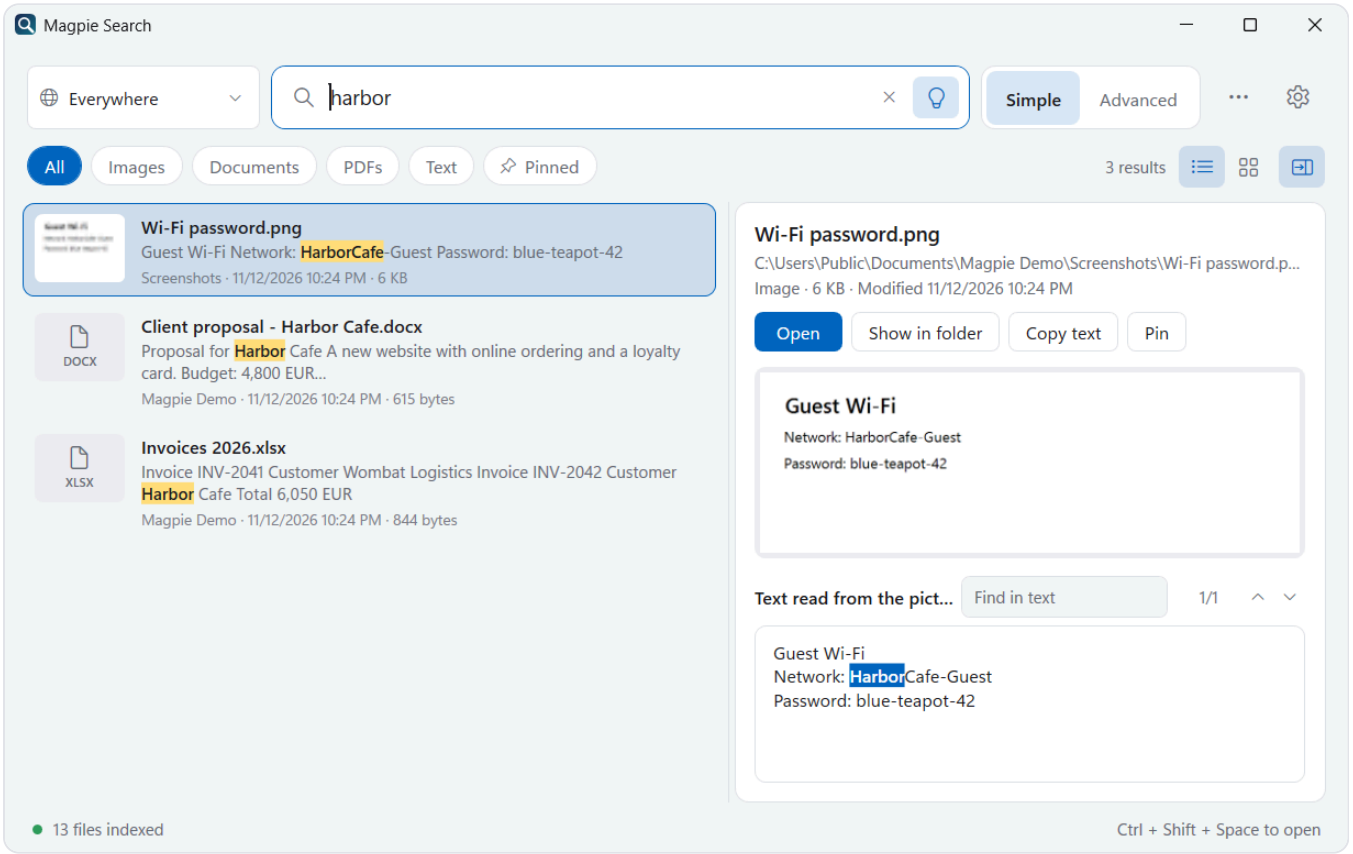
USER GUIDE · VERSION 3.0

Magpie Search

Find any file by what's written in it: documents, PDFs, spreadsheets, slides, notes and the text inside your pictures. Private, fast, and entirely on your PC.



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1 What Magpie Search does

Magpie Search is a search engine for the files on your own PC. You point it at one or more folders; it reads every supported file inside them, turns each one into plain text, and keeps that text in a small database on your computer. When you type in the search box, Magpie looks through that text, not just file names, and shows matching files instantly, with the matching words highlighted.

It doesn't matter what kind of file it is. A sentence you remember from a Word report, a number from a spreadsheet, a word on a PowerPoint slide, a line in a PDF, a phrase in a Markdown note, or text that only exists as pixels in a screenshot: Magpie finds them the same way.

What it reads

Kind	File types	How the text is read
Documents	.docx .docm .xlsx .xlsm .pptx .pptm .odt .ods .odp .rtf	Body text, tables, cells, slide text and speaker notes, footnotes and comments, read directly from the file.
PDFs	.pdf	The text layer of each page. Pages without text (scans, photos) are rendered and read with text recognition (OCR).
Text and notes	.txt .md .markdown .text .log, plus any extensions you add (.csv, .json, .py …)	The text itself; the character encoding is detected automatically.
Pictures	.png .jpg .jpeg .bmp .gif .tif .tiff .webp …	On-device text recognition (OCR): screenshots, photos of documents, receipts, slides.

Magpie skips hidden and system files, program and developer folders such as `node_modules`, `.git`, `bin` and `obj`, and files larger than 300 MB.

Highlights

Everything becomes searchable text

Documents, PDFs, notes and pictures in one index, searched together.

Full text at a glance

A preview pane shows everything Magpie read from a file, with every match highlighted and a find box.

Find by meaning

Optional on-device AI finds files about what you typed, even without the exact words.

Smart query language

`type:pdf`, `modified:7d`, `size:>10mb`, regular expressions, and plain English like *last week*.

Tuned to your PC

During the first indexing Magpie picks the text-reading setup that suits your hardware.

Private by design

Nothing is uploaded. The index, the models and the search all live on your computer.

2 Installing

Magpie Search runs on Windows 10 (version 2004 or later) and Windows 11, 64-bit. It needs about 220 MB of disk space for the program, plus space for the index (usually a few megabytes per thousand files) and the models you download (8–25 MB per language, 23 MB for Find by meaning).

Installer	When to use it
Microsoft Store	The easiest way: automatic updates, no admin rights needed.
`MagpieSearch-Setup-3.0.0.exe`	A friendly one-page setup for direct download. Click **Install**, approve the Windows prompt, and choose **Launch**.
`MagpieSearch-Setup-3.0.0.msi`	For IT departments: silent installs with Intune or Group Policy (`msiexec /i … /qn`).

