

RESIST KIT

EMAIL INDEPENDENCE

Reclaim the master key to your digital life

Your email address is the master key to your digital identity.

If you use Gmail through a browser, and Google begins requiring Digital ID to log in from 27 December 2025, that key is no longer fully yours.

This guide shows you how to:

- Safely **exit Gmail**
- **Keep every email** you've ever received
- Move to a **privacy-respecting provider**
- Cut the cord with Google **on your terms**

No panic. No tech wizardry required. Just calm, practical steps. Put aside 1-2 hours to work through all the steps.

Overview: The three stages to email independence

1. **Secure your email history locally** (so nothing can be taken from you)
2. **Move to a privacy-friendly email provider**
3. **Delete Gmail safely** — without losing your emails

STAGE 1: Secure your Gmail emails locally (before changing anything)

Before you touch Google, make your emails yours.

We used Thunderbird, a free, open-source desktop email program from Mozilla (the Firefox team).

Why Thunderbird?

- Emails are stored on your computer
- You control backups and archives
- Works with Gmail, ProtonMail, Tuta, Fastmail, and more
- No Big Tech lock-in

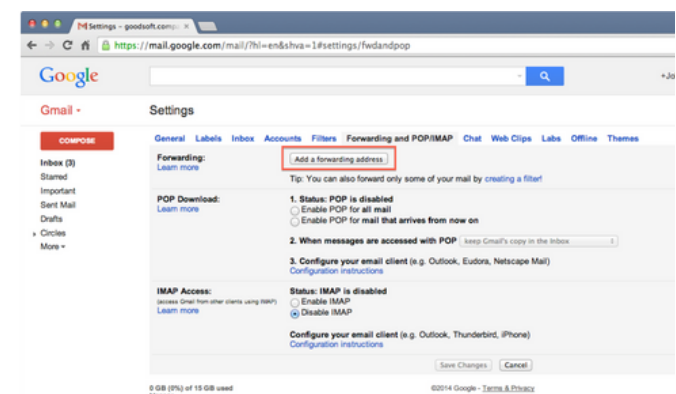
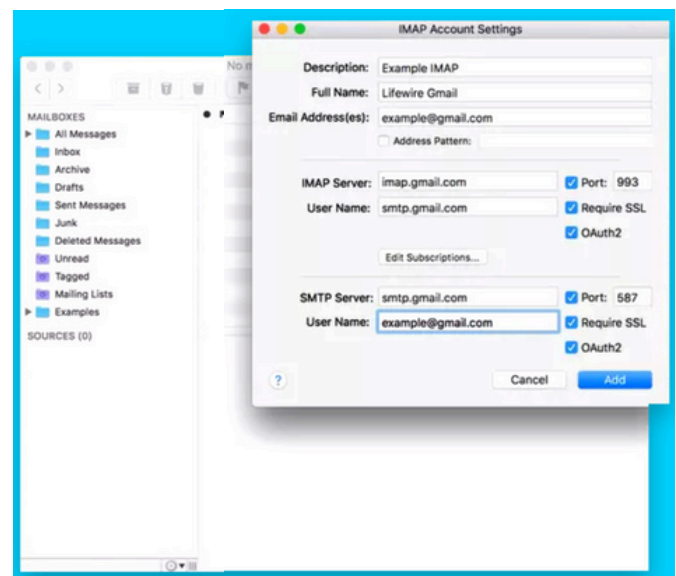
Step 1: Install Thunderbird

1. Download Thunderbird from Mozilla
2. Install it like any normal app
3. Open Thunderbird

Thunderbird works like Outlook or Apple Mail — but with one crucial difference: your emails can live locally on your device, not only on someone else's servers.

Step 2: Enable IMAP in Gmail

This allows Thunderbird to sync your Gmail folders.



