

Tutorials: DigiKam 9.1.0 is an incredibly powerful, completely free, open-source photo management program.



To put it simply, digiKam is an incredibly powerful, **completely free, open-source photo management program**. Think of it as a professional digital photo album combined with a darkroom tool. It is built to help photographers organize and edit thousands of photos sitting on their computers without needing to pay for a monthly subscription like Adobe Lightroom.

What Can digiKam Do?

digiKam is a "two-in-one" program: it handles **advanced organization** and **photo editing**. Here are the most useful things it can do:

1. Smart Photo Organization

- **Finds Faces Automatically:** It features built-in facial recognition AI. Once you tag a person in a few photos, digiKam can scan your entire computer to find and group other photos of that same person.
- **Interactive Maps:** If your phone or camera saves location data (GPS), digiKam places your photos on a 3D world map so you can browse your library based on where you traveled.
- **Deep Search:** You can search through your photos by camera model, specific lens, dates, tags, or even by drawing a rough sketch of the colors you remember in the photo.

2. RAW Photo Editing

- If you own a DSLR or mirrorless camera and shoot in **RAW** (the uncompressed, high-quality image format), digiKam includes a professional "RAW engine" to develop those files.
- It lets you fix lighting, adjust colors, sharpen blurry details, crop, and automatically fix distortion caused by specific camera lenses.

3. Mass Automation (The Batch Manager)

- If you just came home from vacation with 500 photos, digiKam has a tool that can rename all of them at once (e.g., changing IMG_0432.jpg to Italy_Trip_01.jpg), resize them for email, or add a watermark to all of them simultaneously.

4. Total Privacy & Cross-Platform

- Unlike Google Photos or iCloud, digiKam does not upload your pictures to a cloud server. Everything stays safely on your personal hard drive.
- It works perfectly whether you use a **Windows PC, a Mac, or a Linux computer**.

In short: If your computer's default photo app is feeling too basic, or if your hard drive is a messy pile of thousands of unorganized photos, digiKam is the ultimate free tool to take back control of your media library.

Getting started with digiKam is straightforward, but because it is so feature-rich, it helps to take it one step at a time.

Here is a step-by-step guide to setting up and using digiKam for the first time:

Step 1: The Initial Setup (First Launch)

When you open digiKam for the first time, a setup wizard will guide you through a few quick questions:

1. **Choose your library folder:** Pick the main folder on your computer where you currently store your photos (e.g., your default "Pictures" folder). digiKam won't move or change your files; it just reads them from here.
2. **Database location:** digiKam creates a small database file to remember all your tags, edits, and face data. It's usually best to just save this in the same main photo folder.
3. **File Open behavior:** Choose whether you want to open photos with a simple click or a double-click.

Step 2: Let digiKam Scan Your Library

Once the setup is done, digiKam will scan your selected folder.

- Depending on how many thousands of photos you have, this might take a few minutes.
- Once finished, your entire folder structure will appear in the **left sidebar** under **Albums**.

Step 3: Organize with Smart Tools

This is where the magic happens. Look at the left edge of your screen for vertical tabs:

- **People (Facial Recognition):** Click this tab, then click **Scan collection for faces** at the bottom. Once digiKam scans your images, it will show you groups of similar faces. Type a name under a face to tag them. The next time you import photos of that person,

digiKam will automatically guess who they are!

- **Map (Geolocating):** Click this tab to see a world map. If your photos have GPS data (like photos taken on a smartphone), they will automatically appear as pins on the map. If they don't, you can select photos from your album and drag-and-drop them right onto the map to tag the location manually.
- **Tags:** You can create custom tags (like "Vacation," "Work," or "Holidays") and drag them onto your photos to make searching easier later.

Step 4: Edit Your Photos

If you find a photo that needs a quick fix:

1. Double-click the photo to view it closer.
2. Click the **Image Editor** button in the top toolbar (or press **F4**).
3. A new window will open with editing tools. You can adjust exposure, fix color balance, crop, or reduce noise.
4. **Non-destructive editing:** When you save your changes, digiKam intelligently saves your edits as a separate version or sidecar file, ensuring your original, raw photo is never permanently altered or ruined.

Step 5: Automate with the Batch Queue Manager

If you have a large batch of photos you need to modify all at once:

1. Select multiple photos in your album.
2. Right-click and choose **Add to Batch Queue Manager** (or press **Ctrl+B**).
3. On the right side, choose what you want to do (e.g., "Scale" to resize them, "Rename" to change their file names, or "Convert" to change PNGs to JPEGs).
4. Click **Run** at the top, and watch digiKam process hundreds of photos in seconds.

A Quick Tip for Beginners

Pro Tip: Don't feel pressured to use every feature on day one. Start by just using digiKam as a photo viewer to browse your existing folders. Once you are comfortable with the interface, try tagging a few faces or sorting one specific vacation album on the map view!