now and compare. Your future self will thank you.