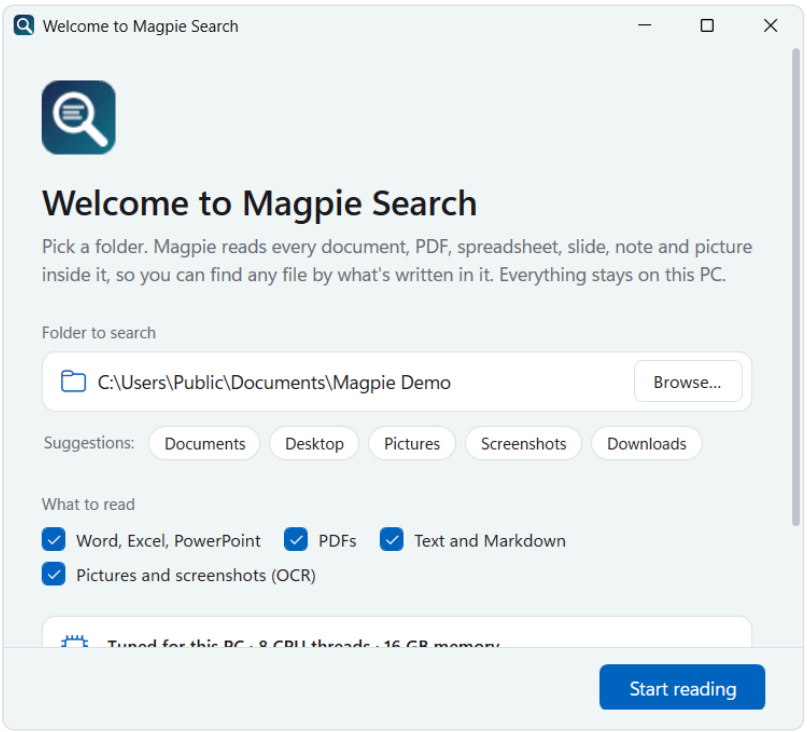
Everything Magpie needs is included; nothing else has to be installed. If you used version 2 ("Magpie — Screenshot Finder"), installing version 3 upgrades it in place: your folders, languages and the text already read from your pictures are kept, so nothing has to be read again.

After installing, Magpie lives in the **System Tray** (the icons next to the clock). Click its icon, or press `Ctrl` + `Shift` + `Space` anywhere in Windows, to open the search window. Closing the window doesn't quit Magpie; it keeps your index up to date in the background. Use the tray menu › **Exit** to quit.

3 First run, step by step

The first time you start Magpie Search, a short setup appears before the search window.

1. **Choose a folder.** Click **Browse…** or one of the suggestions (Documents, Desktop, Pictures, Screenshots, Downloads). Starting with one folder is best; you can add more later.
2. **Choose what to read.** Word/Excel/PowerPoint, PDFs, text and Markdown, and pictures (OCR) are all on by default.
3. **Check the PC summary.** Magpie has already looked at your processor and memory and chosen how to read text in pictures (see the table below). Text recognition starts with English only; more languages can be added in Settings.
4. **Click Start reading.** The reading screen shows the progress, the file being read, live counts per kind of file, and tips.
5. **Start searching.** You don't have to wait: click **Start searching** at any time. When everything is read, the screen says **All set!**



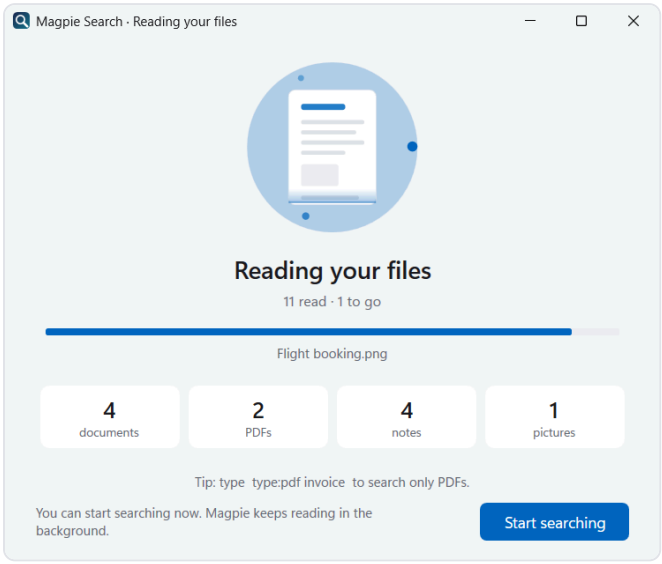
The welcome page: pick a folder, choose what to read, see what was chosen for this PC.

How Magpie tunes itself to your PC

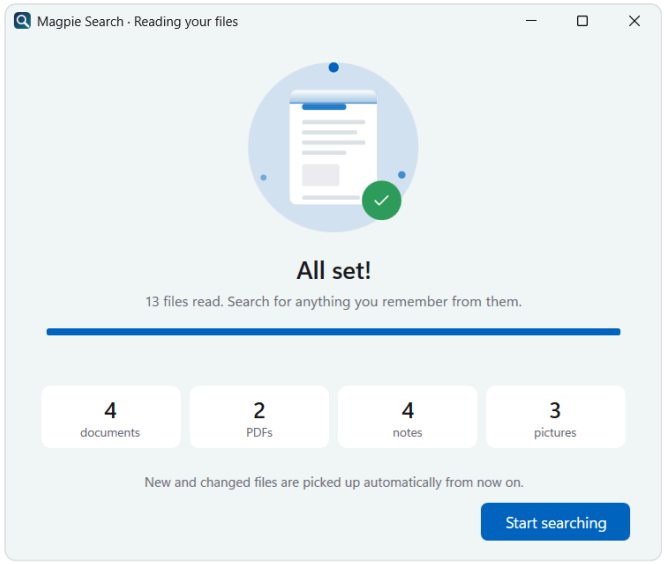
Your PC	Detected as	What Magpie chooses
Light	Fewer than 4 CPU threads or less than about 6 GB of memory	**Fast** reading with the Windows built-in text reader (if Windows has a language for it), one worker thread, Find by meaning off.
Medium	4+ threads and 6+ GB	**Accurate** reading (PaddleOCR), two worker threads, Find by meaning on from 8 GB.

High	8+ threads and 12+ GB	**Accurate** reading, four worker threads, Find by meaning on.

All of these choices can be changed later in Settings.



