

Import Google Photos to Immich

So you decided to **abandon Google Photos**. Whether it be due to **privacy concerns**, **lack of control**, Google's ever changing [Privacy Policy](#) or you just don't want to [end up like this guy](#), doesn't matter. No matter what pushed you to this decision, it is certainly the **right thing to do**. You stumbled upon one of the self hosted alternatives, **Immich**. Good choice. Now it's time to make the switch.

After initial setup, Immich allows you to upload your photos and videos in **3 main ways**:

- Upload through GUI
- [Backup using a mobile application](#)
- Immich CLI

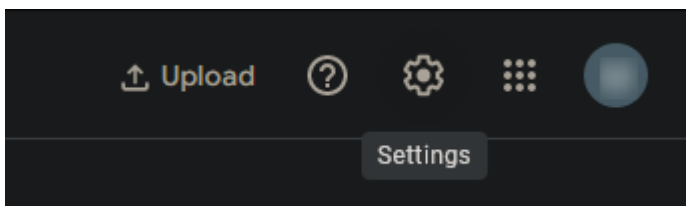
The first two options are useful for new photos, which you have saved on your computer or phone. But how do you transfer your **entire Google Photos library**? This is where **Immich CLI** comes into play. It is a CLI utility which allows you to **bulk import** photos and videos to your Immich account, with all the **necessary metadata**.

Export photos from Google Account

First of all, you need to **get all your photos** from the Google Account. The web **photos.google.com** allows you to download images **individually** or in **bulk**, but that's not useful for exports of your entire library, which might be **thousands** of photos.

Fortunately Google allows you to do a **Takeout**.

- **Log in** to your Google Account and go to **photos.google.com**
- Click on the **Settings** button in the **top right** corner



- Scroll down to the **bottom of the page** and click on **Export your data** and then **Backup**

Export your data

Make a copy of your photos & videos, which you can use with a service outside of Google, or keep as an additional backup



Backup an archive of your data

Prepare a backup of your photos & videos for download, or to send to another service outside of Google. [Learn more](#)

[Backup](#)

- This will take you to a new page called **Google Takeout**

← Google Takeout

Your account, your data.

Export a copy of content in your Google Account to back it up or use it with a service outside of Google.

YOUR EXPORTS

CREATE A NEW EXPORT

1 Select data to include

1 of 1 selected

Products

[Deselect all](#)



Google Photos

Your photos and videos from Google Photos. [More info](#)



Multiple formats

When you continue, you'll need to allow Google Takeout some access to Google Photos.

- It will automatically select just **Google Photos**, so you won't be exporting your entire **Google Profile** (although it may be a good idea in the future)

CREATE A NEW EXPORT

1

Select data to include

1 of 1 selected

Products

Deselect all



Google Photos

Your photos and videos from Google Photos. [More info](#)



Multiple formats



All photo albums included

When you continue, you'll need to allow Google Takeout some access to Google Photos.
After you allow this access, you'll be returned to this page.

[Show more products](#)

[Continue](#)

- Click on **Continue** and choose how you would like your file to be delivered. It's mostly enough to select **Send download link via email**, **Export once**, **.zip file type** and **File size** depending on the **stability** of your connection and **size** of your library.

2

Choose file type, frequency & destination

Destination

Transfer to:

Send download link via email

When your files are ready, you'll get an email with a download link. You'll have one week to download your files. [Learn more](#) about how to locate, access, and share your data.

Frequency

☒ Export once

1 export

☐ Export every 2 months for 1 year

6 exports

File type & size

File type:

.zip

Zip files can be opened on almost any computer.

File size:

50 GB

Exports larger than this size will be split into multiple files.
Zip files larger than 2GB will be compressed in zip64. Older operating systems may not be able to open this file format. There are external applications that can be used to uncompress zip64 files.

Create export

- This process will take from **hours** to **days** depending on the **size of your library**.
- Once it's done, just **download** the archive file to your computer.

