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Launch a Windows Virtual Machine in Amazon Lightsail

[Amazon Lightsail](#) is the easiest way to get started on AWS. It offers virtual servers, storage, databases and networking, plus a cost-effective, monthly plan.

In this tutorial, you create a Windows Server 2016 instance in Amazon Lightsail in seconds. After the instance is up and running, you connect to it via RDP within the Lightsail console using the browser-based RDP client.

[Get started with Amazon Lightsail for free.](#)

About this Tutorial

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Time | 10 minutes |
| Cost | Free Tier Eligible |
| Use Case | Compute |
| Products | Amazon Lightsail |
| Audience | Developer |
| Level | Beginner |
| Last Updated | September 11, 2020 |

[Click here to watch the tutorial on YouTube](#)

1. Create an Amazon Lightsail account

This tutorial is free tier eligible.



Already have an account? [Sign-in](#)

2. Create a Windows Server 2016 instance in Amazon Lightsail

- a. Choose **Create instance** in the **Instances** tab of the [Lightsail home page](#).

The screenshot shows the Amazon Lightsail home page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Amazon Lightsail logo, a gear icon, and the word "Home". To the right, there are links for "Docs", a search bar, "Account", "AWS", and "Billing". Below the navigation bar, a greeting "Good afternoon!" is displayed next to a filter input field labeled "Filter by name, location, tag, or type". The main content area has tabs for "Instances", "Databases", "Networking", "Storage", and "Snapshots". The "Instances" tab is selected. Below the tabs, there's a "Sort by Date" dropdown and a "Create instance" button. Three instance cards are visible: "WordPress-2" (512 MB RAM, 1 vCPU, 20 GB SSD, Running, Oregon, Zone B), "WordPress-1" (512 MB RAM, 1 vCPU, 20 GB SSD, Running, Oregon, Zone A), and "WordPress-LL".

3. Configure the instance


- a. An AWS Region and Availability Zone is selected for you. Choose **Change Region** and **Availability Zone** to create your instance in another location.







Select a Region

The closer your instance is to your users, the less latency they will experience.

[Learn more about Regions](#)

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
|  Oregon us-west-2 |  Ohio us-east-2 |  Virginia us-east-1 |  Montreal ca-central-1 |
|  Tokyo ap-northeast-1 |  Seoul ap-northeast-2 |  Ireland eu-west-1 |  Sydney ap-southeast-2 |
|  London eu-west-2 |  Paris eu-west-3 |  Frankfurt eu-central-1 |  Singapore ap-southeast-1 |
|  Mumbai ap-south-1 | | | |

Select an Availability Zone [?](#)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  Zone A us-west-2a |  Zone B us-west-2b |  Zone C us-west-2c |  Zone D us-west-2d |
|---|---|---|---|

b. Choose the **Microsoft Windows** platform option, and choose **OS only** to view the operating system-only instance images available in Lightsail.

To learn more about Lightsail instance images, see [Choose an Amazon Lightsail instance image](#).



Select a platform



Linux/Unix
22 blueprints



Microsoft
Windows
3 blueprints

Windows-based instance prices reflect additional licensing fees.

Select a blueprint

Apps + OS

OS Only



Windows
Server 2016
2020.02.12



Windows
Server 2012
R2
2020.02.12

c. Choose the **Windows Server 2016** image.

d. (Optional) Choose **Add launch script** to add a PowerShell script that will run on your instance when it launches.

You can add a PowerShell script that runs on your instance the first time it launches.

+ Add launch script



You can enter user data to configure the instance type you've chosen.

Enter your setup code here.

e. Choose your instance plan.

You can try the \$8 USD Lightsail plan free for one month (up to 750 hours). We'll credit one free month to your account.

[Learn more on our Lightsail pricing page.](#)

Choose your instance plan ?

New! Check out our new 16 GB and 32 GB RAM bundles!

Sort by: Price per month Memory Processing Storage Transfer

First month free!

\$8
USD

\$12
USD

\$20
USD

\$40
USD

\$70
USD

>

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| \$8 USD | \$12 USD | \$20 USD | \$40 USD | \$70 USD | Price per month |
| 512 MB | 1 GB | 2 GB | 4 GB | 8 GB | Memory |
| 1 vCPU | 1 vCPU | 1 vCPU | 2 vCPUs | 2 vCPUs | Processing |
| 30 GB SSD | 40 GB SSD | 60 GB SSD | 80 GB SSD | 160 GB SSD | Storage |
| 1 TB | 2 TB | 3 TB | 4 TB | 5 TB | Transfer |

You can try the selected plan free for one month (up to 750 hours).



Identify your instance

Your Lightsail resources must have unique names.

x

g. (Optional) Choose one of the following options to add tags to your instance:

- (Optional) **Add key-only tags**— Enter your new tag into the tag key text box, and press **Enter**. Choose **Save** when you're done entering your tags to add them, or choose **Cancel** to not add them.
- (Optional) **Create a key-value tag**— Enter a key into the **Key** text box, and a value into the **Value** text box. Choose **Save** when you're done entering your tags, or choose **Cancel** to not add them.