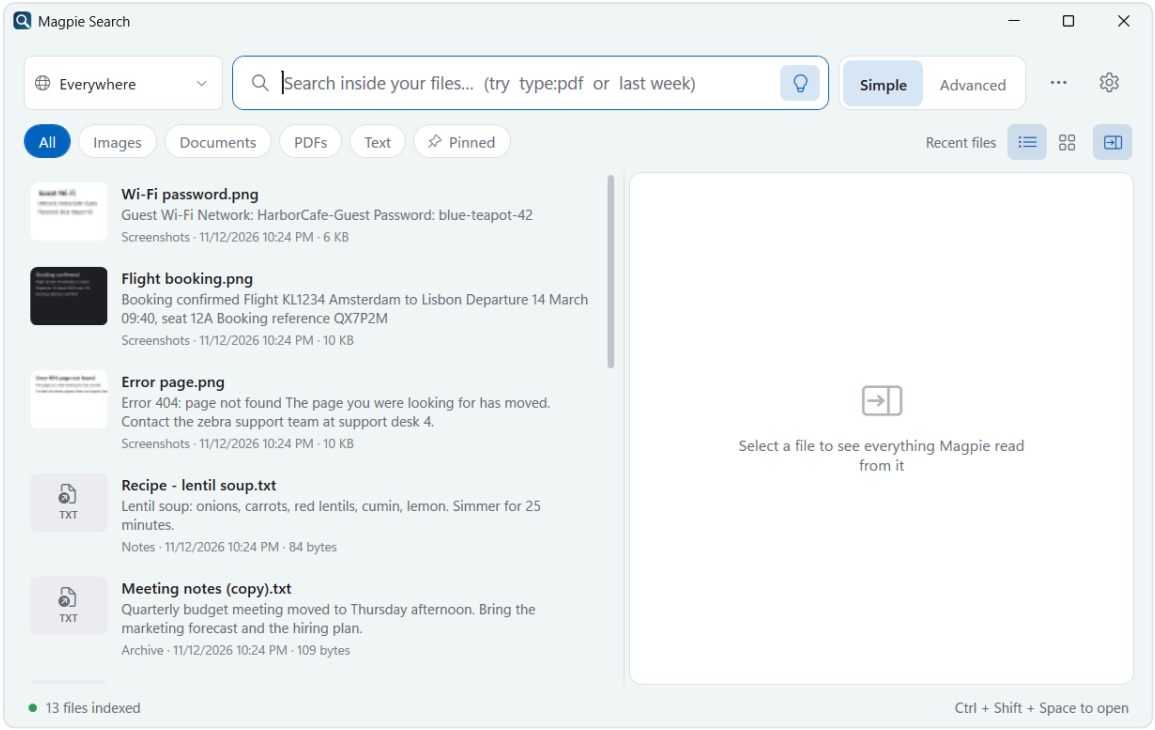
Reading your files: animated progress, live counts and tips.



All set: everything is indexed.

> **Tip:** the first indexing of pictures downloads the English text-recognition model once (about 12 MB). Documents, PDFs and notes are read first because they take only milliseconds each, so they're searchable almost immediately.

4 A tour of the search window



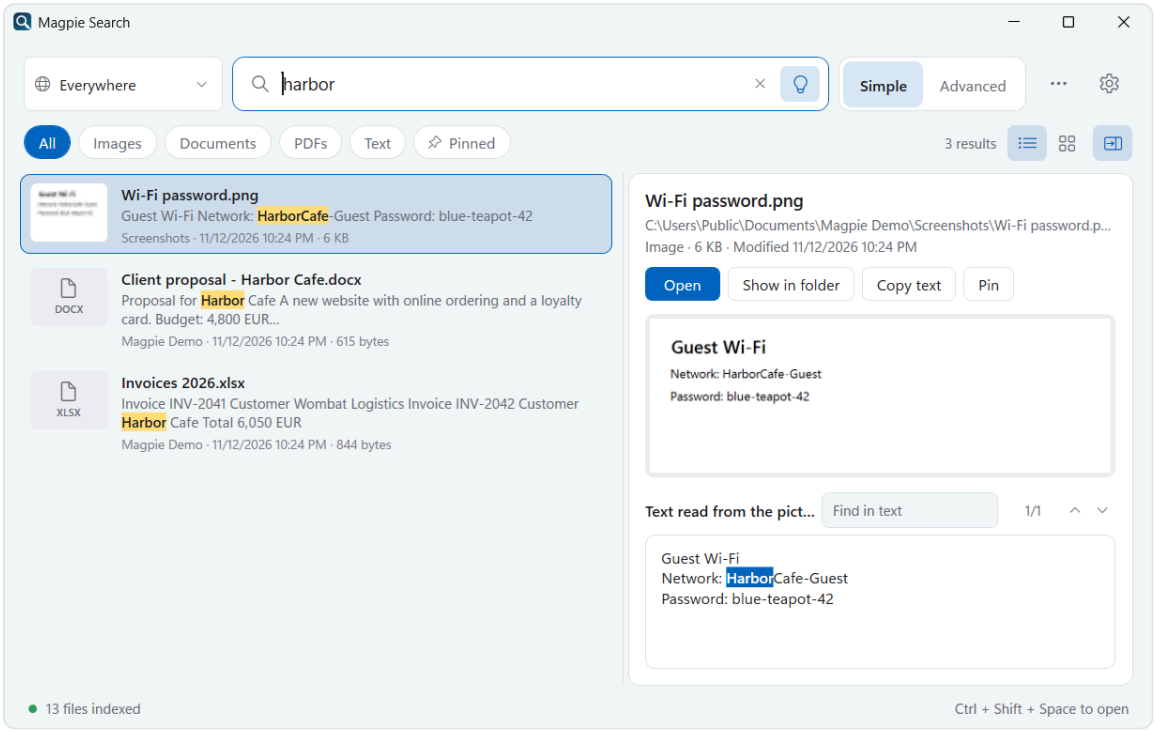
The search window with an empty search box: your most recent files.

Part	What it does
Scope box (left)	Search **Everywhere**, in one **collection**, or in one **folder**. **Manage folders...** opens Settings.
Search box	Type words or use the query language. The light-bulb button switches **Find by meaning** on or off.
Simple / Advanced	Advanced adds form fields for word rules, regular expressions, typo-tolerance, dates, file types and sorting.
⋯ (Tools)	Search tips, the duplicate finder, rescan folders, pause indexing, add a folder.
⚙ (Settings)	Folders, file types, languages, appearance and more.
Chips	Show only **Images**, **Documents**, **PDFs**, **Text** or your **Pinned** files.
Recent	Your last searches, shown while the box is empty. Click one to search again.
List / Grid / Preview	Rows with a snippet, or picture cards; the preview pane button shows or hides the full text.
Status line	What the indexer is doing (reading, downloading a model, paused) and the shortcut to open Magpie.

The window follows your Windows light or dark theme, and adapts to any size: on a narrow window the Simple/Advanced switch moves into the ⋯ menu, chips wrap onto a second line, and the full text replaces the results instead of sitting next to them.