Install and setup Immich CLI

Immich officially provides the **Immich CLI** as a [Node.js CLI application](#) you can install using **npm**.

For **Google Photos**, we are going to be using community maintained [immich-go](#) package. This is because the package was build specifically for **imports** from **Google Photos** and makes it ten times **easier** than other options. The original **Immich CLI** works great if you have some **other kind of library** with proper **.XMP** metadata files as well.

Why not just **unzip** the package from Google and **upload** all photos using the **web** GUI?

Turns out the Google export is dumb (but it also may be an issue on Immich side), but when you do this, the photos will show up in your timeline **as if there were taken today**, meaning the day they were **uploaded to Immich**. This is not great because the photos may be from **2014** but will show up as from **2023**. Immich-go solves this and uses **proper metadata** from **.json files** included in the Google export (**each** exported file has its **.json metadata file**, similar to .xmp)

Install immich-go

Note that we will be using a **Linux** system for this (you can use the **same system** where you host **Immich**)

- Head over to the [project's Github page](#) to download the **latest release** using a tool like **wget**

```
wget https://github.com/simulot/immich-go/releases/download/0.9.2/immich-go_Linux_x86_64.tar.gz
```

- Decompress the download archive so you can run the binary inside

```
tar -xvf immich-go_Linux_x86_64.tar.gz
```

- Now you should be able to run the utility

```
user@server:$ ./immich-go
```

```
immich-go 0.9.2, commit 1de980ae7383586f396e4af7ec91a06ade172865, built at 2023-12-15T07:58:26Z
```

```
missing -server, Immich server address (http://<your-ip>:2283 or https://<your-domain>)
```

```
missing -key
```

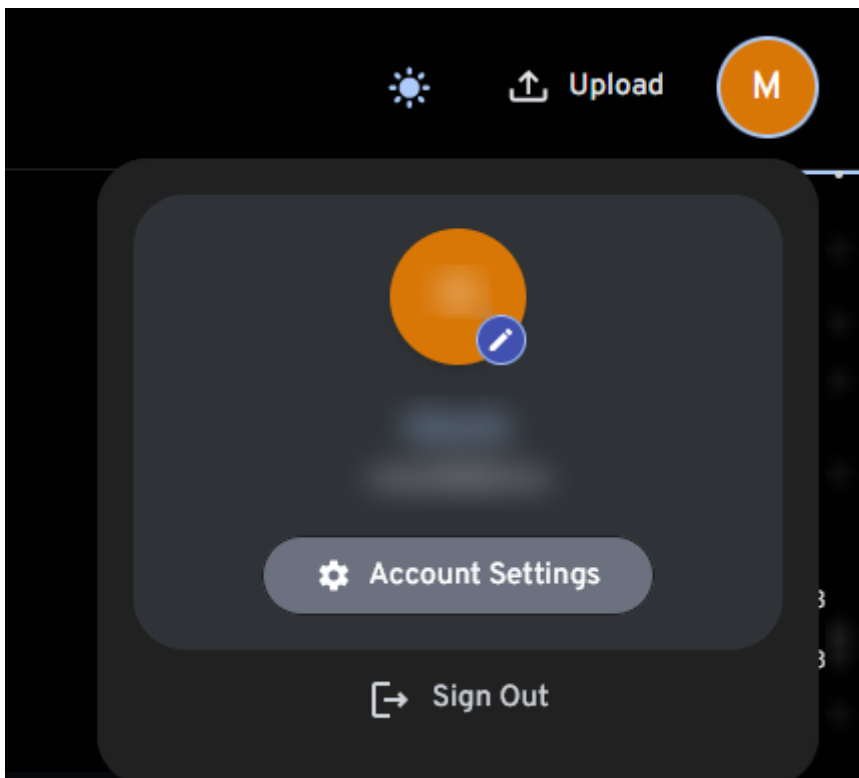
```
missing command upload|duplicate|stack
```