1. Open Gmail
2. Click **Settings** (⚙️) → **See all settings**
3. Go to **Forwarding & POP/IMAP**
4. Under **IMAP Access**, select **Enable IMAP**
5. Click **Save Changes**



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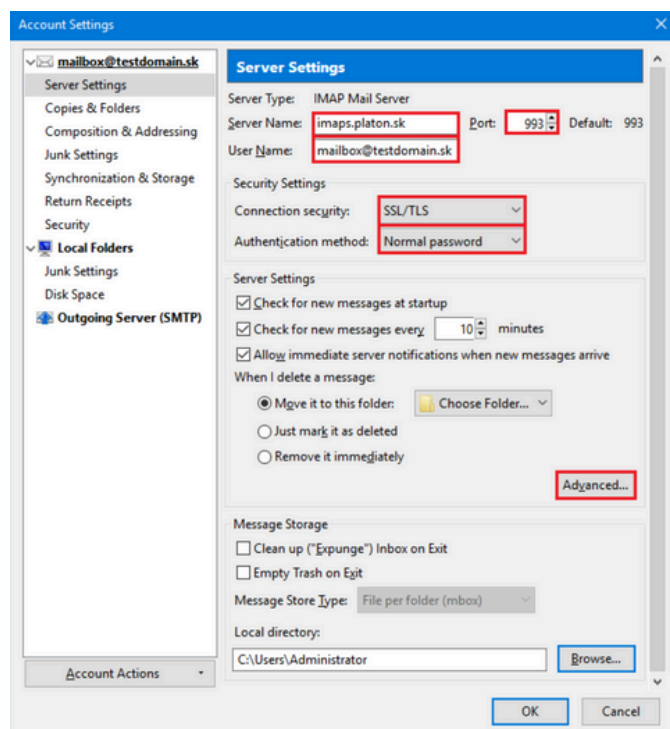
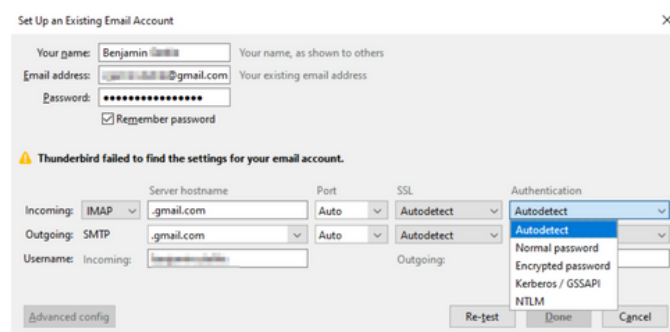
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Step 3: Add Gmail to Thunderbird



1. Open Thunderbird
2. Go to **Account Settings** → **Add Mail Account**
3. Enter your Gmail address and password
4. Approve Google's permissions
5. Choose **IMAP**

Thunderbird will now download your emails.

Important:

If you have many years of email, this can take hours or days. Let it run quietly in the background.

Step 4: Ensure emails are stored locally (critical)

Before deleting Gmail, confirm your emails are truly on your computer.

In Thunderbird:

1. Account Settings
2. Select your Gmail account
3. Go to Synchronization & Storage
4. Tick:
 - a. ☒ Keep messages for this account on this computer
 - b. (Optional) Synchronize all messages locally

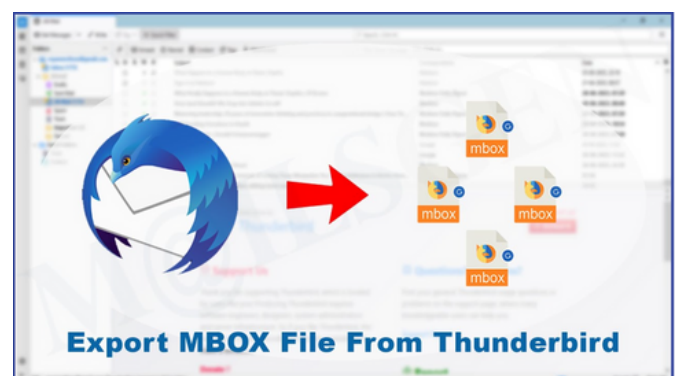
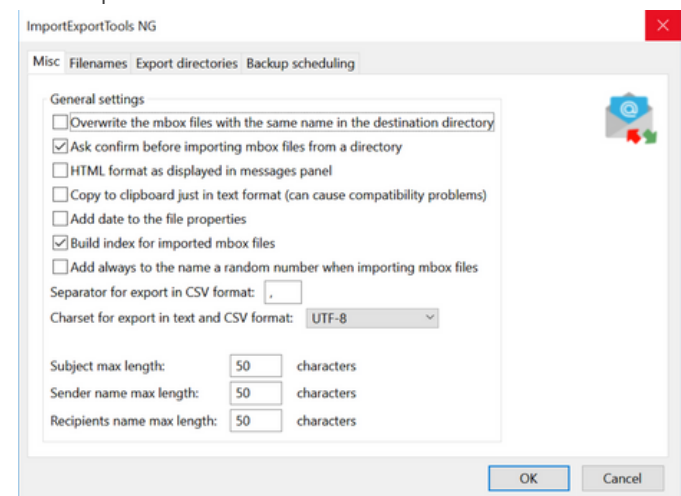
Tip:

Turn off Wi-Fi briefly. If you can still read your emails, they're safely local.

