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What cloud hosting really means, and four questions to ask before buying it

Comparing Hosting Types

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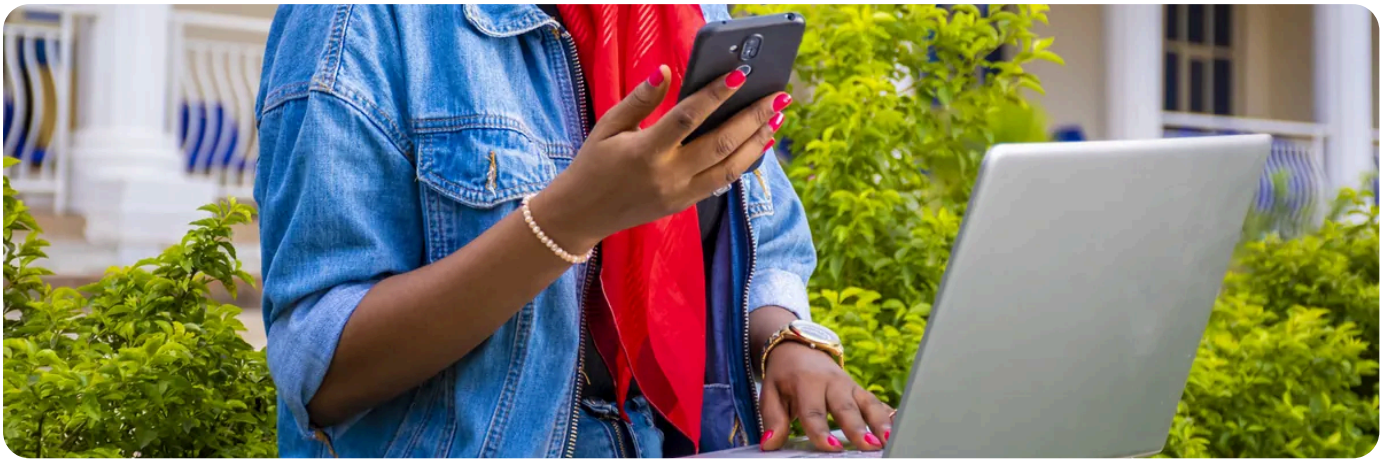
What cloud hosting really means, and four questions to ask before buying it

Comparing Hosting Types Created on **October 10, 2026** 3 min read



"Cloud" is an advertising word, not a specification. In some places it means an ordinary virtual server, in others several machines linked in a network, in others just shared hosting under another name. **Before you buy, ask what you receive exactly.** These four questions work for any provider, ourselves included.

The four questions

Question	Why it matters
1. Do I get a machine of my own or a shared slice?	A shared slice with per-account limits is shared hosting. A virtual machine with reserved resources and root access is a VPS or a cloud machine.
2. Is there a private network between my machines?	It is what sets cloud apart from a VPS. With several servers talking to each other, a private network avoids exposing ports to the internet. See **VPS vs Cloud: the difference is the network**.
3. Who administers it, and what comes as standard?	Operating system, panel, backups, firewall, monitoring. On cloud machines and unmanaged VPS it is almost always the customer. See **managed or unmanaged VPS**.
4. How do I grow, and what does that involve?	Moving up a plan may mean a restart, or a migration. Ask before you need it.

Using the questions, step by step

1. **Write down what your project requires**: how many machines, what software, who will administer it.

2. **Read the product page** looking for the answers to the four questions. Our Cloud servers are on the **Cloud server** page and the VPS on the **VPS server** page, with each plan's current specifications.

3 **Compare against your list**, not against the product name. If all you need is a website, shared hosting does the same with less work. See **shared hosting vs Cloud: what actually changes**.

4 **Ask support before buying** if an answer is unclear. It costs less than moving twice.

Three words to read with suspicion

"Scalable": can it grow, but with a restart, with a migration, or on the spot? **"High availability"**: is there redundancy, and what happens if the physical machine fails? **"Dedicated resources"**: reserved for you, or only partly guaranteed? None of these words has a single meaning, and any provider should be able to say concretely what it means by them.

"In the cloud" does not mean "managed by them".
On a cloud server without management, updates, firewall and backups are the customer's. Do not take it for granted, with us or with anyone: read what the plan includes. See **how far our support goes**.

If you will have more than one machine
(application on one, database on another), cloud with a private network makes sense. With a single one, a VPS is enough and costs less. The whole comparison is in **shared hosting, VPS, Cloud or dedicated: the full comparison**.

NEED A HAND?

Not sure whether you need cloud, a VPS or just a shared plan? Describe the project and we will tell you which is enough.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **VPS vs Cloud: the difference is the network, not the marketing** →
- **Shared hosting vs Cloud: what actually changes** →
- **Shared hosting, VPS, Cloud or dedicated: the full comparison** →
- **Cloud servers** →

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