Key-value tags can only be added one at a time before saving. To add more than one key-value tag, repeat the previous steps.

For more information about key-only and key-value tags, see [Tags in Amazon Lightsail](#).



be used to organize your billing, and to control access to your resources.

[Learn more about tagging.](#)

Key-only tags ?

Add a tag key and press **Enter**.

Key-value tags ?

+ Add key-value tag

Key

Value



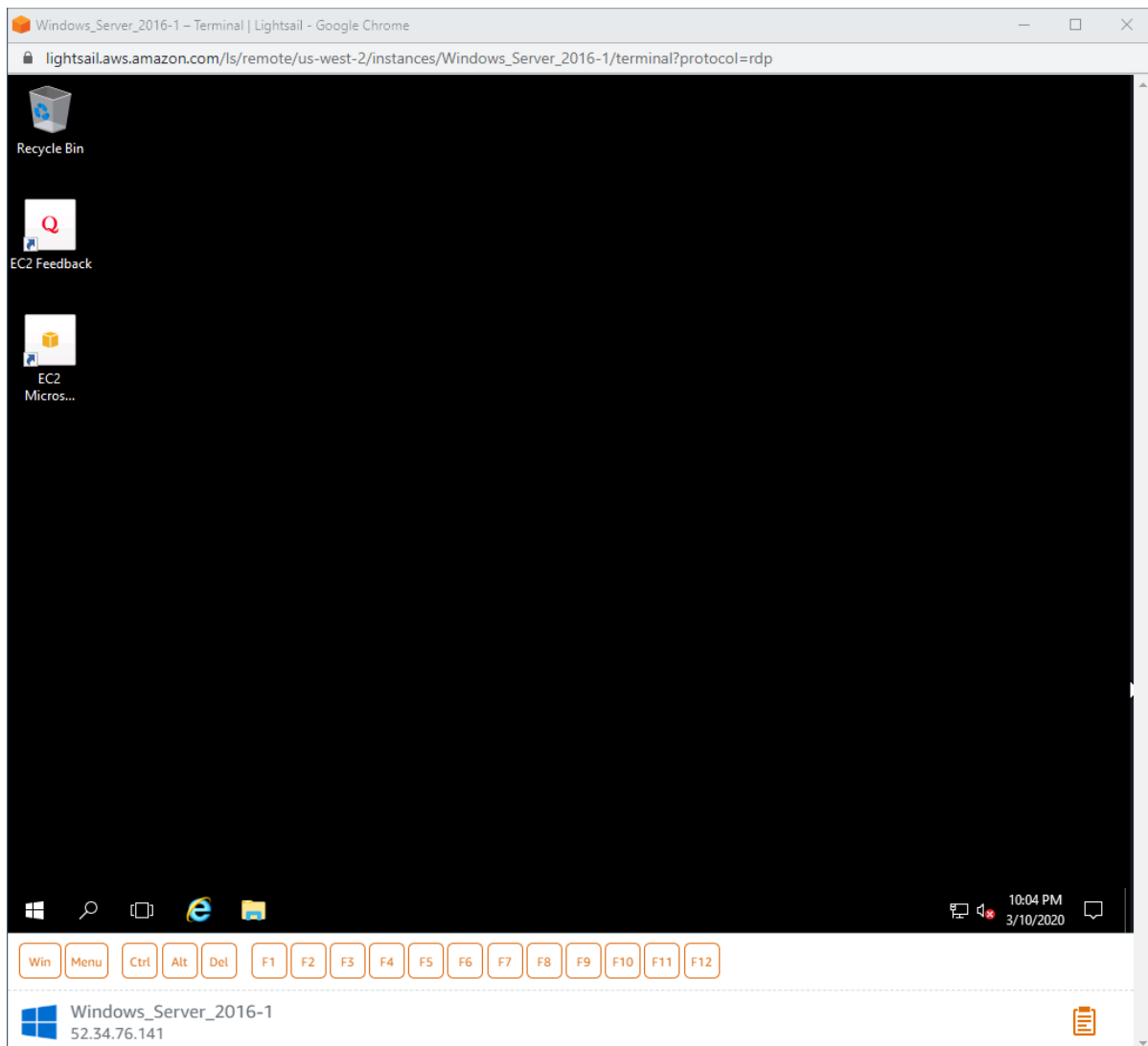
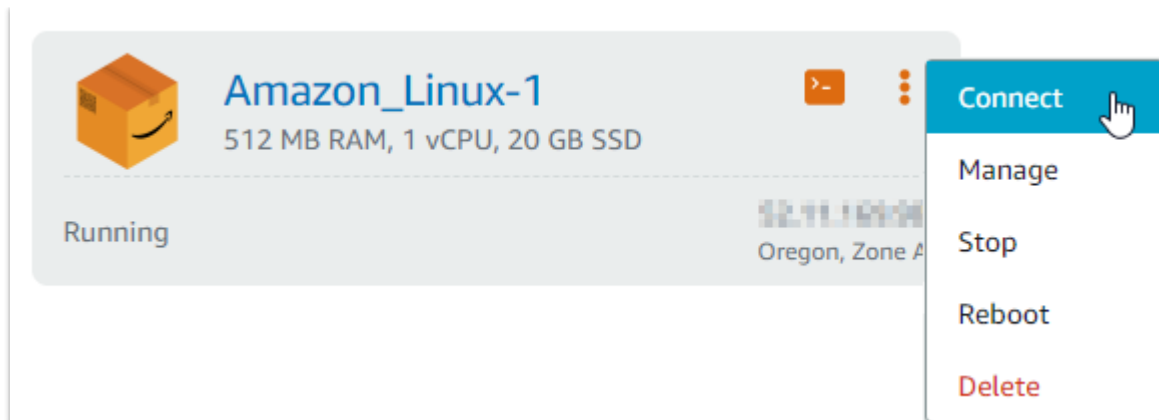
h. Chose **Create instance**.



