Devbox Nix dev environments

START HERE

`devbox init`
Create devbox.json

`devbox search <pkg>`
Find packages

`devbox add <pkg>`
Add a package

`devbox update`
Refresh versions

`devbox shell`
Enter the environment

`devbox services up`
Start services

`devbox run <script>`
Run a script

`devbox rm <pkg>`
Remove a package

devbox.json packages, env, scripts → `devbox add` → **devbox.lock** pinned versions → `devbox shell` → **Nix store** installed packages → `PATH` → **Shell** isolated tools

CONCEPTS

devbox.json lists the packages a project needs; devbox.lock pins exact versions. Commit both so everyone gets the same tools.

Devbox wraps Nix: you get reproducible packages without writing Nix code. Nix itself is installed for you on first use.

Flags of devbox run must come before the script or command name.

PROJECT SETUP

`devbox init`
Create devbox.json in this directory

`devbox add <pkg>`
Add a package to the project

`devbox add <pkg>@<version>`
Add a specific version

`devbox rm <pkg>`
Remove a package

`devbox install`
Install all packages without a shell

`devbox search <pkg>`
List matching packages and versions

`devbox info <pkg>`
Show package and plugin info

`devbox update`
Update all packages within their version tags

`devbox update <pkg>`
Update only the named packages
python@3.11 moves to the newest 3.11.x patch release.

`devbox add <pkg> -p <platform>`
Install only on given platforms

`devbox add <pkg> --allow-insecure`
Allow a package flagged insecure

SHELL AND RUN

`devbox shell`
Start a shell with your packages

`devbox shell -- <cmd>`
Run one command in the environment

SHELL AND RUN (cont.)

`devbox shell --pure`
Isolated shell, almost no inherited env
HOME, USER and DISPLAY are kept.

`devbox shell -c <dir>`
Use the devbox.json in another directory

`devbox shell -e <KEY>=<val>`
Set a variable inside the environment

`devbox shell --env-file <file>`
Load variables from a file

`devbox shell --print-env`
Print a script that sets up the environment

`devbox run <script>`
Run a script from devbox.json

`devbox run <cmd>`
Run any command inside the environment

`devbox run -e <KEY>=<val> <script>`
Run with extra variables

`exit`
Leave the devbox shell

`devbox version`
Print the devbox version

DEVBOX.JSON

Packages (list form)

```
{
  "packages": ["go@latest",
"nodejs@20"]
}
```

Packages (map form)

```
"packages": {
  "busybox": {
    "version": "latest",
    "platforms": ["x86_64-
linux"]
  }
}
```

Environment variables

```
"env": {
  "APP_ENV": "dev",
  "BIN": "$PWD/bin"
}
```

`"env_from": "<path>.env"`
Load variables from a .env file
Values set in devbox.json win over the .env file.

Init hook

```
"shell": {
  "init_hook": ["echo Welcome",
"export FOO=bar"]
}
```

DEVBOX.JSON (cont.)

Scripts

```
"shell": {
  "scripts": {
    "test": "go test ./...",
    "ci": ["go vet ./...", "go
test ./..."]
  }
}
```

`"include": ["plugin:<name>"]`
Merge plugins or a local plugin.json
Later plugins override earlier ones; your config overrides all plugins.

`"github:<owner>/<repo>"`
Use a Nix flake as a package source

Valid platforms: x86_64-linux, aarch64-linux, x86_64-darwin, aarch64-darwin. Set platforms or excluded_platforms on a package, not both.

init_hook runs every time a shell starts, so keep it fast and idempotent.

SERVICES

`devbox services ls`
List available services

`devbox services up`
Start all services with process-compose

`devbox services up <svc>`
Start only the named services

`devbox services up -b`
Run services in the background

`devbox services start <svc>`
Start a service (all if none named)

`devbox services stop <svc>`
Stop a service (all if none named)

`devbox services restart <svc>`
Restart a service

`devbox services up --process-compose-file <path>`
Use your own process-compose file

Packages with a plugin (postgresql, redis, nginx, ...) expose ready-made services; others need a process-compose.yaml next to devbox.json.

GENERATE AND GLOBAL

`devbox generate direnv`
Write an .envrc that loads the environment

`devbox generate dockerfile`
Dockerfile that replicates devbox shell

`devbox generate devcontainer`
Create .devcontainer/ files for VS Code

`devbox generate devcontainer --root-user`
Use root and single-user Nix in the image

`devbox global add <pkg>`
Install a package for all projects

`devbox global list`
List global packages

`devbox global rm <pkg>`
Remove a global package

`devbox global shellenv`
Print shell code adding global packages to PATH

Add eval "$(devbox global shellenv)" to your shell rc file to use global packages everywhere.

RECIPES

Start a project

```
devbox init
devbox add python@3.12
postgresql@16
devbox shell
python --version
```

Auto-load with direnv

```
devbox generate direnv
direnv allow
# entering the directory now
loads the environment
```

Scripts and CI

```
# devbox.json:
shell.scripts.test
devbox run test
devbox run -e CI=1 test
```

Services in the background

```
devbox services up -b
devbox services ls
devbox services stop
```

Containerize

```
devbox generate dockerfile
docker build -t myapp .
```