



■ ANIME ■

Upcoming anime to look forward to in 2026

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2025 was a blockbuster year for anime, to say the least. With the likes of *Demon Slayer: Infinity Castle* and *Chainsaw Man – The Movie: Reze Arc* smashing commercial records, and dark horses like *To Be Hero X* and *Takopi's Original Sin* topping popularity charts, the lineup for this year raised the bar for 2026. That said, here are a few anime that I'll be looking forward to next year.

Witch Hat Atelier

In the magical world of *Witch Hat Atelier*, witches who wield the ability to use spells and potions are born, not taught. Coco, an ordinary girl who dreams of becoming a witch, can only stare in admiration as she sees self-cleaning hot springs, flying carriages, and paths with lit-up cobblestones all around her. Everything takes a turn, though, when she accidentally discovers a forbidden magic book and is taken under the guidance of an enigmatic witch master. With its intricate world-building and immersive adventures, *Witch Hat Atelier* is one of the most unique shows that will come out in 2026, courtesy of Studio BUG FILMS.

Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: Steel Ball Run

Any longstanding fan of the *Jojo* universe knows how eagerly everyone has been awaiting the anime adaptation of *Steel Ball Run*, the seventh part of the *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure* franchise. Set in the American Old West, the show will revolve around

the annual "Steel Ball Run," a six-thousand-kilometre-long horse race with a fifty-million-dollar prize. Johnny Joestar, Gyro Zeppeli, and Diego Brando, carrying three familiar family names, are some of the many participants in the race, and at the centre of the mayhem that unfolds across the series' runtime. With one of the most captivating storylines in the franchise, *Steel Ball Run* should definitely be on your radar in 2026.

Akane-banashi

Adapted from the manga of the same name, *Akane-banashi* follows Akane Ousaki, a girl who grows up spellbound by her father's skill in *rakugo* — a form of solo Japanese verbal comedy. When her father is expelled after a brutal promotion exam and abandons the craft, Akane is fuelled by anger, love, and pride to master *rakugo* herself and confront the system that rejected her idol. Given the source material's high ratings already, it might be safe to say that Akane's character-driven journey in the world of art and performance will deliver.

Jujutsu Kaisen Season 3

When the *Shibuya Arc* of *Jujutsu Kaisen* was airing in 2023, I remember seeing anime-only watchers in absolute horror week in and week out. Unfortunately for them, the immensely popular series is set to return in 2026 with the *Culling Game Arc*, a battle royale-themed iteration that will likely break all expectations anyone had for the series thus far. Orchestrated by Kenjaku, *The Culling*

Game will see players like Itadori, Fushiguro, and allies jump into a lethal game where they must kill others using jujutsu. There are a lot of heavy exposition dumps throughout the arc, but the action more than makes up for the wait.

Frieren: Beyond Journey's End Season 2

There weren't many awards that *Frieren: Beyond Journey's End* didn't snag last year, and rightfully so. Studio Madhouse's adventure fantasy following the titular immortal elf, Frieren, and the aftermath of her losing most of her companions to the tides of time, struck a chord with watchers everywhere. And even though the second season has been reported to be only ten episodes long in comparison to the first season's twenty-eight episodes, the source material's strength and Madhouse's production quality make me very hopeful for the show's return.

As things stand, the roster of new, non-sequel anime for 2026 seems a bit lacklustre. However, with all the sequels that are set to come out apart from the ones mentioned above, such as *Black Clover Season 2*, *Oshi no Ko Season 3*, *Jigokuraku Season 2*, etc., it would not be completely amiss to say that we might be in for another good anime season.

Ayaan immerses himself in dinosaur comics and poorly-written manga. Recommend your least favourite reads at ayaan.shams@gmail.com

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