

GUIDE

Running open image models on your own computer

What open image models are, what hardware they need, and how their licences differ from hosted tools.

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Open image models are models whose weights are published so you can run them yourself, on your own computer or a rented GPU. You trade a subscription for setup work, privacy and control. The licences differ per model, and the licence decides whether your output is commercial. Facts below come from the official model cards, read 2026-11-13.

The main open models

- **Stable Diffusion XL (SDXL).** Stability AI's model card lists the licence as `openrail++`. It is a widely supported base model with many community tools around it.
- **FLUX.1-dev.** Black Forest Labs' model card lists a 12B-parameter model under `flux-1-dev-non-commercial-license`. The weights are gated: you request access on Hugging Face. Output is for non-commercial use unless you buy a commercial licence.
- **FLUX.1-schnell.** The same family, listed under `apache-2.0`. Apache-2.0 permits commercial use under its conditions. It is the fast, distilled variant.
- **Stable Diffusion 3.5 family.** Stability AI's API pricing page names Stable Diffusion 3.5 Large, Turbo, Medium and Flash as API services; the weights are also published by Stability AI under its own licence terms.

Licence is the first thing to check

"Open weights" does not mean "free for any use". Three patterns appear on the model cards:

1. **Permissive licences** such as Apache-2.0 (FLUX.1-schnell). Commercial use is allowed under the licence conditions.
2. **Use-restriction licences** such as OpenRAIL++ (SDXL) and the Stability Community License. Stability's license page allows commercial use for individuals and organizations under $1M in annual revenue and adds use restrictions.
3. **Non-commercial licences** such as FLUX.1-dev. Commercial use needs a separate paid licence from the model maker.

Read the licence file in the model repository before you build anything on it. Our guide on commercial use and copyright covers the wider picture.

Hardware reality

Large models need a modern GPU with substantial memory; smaller distilled models run on less. The FLUX.1-dev card lists 12B parameters in BF16, which means the weights alone are tens of gigabytes and the working memory is larger. Community frontends such as ComfyUI and A1111-style interfaces handle most of the setup; Freepik's pricing page even lists "Magnific for ComfyUI" as an integration (read 2026-11-13). If you do not have the hardware, GPU rental or hosted inference of open models is the middle path.

When self-hosting wins

- **Privacy.** Images and prompts never leave your machines.
- **Volume cost.** At high volume, your own hardware can beat per-image API prices.
- **Control.** You pick the exact model version and keep it stable while vendors update theirs.

- **Offline work.** No account, no queue, no outage.

When it loses

- **Convenience.** Hosted tools add editing interfaces, upscalers and background removal in one place.
- **Latest models.** Vendors ship new models to their APIs first; open releases lag.
- **Support.** You are the support team.

Sources

All sources below were fetched and checked on 2026-11-13.

- Stable Diffusion XL base 1.0 model card, accessed 2026-11-13.
- FLUX.1-dev model card, accessed 2026-11-13.
- FLUX.1-schnell model card, accessed 2026-11-13.
- Stability AI Community License, accessed 2026-11-13.
- Stability AI API pricing, accessed 2026-11-13.
- Freepik pricing, accessed 2026-11-13.

Frequently asked questions

Do I need a gaming GPU?

Smaller models run on modest hardware; large models need a modern GPU with plenty of memory. Check the model card and community reports for your exact card before you download tens of gigabytes.

Sources

huggingface.co — https://huggingface.co/stabilityai/stable-diffusion-xl-base-1.0
huggingface.co — https://huggingface.co/black-forest-labs/FLUX.1-dev
huggingface.co — https://huggingface.co/black-forest-labs/FLUX.1-schnell
stability.ai — https://stability.ai/license