

Own your cloud.

Replace Dropbox and Google Drive with Nextcloud.

Your files, calendar and contacts on a server you control — with desktop sync and mobile apps that feel just like the services you're leaving.

Who this is for

Anyone hitting Dropbox's 2 GB / 3-device wall or tired of Google's shared 15 GB, who has a spare PC, mini-PC or NAS to run a small always-on service. No prior Docker experience assumed.

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Why move off Dropbox & Google Drive

Dropbox's free tier caps you at 2 GB across just 3 devices; Google Drive's 15 GB is shared with Gmail and Photos and fills fast. Both are cloud-only and priced to push you upward. **Nextcloud** is an open-source private cloud: file sync, calendar, contacts, notes and photos, running on hardware you own.

What you keep

Desktop sync client (Windows/Mac/Linux) · mobile auto-upload · file sharing links · calendar and contacts · multi-user. What you drop: the storage bill and the cloud.

Self-hosting means backups are your responsibility. Keep a copy of anything irreplaceable elsewhere until you trust your setup.

1 · What you need

Nextcloud's All-in-One (AIO) bundles everything into managed Docker containers. Any always-on 64-bit Linux machine works: an old desktop, a mini-PC, or a NAS with Docker.

Use case	RAM	Storage
Personal (1–2 users)	2 GB	100 GB+
Family (3–10 users)	4 GB	500 GB – 2 TB
Small team (10+)	8 GB+	scale to your library

Storage & disk

A Raspberry Pi 4 with 4 GB RAM and a USB SSD comfortably serves 1–3 users. Put the data on a real disk, not an SD card, and size it to your existing Dropbox/Drive usage.

2 · Install Nextcloud All-in-One

Install Docker with the Compose plugin first. Then start the AIO master container — it manages every other container and its own updates and backups:

```
docker run -d \
  --name nextcloud-aio-mastercontainer \
  --restart always \
  -p 8080:8080 \
  -v nextcloud_aio_mastercontainer:/mnt/docker-aio-config \
  -v /var/run/docker.sock:/var/run/docker.sock:ro \
  nextcloud/all-in-one:latest
```

Open <https://SERVER-IP:8080>. AIO shows a one-time passphrase — save it — then walk you through choosing your data location and which optional apps to enable.

Checkpoint

You should reach the AIO admin panel and be able to start the containers. Point the data location at your big disk before the first start, not the system drive.

3 · First login & the sync client

- Finish the AIO setup and open your Nextcloud at its address; log in as admin.
- Install the Nextcloud desktop client (Windows/Mac/Linux) and the mobile app. The desktop client does two-way sync just like Dropbox; the mobile app can auto-upload your photos.
- Create user accounts for family members if needed — each gets their own space.

4 · Move your files in

Get your data out of the old services, then bring it into Nextcloud through the desktop client (the least fiddly route — drop files into the synced folder and they upload).

- 1 Dropbox: account → export/download your files. Google Drive: use `takeout.google.com` (Drive only).
- 2 Copy the downloaded files into your local Nextcloud sync folder; the client uploads them.
- 3 Contacts and calendar: export from Google as vCard (.vcf) and iCal (.ics), then import into Nextcloud's Contacts and Calendar apps.

Tip

Move in batches, not all at once, so you can watch the first folder sync cleanly before committing the whole library.

5 · Verify, then decommission

- Confirm file counts roughly match and the desktop client shows everything synced.
- Check calendar and contacts imported correctly.
- Set up a backup of the AIO data — self-hosting means the backup is now your job. AIO has a built-in backup feature; use it.
- Only once everything is solid, downgrade or cancel the paid cloud plan.

Common snags

Symptom	Fix
Can't reach :8080	Check the container is running and the port isn't firewalled.
Sync is slow	Large first sync is normal; let it finish before adding more.
Untrusted domain error	Add your address to <code>trusted_domains</code> in AIO settings.

Found this useful?

This guide is free — pay what you want if it saved you time. More offline & one-time-purchase alternatives to subscription apps, plus other migration guides, at **payoncehq.com**.

Sources: official Nextcloud documentation and the Nextcloud All-in-One project. Commands current as of 2026; check the project pages for the latest. Independent guide, not affiliated with Nextcloud, Dropbox or Google.