Within minutes, your Windows Server 2016 instance is ready, and you can connect to it using the browser-based RDP client in the Lightsail console.

4. Connect to your instance using the browser-based RDP client in Lightsail

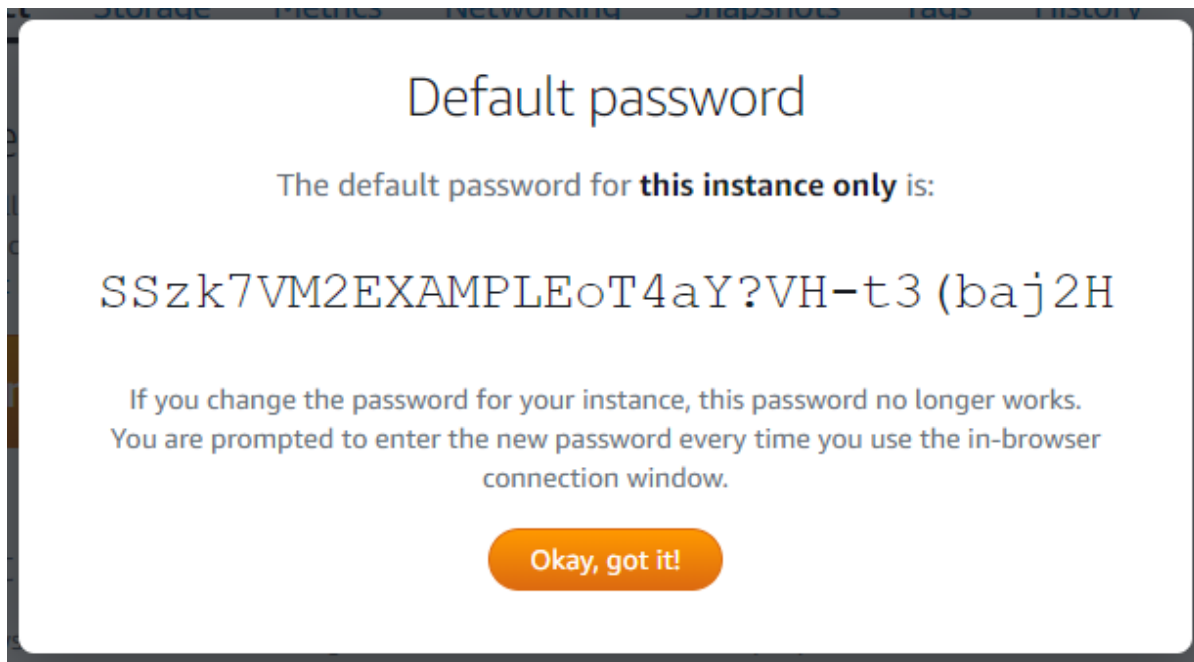
a. In the **Instances** tab of the [Lightsail home page](#), choose the RDP icon, or the ellipsis (:) icon next to the Windows Server 2016 instance you just created.





Choose the **Connect** tab, scroll down to the **Default login credentials** section of the page, and choose **Show default password**.

Important: If you changed the administrator password after signing in to your Windows Server 2016 instance, then the administrator password displayed in the Lightsail console is no longer valid.



5. Next steps

Now that you can connect to your instance, what you do next depends on how you plan to use it. For example, you can:

- [Create a static IP address](#) for your instance to keep the same IP address each time you stop and start your Lightsail instance.
- [Create a snapshot of your instance](#) to keep as a backup.
- [Attach a disk to your instance](#) to add more storage space



Recommended next steps

Create a static IP address

Create a static IP address for your instance to keep the same IP address each time you stop and start your Lightsail instance.

Add a snapshot

Create a snapshot of your instance to keep as a backup.



Attach a disk to your instance to add more storage space.

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