Devbox Nix dev environments

CONCEPTS

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

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

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

SHELL AND RUN

`devbox shell`
Start a shell with your packages

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

`devbox shell --pure`
Isolated shell, almost no inherited env

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

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

`exit`
Leave the devbox shell

DEVBOX.JSON

Packages (list form)

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

Environment variables

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

`"env_from": "<path>.env"`
Load variables from a .env file

Init hook

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

Scripts

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

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

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

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 .
```