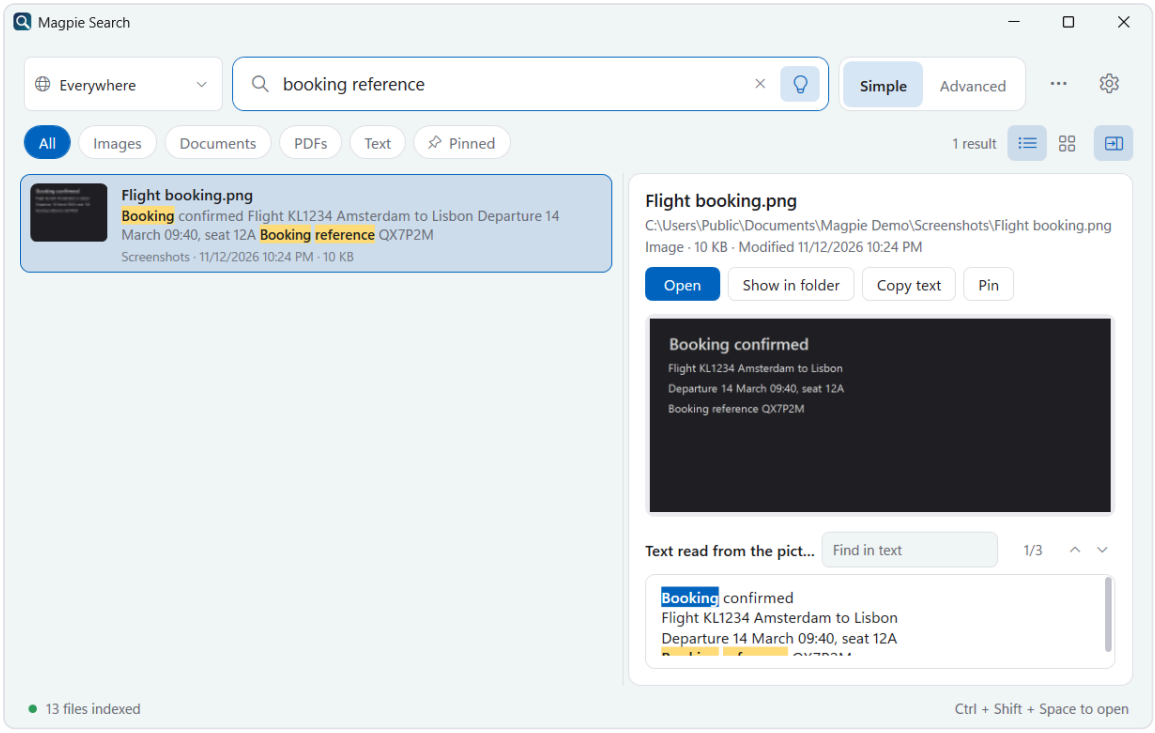
5 Searching

Just type. Results update as you type, best matches first, with your words highlighted in a short snippet from the file. The first result is shown in the preview pane on the right.



One search, three kinds of file: a Word proposal, an Excel sheet and a screenshot whose text was read with OCR.

- **All words must appear**, in any order and anywhere in the text or the file name.
- **Partial words match**: `invo` finds *invoice* and *invoices*.
- Use **"quotes"** for an exact phrase: `"error 404"`.
- Put a minus in front of a word to leave it out: `budget -draft`.
- Upper and lower case don't matter. Persian and Arabic letter variants, and Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Thai text, are handled too.

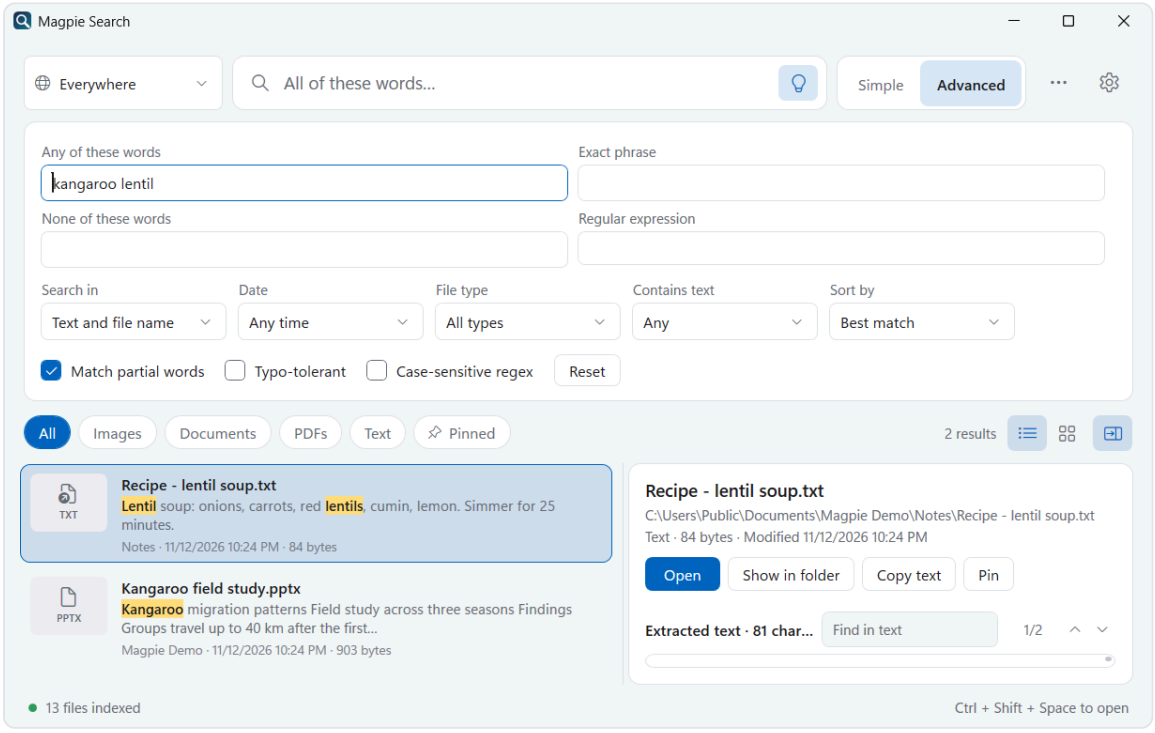


Text inside a picture: the screenshot is shown above everything Magpie read from it.