Step 5: (Optional but recommended)

Export your email archive

Install **ImportExportTools NG** to create backups.



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1. Thunderbird → Tools → Add-ons & Themes
2. Search ImportExportTools NG
3. Install and restart Thunderbird
4. Right-click any folder → Export

Export formats:

- **.mbox** (entire folders)
- **.eml** (individual emails)

Store backups on:

- External hard drive
- Encrypted USB
- Offline storage

At this point:

- ✓ Your email history is safe
- ✓ Google can't lock you out of it
- ✓ You're ready to move on

STAGE 2: to a privacy-friendly email provider

Recommended providers used widely in privacy-conscious communities:

- [ProtonMail](#) - easiest to migrate to; strong privacy
- [Tuta](#) - excellent privacy defaults
- [Fastmail](#) - Australian-based; reliable

This guide uses Proton Mail as the example.

Step 1 — Create your new email account

Create your Proton Account
One account for all Proton services.

Username
| @proton.me

Password
Password must contain at least 8 characters

Repeat password

Create account

Sign in

By creating a Proton account, you agree to our [terms and conditions](#)

ProtonMail CREATE YOUR ACCOUNT

Take back your privacy! Creating your secure email account takes less than 2 minutes.

1 Username and domain

This will be your new ProtonMail email address.

GPLTestAccount @ protonmail.com

2 Password

If you lose your password, you will not be able to read your emails.

3 Recovery email (optional)

This is used to recover your account if you get locked out or forget your password.

Recovery email

By clicking Create Account, you agree to abide by ProtonMail's Terms and Conditions.

CREATE ACCOUNT

[Already have an account?](#)

1. Go to **proton.me**
2. Choose **Proton Mail**
3. Create your account
4. Set a strong password

You now have a working, independent email address.

Step 2: Move your contacts from Gmail

Export contacts

☒ Selected contacts (243)

☐ Contacts (243)

Export as

☐ Google CSV

☐ Outlook CSV

☒ vCard (for iOS Contacts)

Cancel Export

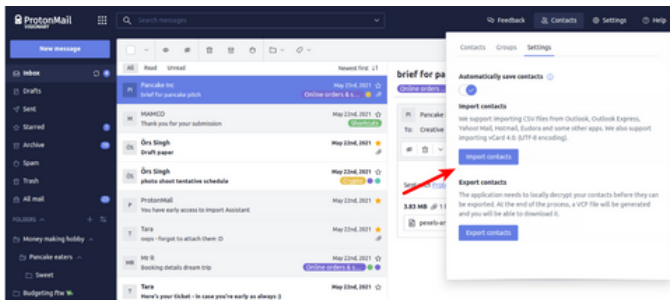


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Step 2: Move your contacts from Gmail



