

Service Name

AWS Cost Explorer

Service Overview

AWS Cost Explorer is a comprehensive cost management and analysis tool that enables users to visualize, understand, and manage their AWS costs and usage over time. It provides interactive dashboards, customizable reports, and forecasting capabilities to help organizations analyze spending patterns, identify cost optimization opportunities, and make data-driven financial decisions. The service offers both a web-based user interface and programmatic access through APIs, supporting detailed cost analysis across multiple dimensions including services, accounts, regions, and time periods with up to 13 months of historical data and 18 months of forecasting.

Key Use Cases

- **Cost Analysis and Monitoring:** Track and analyze AWS spending patterns across services, accounts, and regions to identify cost drivers and trends
- **Budget Planning and Forecasting:** Generate cost forecasts for up to 18 months and create budgets with automated alerts for proactive financial management
- **Cost Optimization:** Identify underutilized resources, receive Reserved Instance recommendations, and analyze cost anomalies to reduce unnecessary spending

Features

- **Interactive Cost Visualization:** Customizable charts and graphs for exploring cost and usage data with filtering and grouping options
- **18-Month Forecasting:** AI-powered cost forecasting with explainable insights based on historical usage patterns
- **Cost Comparison:** Automated cost comparison between time periods with detailed breakdown of cost drivers
- **Granular Data Access:** Daily, hourly, and resource-level cost data with support for multi-year historical analysis
- **Reserved Instance Reports:** Coverage and utilization reporting with purchase recommendations for Reserved Instances and Savings Plans
- **Custom Reports and Dashboards:** Saveable custom reports and integration with Billing and Cost Management Dashboards
- **API Access:** Programmatic access to cost and usage data through comprehensive REST APIs
- **CSV Export:** Downloadable reports in CSV format for external analysis and integration

Value Proposition

AWS Cost Explorer offers unmatched visibility into AWS spending with native integration across all AWS services and real-time data access. Unlike third-party tools, it provides built-in forecasting with AI-powered explanations, automated cost anomaly detection, and seamless integration with AWS Budgets and Cost Anomaly Detection:

- The service eliminates the need for external cost management infrastructure while offering both free console access and affordable API pricing at \$0.01 per request
- Its comprehensive feature set includes 18-month forecasting, resource-level granularity, and automated Reserved Instance recommendations, making it the most cost-effective solution for AWS-centric organizations seeking complete financial visibility and control

Service Integration

Cost Explorer integrates deeply with AWS Billing and Cost Management services including AWS Budgets for alert management, AWS Cost Anomaly Detection for automated spending anomaly identification, and AWS Cost and Usage Reports for detailed billing data. It connects with AWS Organizations for consolidated billing analysis across member accounts and integrates with Amazon Q Developer for natural language cost queries:

- The service also works with AWS IAM for access control, Amazon S3 for data export, and AWS Trusted Advisor for cost optimization recommendations
- Additionally, it supports integration with Amazon QuickSight for advanced analytics and AWS Config for resource tracking and compliance monitoring

Onboarding and Offboarding

Getting started with Cost Explorer is automatic upon AWS account creation, requiring no additional setup or configuration. Users simply access the service through the AWS Cost Management console where data preparation begins immediately, with current month data available within 24 hours and historical data within a few days:

- The service provides preconfigured default reports and an interactive walkthrough for new users
- Cost Explorer cannot be disabled once enabled, ensuring continuous cost visibility
- Organizations using consolidated billing need management account enablement for member account access, and IAM permissions can be configured for granular access control across teams and departments

Getting Started Guide: <https://docs.aws.amazon.com/cost-management/latest/userguide/ce-getting-started.html>

Data Removal

Cost Explorer cannot be disabled once enabled and maintains cost data according to AWS data retention policies. Historical cost data is retained for up to 13 months automatically, with optional extended retention for multi-year analysis. Since Cost Explorer uses the same dataset as AWS Cost and Usage Reports, data removal follows standard AWS account closure procedures. Organizations can control access through IAM policies and remove saved reports and custom configurations, but the underlying cost data remains accessible as part of AWS's billing infrastructure.