Advanced search

Click **Advanced** (or press `Ctrl` + `2`) for a form with more control:

- **Any of these words**, **Exact phrase**, **None of these words**.
- **Regular expression**, for patterns such as invoice numbers or phone numbers (`\b\d{3}-\d{4}\b`).
- **Typo-tolerant**: also finds words with one or two wrong letters (*recieve* → *receive*).
- **Search in** text and file name, text only, or file name only; **Date** ranges; **File type**; **Contains text**; **Sort by**.



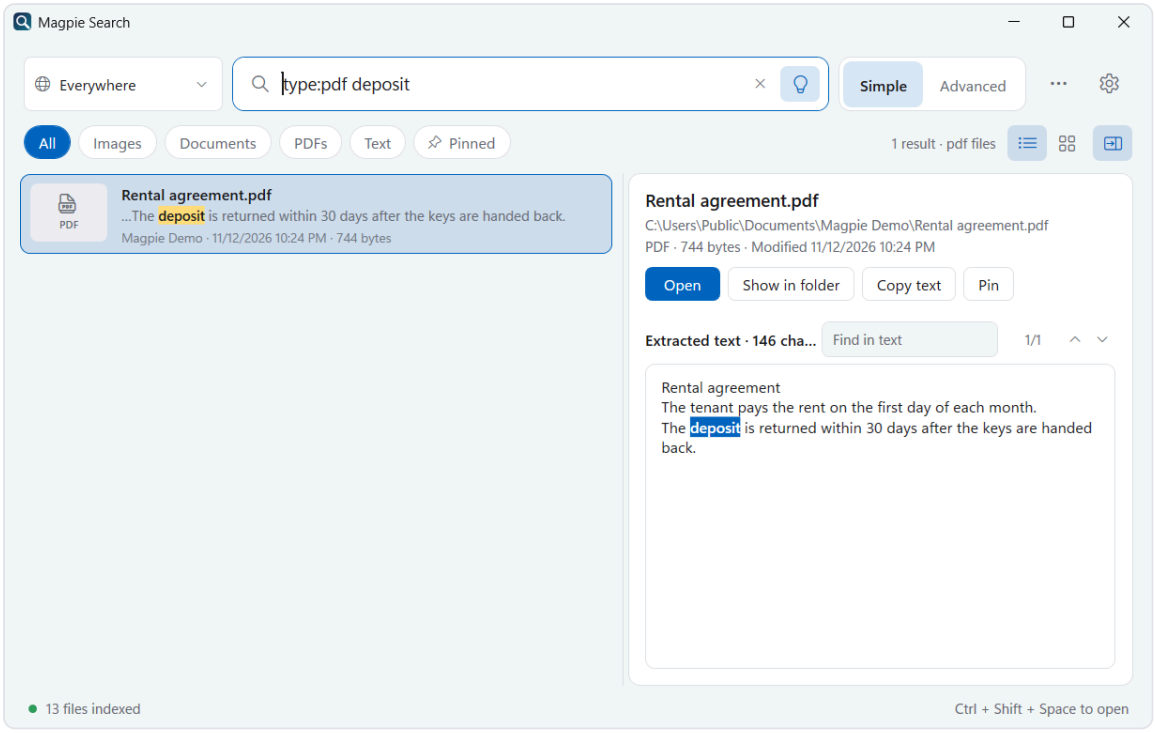
Advanced search: files containing any of the words "kangaroo" or "lentil".

6 The query language

You can also type filters straight into the search box and mix them with normal words. Press `F1` in Magpie for this list.

Type this	To find
`type:pdf` `type:image` `type:doc` `type:text`	Only one kind of file
`ext:md,txt`	Only these extensions
`name:report`	The word in the file name
`content:timeout`	The word in the text, not the name
`in:work` `path:"clients\2026"`	Files whose folder path contains this text
`modified:7d` `modified:2026-03` `after:2026-01-01` `before:2026-02-01`	By the date the file changed (d, w, m, y)
`size:>10mb` `size:<500kb`	By file size
`re:"INV-\d+"`	A regular expression
`sort:newest` `sort:oldest` `sort:name` `sort:largest`	A different order
`is:pinned`	Only pinned files

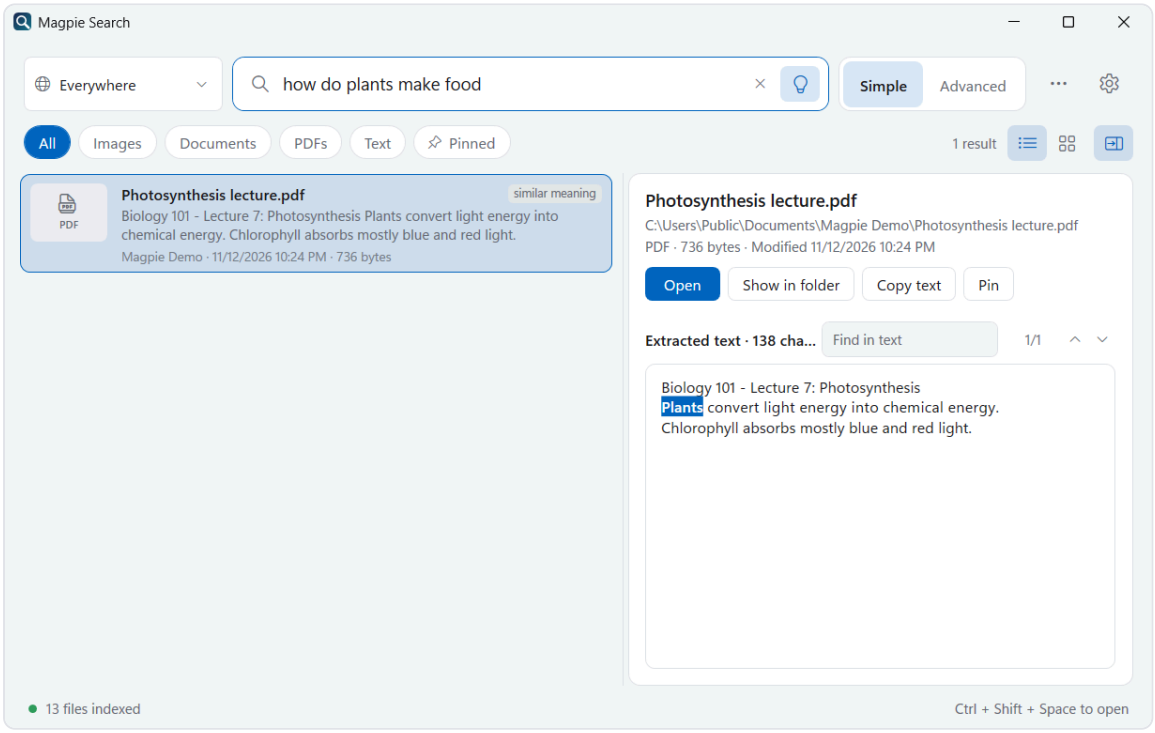
Plain-English dates work too: *today*, *yesterday*, *this week*, *last week*, *this month*, *last month*, *this year*, *last year*, *last 7 days*, *3 days ago*. So `invoice last month` or `screenshots from last week` do what you'd expect. Put a word in quotes to search for it literally (`"today"`).