- If something is not working, check that the file has execute privileges

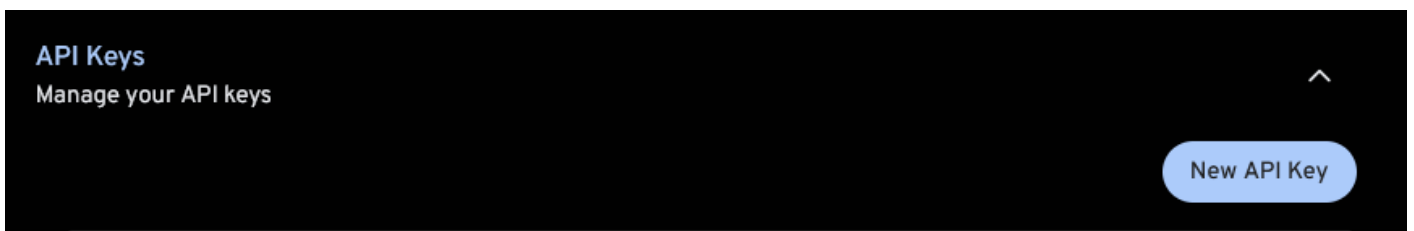
Get Immich API key

For the program to work, we need to provide it with the **URL** of your Immich instance and a user **API key**. We can generate the API key in GUI [as per the documentantion](#).

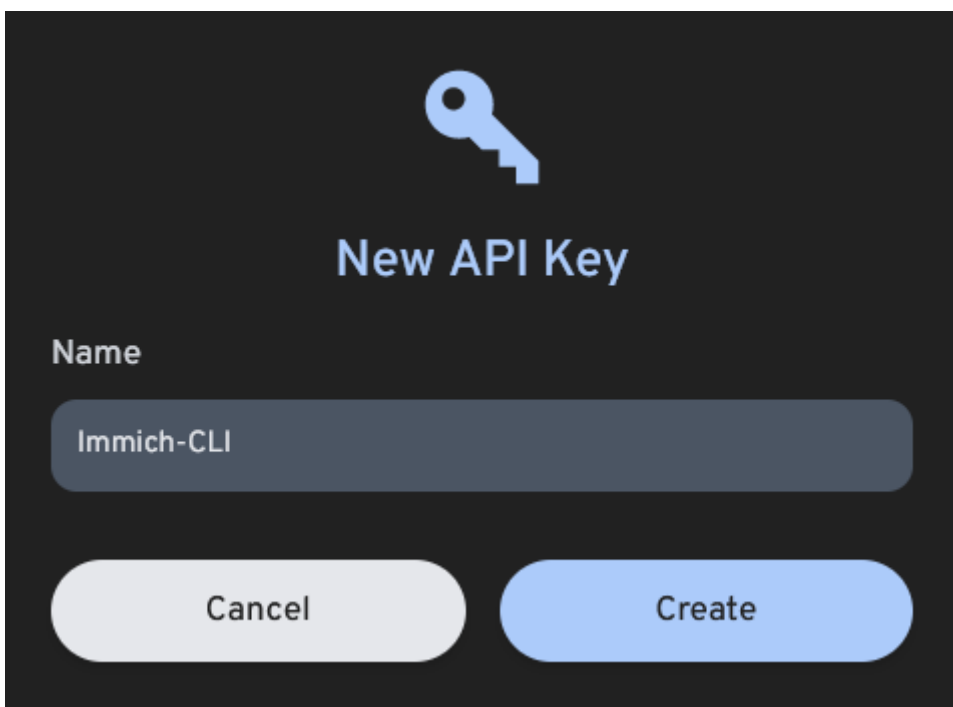
- **Log in** to your **Immich** instance with the account you want to upload the photos to (not admin)
- Click on your **profile icon** and go to **Account Settings**