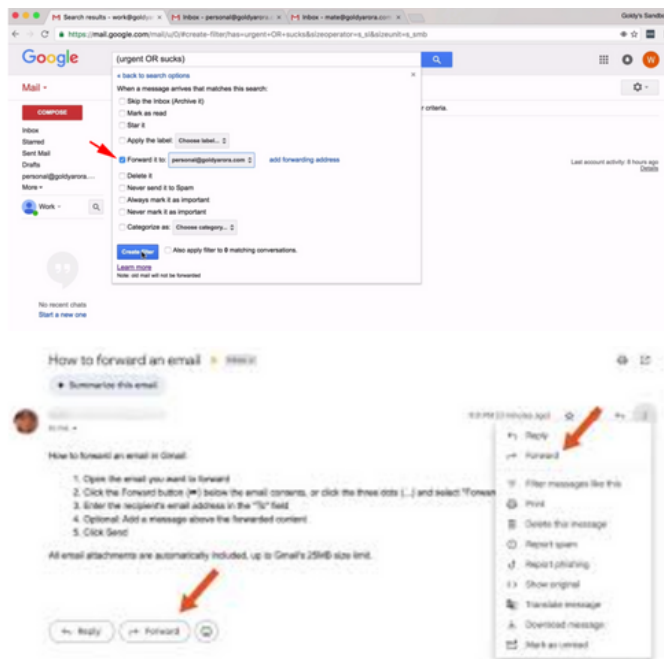
Export from Google

1. Go to **contacts.google.com**
2. Click **Export**
3. Choose **All Contacts**
4. Select **vCard**
5. Download the file

Import to Proton

1. Log in to Proton Mail
2. Click **Contacts**
3. Select **Import**
4. Upload the vCard file

Step 3: Forward Gmail to your new address (transition phase)



1. Gmail → **Settings** → **See all settings**
2. **Forwarding & POP/IMAP**
3. Click Add forwarding address
4. Enter your Proton address
5. Confirm the code
6. Choose **Keep Gmail's copy** (for now)

This ensures you don't miss anything while transitioning.

Step 4: Update your important accounts Do this gradually.

Start with:

- Banking
- Super / retirement
- MyGov / ATO
- Utilities
- Insurance
- Medical portals

Then:

- Social media
- Shopping
- Streaming
- Cloud services
- Newsletters & apps

Tip:

Search Gmail for:

“verify” • “reset” • “receipt” • “subscription”

STAGE 3: Delete Gmail safely (without losing your emails)

This is where many people hesitate - but if you've completed Stage 1, you're safe.

The key principle

Deleting Gmail deletes Google's copy - not your Thunderbird archive.

Before deleting Gmail: quick checklist

- ✓ Emails fully downloaded in Thunderbird
- ✓ Offline reading works
- ✓ Optional backup completed



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Step 1: Remove Gmail access from Thunderbird (optional)

In Thunderbird:

- Account Settings → Remove Account

This does not delete local mail if it's already downloaded.

Step 2: Delete Gmail from your Google account

Delete a Google service

A Google Account offers many services. Some of these services can be deleted from your account individually.

Download your data
You can download your data before deleting a service

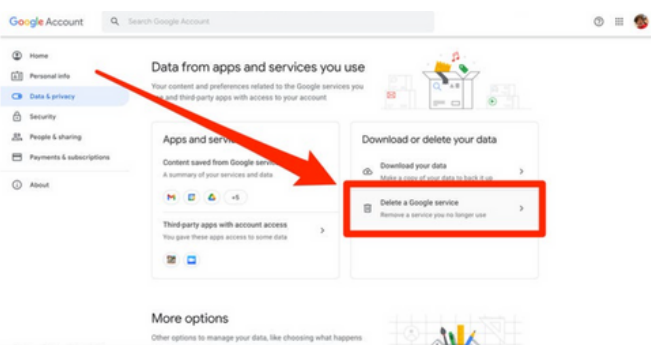
How you'll sign in to Google

To continue to use your other Google services with this account - like Google Play, Docs, or Calendar - you'll need an address to sign in with. It can't be a Gmail address.

Enter an email address

We'll send a verification message to this new email address. Gmail won't be deleted from your account until you've verified your new address by clicking the link in the verification message.

[Cancel](#) [Send verification email](#)



1. Go to **Google Account**
2. Open **Data & Privacy**
3. Scroll to **Delete a Google service**
4. Select **Gmail**
5. Follow the prompts
6. Provide a non-Gmail recovery email

This:

- ☒ Deletes Gmail and your @gmail.com address
- ☒ Keeps other Google services (if you still use them)
- ☒ Leaves Thunderbird untouched

After deletion: what to expect

- Thunderbird stops syncing (expected)
- All emails remain readable and searchable
- You now control your archive permanently

Bonus step: Use aliases going forward

To avoid rebuilding a single "master key" problem:

Use email aliases

Services like **SimpleLogin** allow you to:

- Create unique addresses for every service
- Disable any alias that gets spammed
- Prevent cross-platform tracking
- Reduce account-linking and credential attacks

This is how you stay independent **long-term**.

Final reassurance

You don't need to disappear from the internet. You just need to **own your keys**.

Email independence is not extreme. It's sensible, and increasingly necessary.



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