Backup/Restore and Disaster Recovery

Cost Explorer does not require traditional backup and disaster recovery as it operates as a fully managed AWS service with built-in redundancy and high availability. The service automatically maintains data integrity and availability across AWS regions. Cost data is continuously synchronized from billing systems and refreshed at least once every 24 hours. Custom reports and configurations can be recreated through the console or API, and data exports provide external backup options for critical cost analysis workflows.

Backup Capabilities

Cost Explorer does not have traditional backup capabilities as it is a managed analytics service that sources data from AWS billing systems. The service provides data export functionality through CSV downloads and API access for external data preservation. Custom reports and dashboard configurations can be saved within the service, and organizations can implement their own data backup strategies using the Cost Explorer API to programmatically extract and archive cost data externally.

Disaster Recovery

Cost Explorer is a fully managed service with inherent disaster recovery built into AWS infrastructure. The service does not require separate disaster recovery planning as it automatically maintains high availability and data consistency across AWS regions:

- Cost data is sourced from resilient AWS billing systems, ensuring continuous availability
- Organizations can maintain business continuity through API access and exported data, allowing cost analysis to continue even during localized service interruptions

Recovery Objectives

Cost Explorer supports rapid recovery objectives through its cloud-native architecture and API-first design. The service maintains near real-time data availability with 24-hour refresh cycles, supporting low RTO requirements for cost monitoring and analysis. Organizations can achieve minimal RPO through continuous data export and API-based backup strategies. The service's high availability design and integration with AWS's global

infrastructure ensures consistent access to critical cost data for business continuity and financial decision-making processes.

Service Constraints

Service Quotas: <https://docs.aws.amazon.com/cost-management/latest/userguide/management-limits.html>

FAQ: <https://aws.amazon.com/aws-cost-management/aws-cost-explorer/faqs/>

Technical Requirements

Service Documentation: <https://docs.aws.amazon.com/cost-management/latest/userguide/ce-what-is.html>

User Guide: <https://docs.aws.amazon.com/cost-management/latest/userguide/ce-what-is.html>

API Reference: https://docs.aws.amazon.com/aws-cost-management/latest/APIReference/API_Operations_AWS_Cost_Explorer_Service.html

Pricing Overview

Please see the AWS UK G Cloud 15 Pricing Document accompanying this service in the Digital Marketplace.

Public Pricing: <https://aws.amazon.com/aws-cost-management/aws-cost-explorer/pricing/>

Cost Optimization

Cost Explorer offers unique cost optimization through automated Reserved Instance and Savings Plans recommendations based on actual usage patterns. The service provides rightsizing recommendations for EC2 instances and identifies underutilized resources across all AWS services:

- Its AI-powered forecasting helps predict optimal commitment levels for cost savings, while cost anomaly detection prevents unexpected spending
- The platform enables granular cost allocation through tagging strategies and supports automated budget alerts to prevent overspending
- Organizations can leverage the Cost Comparison feature to identify cost drivers and implement data-driven optimization strategies across their entire AWS infrastructure

Savings Considerations

Cost Explorer maximizes savings through comprehensive Reserved Instance and Savings Plans analysis, potentially reducing compute costs by up to 75% through proper

commitment strategies. The service identifies idle and underutilized resources, enabling right-sizing decisions that can reduce costs by 20-50% for oversized instances:

- Its forecasting capabilities help organizations make informed capacity planning decisions, avoiding both over-provisioning and emergency scaling costs
- The automated cost anomaly detection prevents budget overruns and unexpected charges, while detailed usage analytics enable teams to optimize resource allocation and eliminate waste across their AWS environment, resulting in typical cost reductions of 15-30% for well-managed accounts