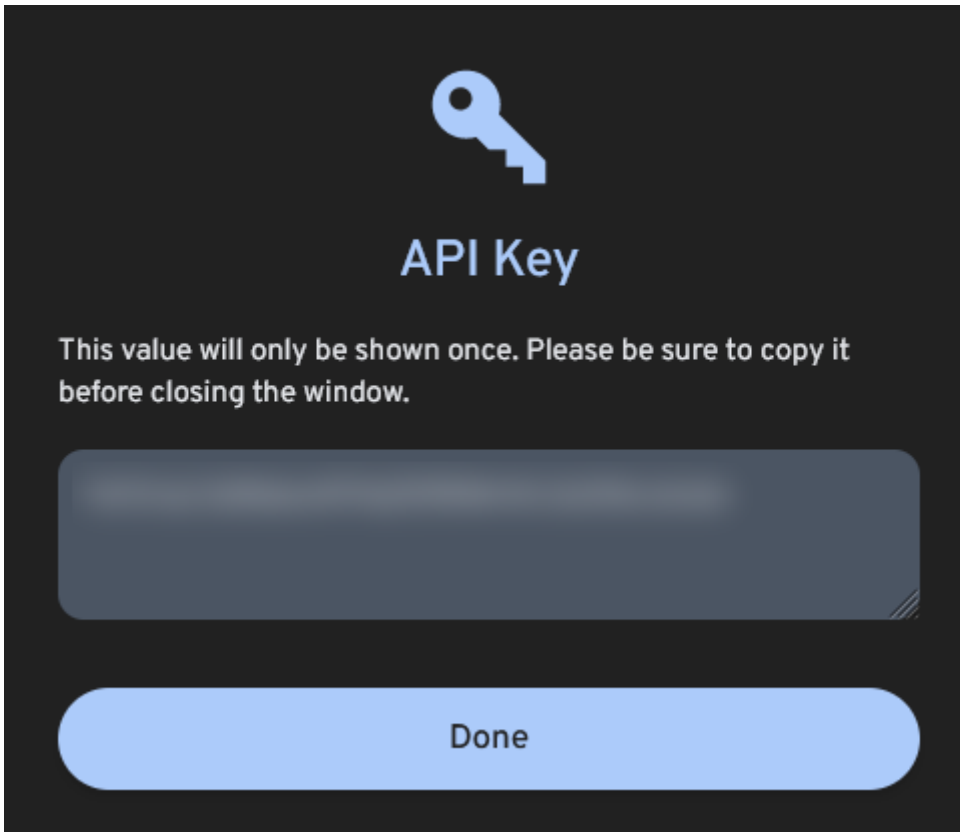
- Here you pick **API Keys** and **New API Key**



- Name it however you want and click **Create**



- This will show you the newly created **API key**. Make sure to **write it down** somewhere because you **won't be able** to view it again



Upload photos with immich-go

Transfer the .zip file of your library to the **same system** where you have installed **immich-go**. You can use tools like **scp** to transfer files between **Windows** and **Linux** machines.

Now that you have everything ready, it's time to upload your library.

```
./immich-go -server=https://yourdomain.example -key=XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX upload -dry-run -create-albums -google-photos googlearchive.zip
```

This is only a **dry-run**, so it will show you what it would upload but doesn't do anything yet.

Upload report:

```
28599 scanned files
12588 handled files
12156 metadata files
8801 uploaded files on the server
  1 upgraded files on the server
3758 duplicated files in the input
102 files already on the server
0 discarded files because in folder failed videos
```

0 discarded files because of options
0 discarded files because server has a better image
0 files type not supported
0 errors
0 files without metadata file

Done.

- If you are satisfied with the numbers it showed you, just remove the **-dry-run** option from the command

```
./immich-go -server=https://yourdomain.example -key=XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX upload -create-albums -google-photos googlearchive.zip
```

You don't even have to unzip the file, just run the command pointing to the .zip

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