

Teachable vs Thinkific vs Kajabi: which course platform actually fits

Teachable starts at 29 dollars, Thinkific at 49, Kajabi at 143. Lined up they look like one product at three prices. Two are course hosts and one is an all-in-one business platform, and the gap mostly measures that. Here is how to tell which you actually need.

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Search for the best course platform and you get a price table: Teachable from 29 dollars, Thinkific from 49, Kajabi from 143. Lined up like that they look like the same product at three prices. They are not. Two of them are course hosts and one is an all-in-one business platform, and the sticker gap mostly measures that difference, not value.

Three prices, two different products

Teachable and Thinkific are course-first tools: you upload lessons, sell them, and bring your own email list and website. Kajabi is a whole creator stack in one login, courses plus email marketing, sales funnels, a website and a community, which is why its entry price runs three to five times the other two. So the honest first question is not which is cheapest, it is whether you are buying a place to host courses or replacing a marketing stack.

What each actually charges in 2026

List prices as of mid-2026, billed annually unless noted. They move, so confirm the current tier before you commit.

- Teachable: a free plan and a 29 dollar Starter both carry a per-sale platform fee (7.5 percent on Starter), and the fee only disappears at the 69 dollar Builder plan; Growth is 139 dollars. So Builder, not the 29 dollar sticker, is the real zero-fee entry. Why the cheap tier is usually the expensive one is worked through in our companion piece on the cheap-plan trap.
- Thinkific: a free plan (one course) and a 49 dollar Basic that already charges zero platform fee, the cheapest no-fee entry of the three; Start is 99 dollars and Grow 199. There is no per-sale platform fee on any paid Thinkific plan.
- Kajabi: about 143 dollars a month billed annually (179 month to month) for Basic, which includes 5 products and 2,500 contacts; Growth is 199 (249 monthly) and Pro 399 (499). Kajabi charges no platform fee on its own Kajabi Payments checkout.

The axis that actually moves your bill

The three do not meter the same thing, so their plans are not measuring the same quantity. Teachable and Thinkific price on course-side limits: how many products, students or admins you have. Kajabi prices like an email tool, on contacts, the people in your audience. That is the line most comparisons miss: on Kajabi a growing mailing list can push you to the next tier even

when your course sales are flat, the same way a contact-priced email platform bills you for people you store rather than sales you make.

Kajabi tightened exactly this in a January 2026 pricing change: it removed the cheap 89 dollar Kickstarter plan from its lineup and cut the Basic plan contact limit from 10,000 to 2,500 while raising the price. So if you carry a large list, price Kajabi against your contact count at its biggest, not against the single course you are selling.

The fee Kajabi hides if you keep your own Stripe

Kajabi charges no platform fee on Kajabi Payments, its built-in checkout. Bring your own Stripe or PayPal instead and it adds a surcharge on top of normal card processing: about 2 percent on Basic, 1 percent on Growth and 0.5 percent on Pro. So the zero-fee headline holds only if you also hand Kajabi the payment rail. On 10,000 dollars of monthly sales, the 2 percent Basic surcharge is 200 dollars a month for the privilege of using the processor you already run.

Who each one is actually for

- Thinkific or Teachable if you already run your email and website elsewhere and just need a reliable course host. Thinkific Basic at 49 dollars is the cheapest zero-fee start; Teachable Builder at 69 costs a little more but can act as merchant of record on its native gateways and remit EU and UK VAT for you, a real job the other two leave to you.
- Kajabi if you want to replace a stack, email marketing, funnels, a site and a community, with one tool. At 143 dollars it is only expensive next to a bare course host; next to paying separately for an email platform plus a site builder plus a community tool it can come out ahead. Judge it as a stack, not as a course host.

The VAT job is part of the price

For an EU seller one line can outweigh the plan gap: who handles VAT on digital course sales. A pre-recorded, on-demand course is an electronically supplied service, so once your cross-border EU sales pass 10,000 euros a year you charge VAT at the buyer country rate. Teachable can act as the merchant of record on its native gateways and collect and remit EU and UK VAT for you; Kajabi gives you tax tools but leaves you as the taxable person; Thinkific does not remit EU VAT natively, so you connect an external merchant of record or file through the One Stop Shop yourself. If you sell into the EU, that can matter more than a few dollars of monthly plan price.

Run your own numbers

The plan tables make Teachable look cheapest and Kajabi dearest, but the ranking flips once you put in your real price, sales volume, list size and which checkout you use. Drop those into the course-platform profit calculator and it returns your take-home on each platform and tier, so the choice comes down to features and fit rather than the sticker price.

Frequently asked questions

Which is cheapest: Teachable, Thinkific or Kajabi?

For a pure course host, Thinkific Basic at 49 dollars is the cheapest zero-fee plan. Teachable is cheaper on paper at 29 dollars, but that Starter tier adds a 7.5 percent per-sale fee, so its real zero-fee entry is the 69 dollar Builder plan. Kajabi starts near 143 dollars because it bundles email, funnels, a site and a community, so it is only comparable if you would otherwise pay for those separately.

Do Teachable, Thinkific and Kajabi charge transaction fees?

Thinkific charges no platform fee on any paid plan. Teachable charges 7.5 percent on its Starter plan and zero from Builder up. Kajabi charges no fee on its own Kajabi Payments checkout, but adds a surcharge of about 2 percent on Basic, 1 percent on Growth and 0.5 percent on Pro if you use your own Stripe or PayPal instead. Card processing of about 2.9 percent plus 30 cents applies on all three regardless.

Why is Kajabi so much more expensive?

Because it is a different product. Teachable and Thinkific host courses; Kajabi is an all-in-one that also replaces your email marketing, sales funnels, website and community. It also prices on contacts rather than course limits, so a larger audience raises the bill even if course sales are flat. In January 2026 Kajabi removed its cheap 89 dollar Kickstarter plan and cut the Basic contact limit from 10,000 to 2,500 while raising prices.

Does Kajabi, Teachable or Thinkific handle EU VAT?

It differs, and it is a real tiebreaker. Teachable can act as the merchant of record on its native gateways and collect and remit EU and UK VAT for you. Kajabi gives you VAT tools such as rate calculation and invoices, but you stay the taxable person, so registering and remitting is yours. Thinkific does not remit EU VAT natively, so you connect an external merchant of record or file through the One Stop Shop yourself.

Should I pick a course platform on price alone?

Only after you decide what you are buying. If you already run your email and website elsewhere, a cheap zero-fee course host such as Thinkific Basic or Teachable Builder is the value pick. If you want one tool to run the whole business, Kajabi competes on the bundle, not the sticker. Put your real price, volume and list size into the calculator to compare take-home rather than the plan table.

Compare your take-home across all three

Free, no signup: agent.mue.app/tools/course-platform-profit-calculator

agent.mue.app/articles/teachable-vs-thinkific-vs-kajabi-which-course-platform

