

Spring Boot 3 vs Spring Boot 4 The Ultimate Comparison Cheat Sheet



◆ OVERVIEW

Feature	Spring Boot 3	Spring Boot 4
Release Focus	Jakarta EE migration, baseline modernization	Performance, native-first, developer experience
Java Version	Java 17+	Java 21+ (optimized for future Java)
Spring Framework	Spring Framework 6	Spring Framework 7
Goal	Modernize ecosystem	Make Spring cloud-native & native-first





1. MODULARITY & AUTO-CONFIGURATION

Spring Boot 3	Spring Boot 4
Auto-config still large but improved	Fully modular auto-config
Many starters still pull extra configs	Each starter is laser-focused
Larger memory footprint	Smaller classpath & memory



2. API VERSIONING

Spring Boot 3	Spring Boot 4
No native API versioning	Built-in API versioning
Versioning via URL hacks (/v1)	@GetMapping(version="1")
Manual maintenance	Framework-supported





3. NULL SAFETY

Spring Boot 3

Spring Boot 4

Optional null annotations

Full JSpecify support

No default package null safety

@Nullable package-level safety

Runtime bugs possible

Compile-time safety



4. HTTP CLIENTS

Spring Boot 3	Spring Boot 4
RestTemplate (deprecated)	Native Declarative HTTP Clients
Feign (external dependency)	Zero external dependencies
Boilerplate-heavy	Interface-driven & clean





5. OBSERVABILITY

Spring Boot 3	Spring Boot 4
Micrometer 1.x	Micrometer 2.0 + Actuator 4
Metrics & tracing setup required	High-definition observability
Manual correlation	Built-in tracing & health



6. NATIVE & GRAALVM SUPPORT

Spring Boot 3	Spring Boot 4
Native images supported	Native-first architecture
Extra configuration needed	Minimal config
Slower startup	Lightning-fast startup





7. VIRTUAL THREADS

Spring Boot 3	Spring Boot 4
Supported (Project Loom)	Optimized & production-ready
Manual tuning required	Better defaults
Limited ecosystem readiness	Full ecosystem support





8. CONDITIONAL BEANS

Spring Boot 3	Spring Boot 4
Verbose conditions	Simplified conditional syntax
Hard to debug	Smarter defaults
Boilerplate-heavy	Cleaner configuration

Winner: 🏆 Spring Boot 4



WHEN SHOULD YOU UPGRADE?

Stay on Spring Boot 3 if:

1. You just migrated from Boot 2
2. Running Java 17 in production
3. No need for native images yet

Move to Spring Boot 4 if:

1. Building microservices or serverless
2. Targeting GraalVM / native images
3. Want faster startup & lower memory
4. Building APIs at scale

ONE-LINE SUMMARY (PERFECT FOR THE SHEET FOOTER)

1. Spring Boot 3 modernized Spring.
2. Spring Boot 4 redefines how cloud-native Java should feel.





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THANK YOU

Thank you for using this
Spring Boot 3 vs Spring Boot 4
Cheat Sheet.

We hope it helps you
understand the key
differences, make better
upgrade decisions, and build
modern, high-performance
Java applications.