`type:pdf deposit`: only PDFs that contain "deposit". The header explains the filter that was applied.

7 Find by meaning

Sometimes you remember what a file was *about*, but not the words in it. With **Find by meaning** on, Magpie also shows files whose content is close in meaning to what you typed. They're marked **similar meaning**.



"how do plants make food" finds the photosynthesis lecture, which never uses those words.

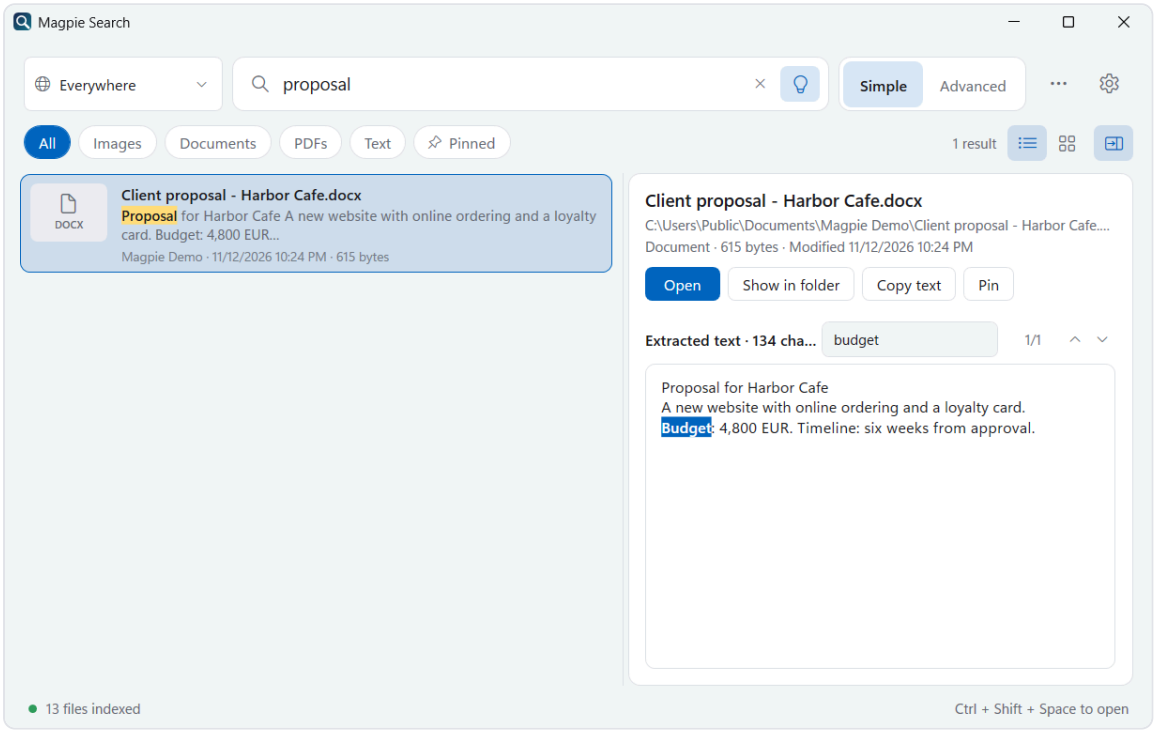
- Turn it on or off for a search with the **light-bulb** button in the search box.

- Switch the feature on, and choose the model, in **Settings › Indexing › Find by meaning**. **English** (23 MB) is small and fast; **Multilingual** (about 118 MB) understands about 100 languages including Persian, Arabic and Chinese.
- The model runs on your PC; nothing is sent anywhere. After the normal reading is finished, Magpie spends a little extra time "learning" what each file is about (the status line says *Learning meanings*).
- Word matches and meaning matches are combined into one ranking, so files that match both come first.

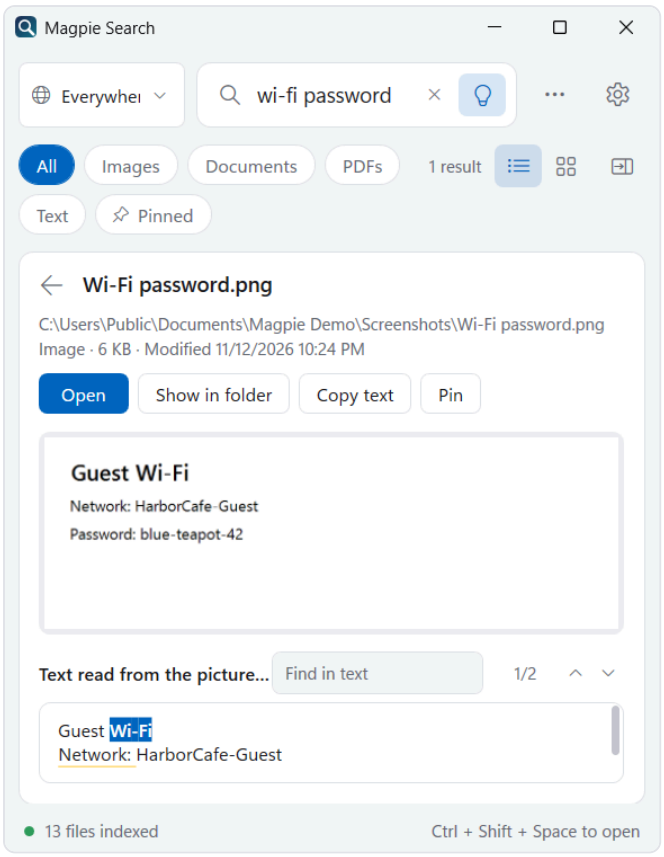
8 Reading the full text

Select a result and the **preview pane** shows its name, folder, type, size and date, buttons to open it, show it in its folder, copy its text or pin it, the picture itself for images, and **everything Magpie read from the file**, not just the beginning.

