

The best shows on Paramount Plus in 2023

I am a Paramount Plus apologist. I know – going by subscription numbers alone – that I have to be because people do not subscribe to the streaming service at the same rate as Netflix or Amazon Prime, but I spend more time in the Paramount Plus app than the other two. It's got older shows like *Star Trek*, *Frasier*, and *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, and newer splashy shows like... everything Taylor Sheridan produces and *Frasier*. It has a whole mess of football (American) and football (the rest of the world), and while bigger brands like Netflix are only now experimenting with live TV, Paramount Plus has been doing it from the get-go and doing it really well.

It is, I think, my desert island streaming service.

A lot of new shows aired on the service this year. These are some of the best to check out if you've recently picked up Paramount Plus or are trying to justify getting it so you can catch up on all the *Star Trek* you missed.

**a: hover]: shadow-highlight-franklin
dark: [&>a: hover]: shadow-highlight-franklin
franklin [&>a]: shadow-underline-black
dark: [&>a]: shadow-underline-white">1923**

Taylor Sheridan programming seems to be half of what's available on Paramount Plus, and that makes sense when you remember *Yellowstone* is a monster hit. But of all the shows he's making, *1923* with Harrison Ford and Helen Mirren has to

be my favorite. The series is a *Yellowstone* prequel chronicling the Duttons' lives during a moment of extraordinary transition in the west. Sheep farmers and ranchers wage war on horseback with Tommy guns, while the heir to the family travels across the continent of Africa with his new British heiress bride to help the family fight its new war. It's violent and goofy, but also one of the most entertaining adventure shows on TV right now.

**a: hover]: shadow-highlight-franklin
dark: [>a: hover]: shadow-highlight-franklin
[>a]: shadow-underline-black
dark: [>a]: shadow-underline-white">*Star Trek: Strange New Worlds***

If you've never watched *Star Trek* and have been looking for a place to start, *Strange New Worlds* is for you. This is a prequel to the original *Star Trek*, so there are some characters you may recognize, like Spock and Uhura (and occasionally Kirk!), and lots of other new characters you've never met but whom you will instantly adore. This show is blessedly episodic in a world where most shows treat each season as one very long movie, which means it can do really fun one-off episodes – like this year's crossover with *Lower Decks* or its excellent musical. It's months later, and I'm still humming along with Spock's smooth tenor.

**a: hover]: shadow-highlight-franklin
dark: [>a: hover]: shadow-highlight-franklin
[>a]: shadow-underline-black
dark: [>a]: shadow-underline-**

white">Special Ops: Lioness

This is another Taylor Sheridan show with a stacked cast. This time Zoe Saldana is a CIA officer who specifically works with young women spies to infiltrate terrorist organizations through the networks of wives and daughters. The show, which also stars Nicole Kidman and Morgan Freeman, takes itself entirely too seriously and can be a bit too jingoistic for my taste. Yet this is also a Taylor Sheridan joint and that man really knows how to make highly entertaining adventure shows. So it takes itself real serious – but is almost always compelling.

**a: hover]: shadow-highlight-franklin
dark: [&>a: hover]: shadow-highlight-franklin
franklin [&>a]: shadow-underline-black
dark: [&>a]: shadow-underline-
white">Lawmen: Bass Reeves**

And let's close this out with one final Sheridan joint. This one is about Bass Reeves, one of the most famous US marshals of the American frontier, and the first Black deputy marshal west of the Mississippi. David Oyelowo produces the show and plays Reeves with a steady fury. It's a fascinating portrayal at the center of a more rote Western that is trying to navigate the myth of Reeves while setting him in a world that feels oddly post-racism in a way reality absolutely was not. I find myself frequently struggling to understand who the audience for this show is – but the performances at the center of it are terrific.

<https://www.theverge.com/23999770/paramount-plus-best-shows-2023>