


Your Photos Are Probably Giving Away Your Location. Here's How to Stop That

 [wired.com/story/how-to-stop-your-photos-giving-away-your-location](https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-stop-your-photos-giving-away-your-location)

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Take a photo on any [digital camera](#) or [smartphone](#) and it's not just the pixels that are saved. The image also gets a bunch of metadata appended to it, also known as EXIF (Exchangeable Image File Format) data, including details of when it was taken, the device that was used to capture it, and the camera settings that were used.

If your phone or camera has a GPS chip and is [tracking your location](#), then this gets invisibly stamped on to the photo as well. That's good if you want to look back at all the pictures you've ever taken in New York City or at Lizard Point, but not so good if you're sharing pictures of your pets and don't want to give away your home address at the same time.

Any time a photo goes beyond the audience of just you, it's important to think about the metadata attached to it—and if needed, you should delete the location stamp.

How to View Photo Metadata

A location-stamped photo in Google Photos on Android.

Photo metadata can be useful in a whole host of ways, and that includes the location tags. For example, both [Google Photos](#) and Apple Photos can sort your photo library based on where pictures were taken. Just try running a search in either of these apps for a place you've visited recently to see the results.

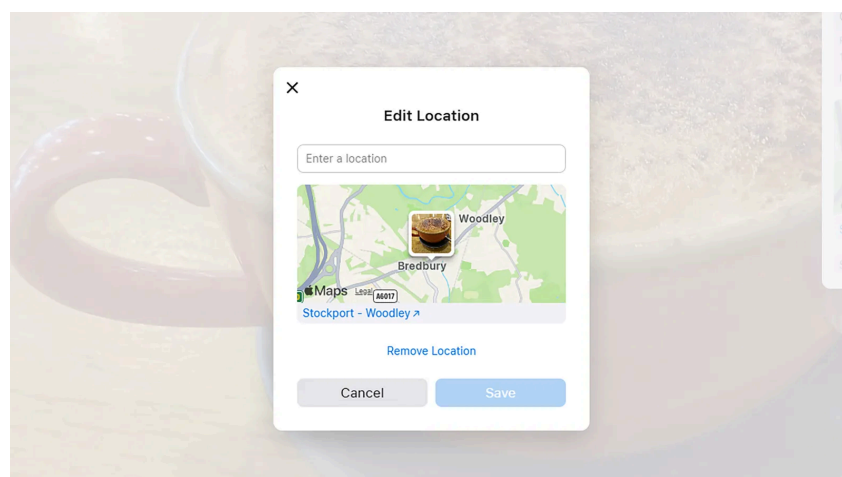
There are several ways to see the metadata stored with a photo. In Google Photos for Android, tap on a picture to open it, then tap the three dots (top right) and choose **About**. If location information is attached, you'll see the photo placed on a map. With Google Photos [on the web](#), once you've opened an image you can see the same metadata by clicking the info button (the small "i" in a circle) in the top right corner.

Over on iOS you can use Apple Photos to find photo metadata by opening up an image, then tapping on the info button (the small encircled "i") down at the bottom. Again, your photo will be shown on a miniature map, if there's location information attached. If you're using Apple Photos [on the web](#), double-click on an image to open it, and the info button is up in the top right corner.

This data can be found in Windows and macOS too, though you just get the GPS coordinates rather than a nicely formatted map. On Windows, right-click on an image in File Explorer, choose **Properties**, and then open the **Details** tab; on macOS, right-click on an image in Finder, pick **Get Info**, and if there are GPS coordinates attached then you'll see them in the pop-up dialog.

Most photo editing software is able to bring up location information on images as well. Hunt around in the settings and you should be able to find the option, though again you'll most likely just get latitude and longitude coordinates rather than a map. In the current version of Adobe Photoshop, for example, you can bring up a photo's metadata by choosing **File** then **File Info** after opening the image.

How to Clear Photo Metadata



Editing location data on Apple Photos on the web.

It's worth bearing in mind that plenty of sites and apps—including eBay and Facebook—automatically strip out the location data from uploaded pictures. If you're worried about people knowing where you live, work, or spend time on

vacation, check the settings for the sites and apps you're sharing too, as the GPS details might get stripped without you having to do anything else.

Some photo editors will let you edit and remove locations: Google Photos doesn't, for example, but Apple Photos does. Head to the info page for an image, and you'll see an option for wiping data from the file—the option is labeled **Adjust** in Apple Photos for iOS, and **Edit** on Apple Photos on the web.

There are various ways to do this in other software programs. You could just copy an image to your computer's clipboard, then paste it back as a fresh image and save it under a new name. Much of the metadata, including location, will be removed in the process—because the clipboard is just handling the raw pixels that form the image.

You also have various dedicated tools for the job: [ExifViewer.Pro](#) runs in a browser tab, doesn't require any registration, is simple to use, and is private (it'll even run without an internet connection, once loaded). There's also the lightweight [ExifTool](#) application you can run locally on Windows or macOS.

One other option on mobile is to deny your camera app location access: It's **Apps > Camera > Permissions** from Android Settings and **Privacy & Security > Location Services > Camera** from iOS Settings. Disabling location access will mean no location information is saved with your snaps, but it also means you won't be able to search by location when using services such as Google Photos and Apple Photos.