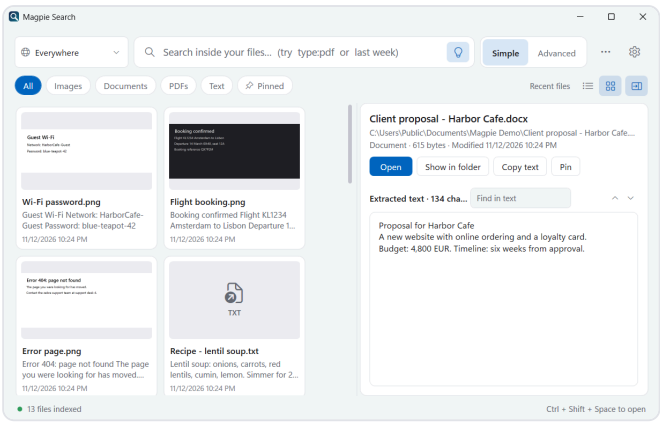
- Every word you searched for is highlighted; the current match is shown in the accent colour.
- **Find in text** searches inside this one file. Press `Enter` or `F3` for the next match and `Shift` + `F3` for the previous one; the counter shows *3/12*.
- Drag the line between the results and the preview to make it wider or narrower; Magpie remembers the width.
- Press `Space` on a result to show its text; the preview button hides or shows the pane.
- Very long documents are shown in a lighter viewer that stays fast even for hundreds of pages.



Find in text: "budget" inside the selected proposal.



On a narrow window the full text replaces the results. The arrow (or `Esc`) goes back.



Grid view (`Ctrl`+`L`): picture cards, handy for screenshots.

9 Working with results

To	Do this
Open a file	Double-click, press `Enter`, or click **Open** in the preview. Files you open often rank a little higher.
Show it in Explorer	`Ctrl`+`E`, right-click › Show in Explorer, or **Show in folder**.
Copy it	`Ctrl`+`C` copies the picture (paste into a chat or document) or the file (paste into Explorer or an email).
Copy its text	`Ctrl`+`Shift`+`C`, or **Copy text**: handy for text in screenshots.
Copy its path	Right-click › Copy path.
Drag it out	Drag a result into an email, a chat app or a folder.
Pin it	`Ctrl`+`D`, right-click › Pin, or **Pin**. Pinned files show a pin and are listed under the **Pinned** chip.
Search again	Click a **Recent** search (shown while the box is empty). **Clear** forgets them.
Narrow the results	Click a chip (Images, Documents, PDFs, Text, Pinned) or pick a scope.

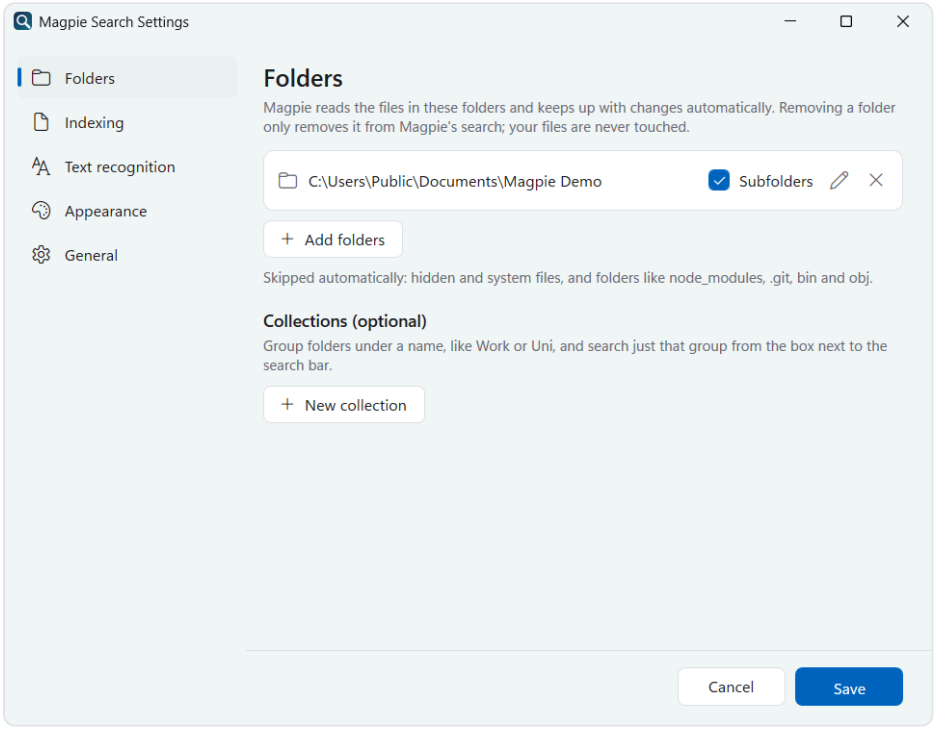
While the results list has focus, just start typing: the letters go straight to the search box. `↓` moves from the search box into the results.

10 Folders, collections and scope

Folders are what Magpie reads. Add or remove them in **Settings › Folders**, or quickly with ⋯ › **Add a folder...**. For each folder you can choose whether its subfolders are included. Removing a folder only removes it from Magpie's search; your files are never changed, moved or deleted.

Collections are optional names for groups of your folders, such as *Work*, *Uni* or *Home*. They don't change what's read; they let you search just that group. Create one with **New collection**, give it a name, and tick its folders.

The **scope box** to the left of the search box chooses where you search: **Everywhere**, a collection (most used first), or one folder. `Ctrl` + `P` opens it from the keyboard.



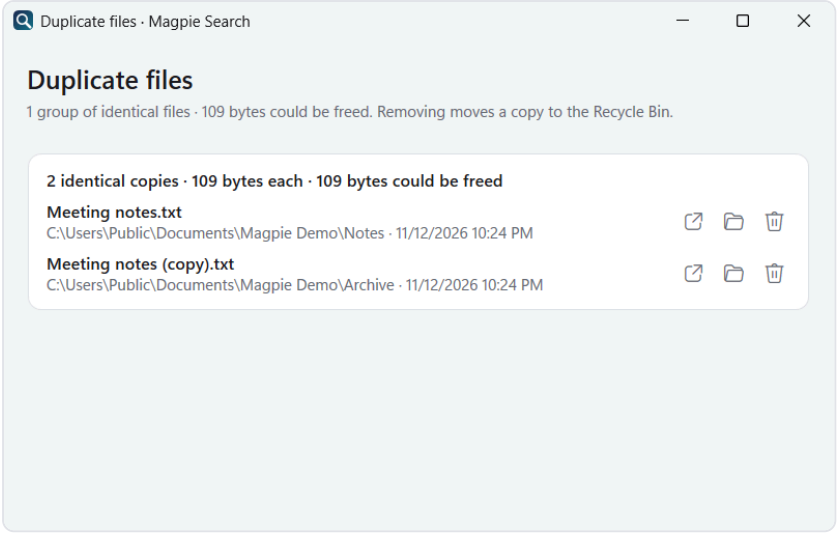
Settings › Folders: the folder list and optional collections.

11 Tools: duplicates, rescan, pause

The ⋯ button next to the search box holds a few tools.

Find duplicate files

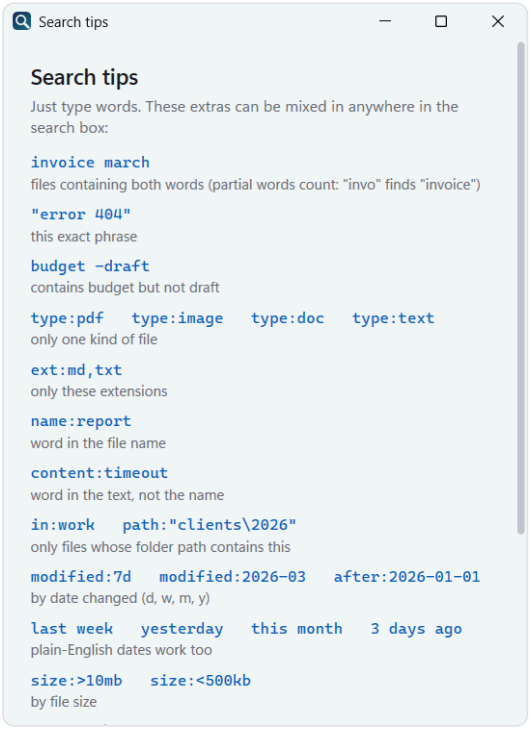
Lists files with exactly the same content, wherever they are and whatever they're called. Magpie first groups files of exactly the same size (instant, from the index), then compares their content with a SHA-256 fingerprint. Each copy can be opened, shown in its folder, or moved to the **Recycle Bin** after you confirm, so you can always restore it. Magpie never deletes anything permanently.



The duplicate finder found two identical copies of the meeting notes.

Rescan, pause, add a folder, tips

- **Rescan folders now** (`F5`): checks every folder for changes. Normally not needed, because Magpie notices new, changed, renamed and deleted files by itself, and after the PC wakes from sleep.
- **Pause indexing**: stops reading until you resume (also in the tray menu). By default Magpie also pauses while a laptop runs on battery.
- **Add a folder...** and **Search tips** (`F1`).

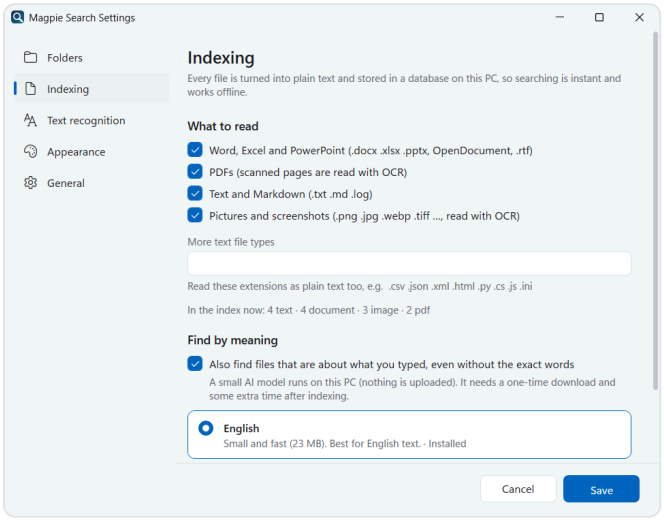


Search tips (F1).

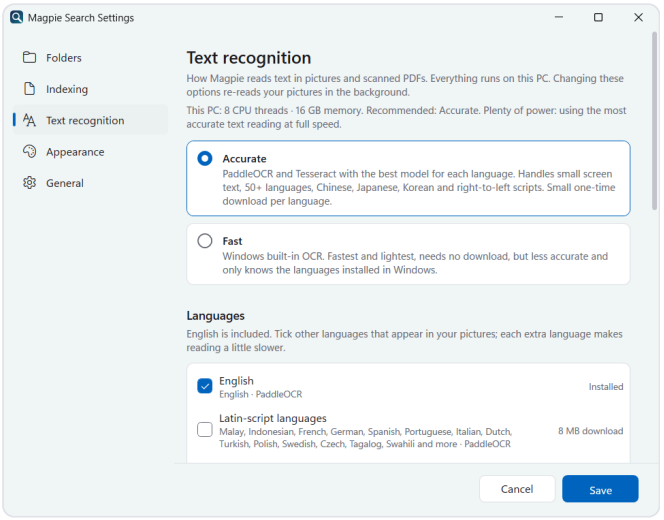
12 Settings

Open Settings with the ⚙ button, `Ctrl` + `,`, or the tray menu. Changes apply when you press **Save**; **Cancel** undoes everything (the theme previews immediately).

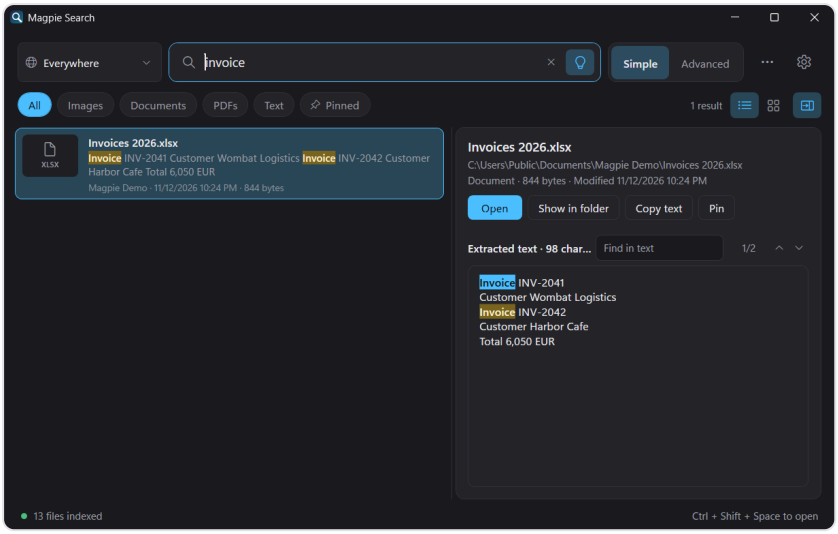
Page	What you can change
Folders	The folders that are read (with or without subfolders) and optional collections.
Indexing	Which kinds of files are read; extra extensions to read as plain text (for example `.csv` `.json` `.py`); Find by meaning on/off and its model. Shows what's in the index now.
Text recognition	**Accurate** (PaddleOCR and Tesseract, the best model per language) or **Fast** (Windows built-in OCR). Tick extra languages: Latin-script languages, Chinese and Japanese, Korean, Cyrillic, Greek, Thai, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Hebrew, Bengali, Vietnamese. Each language is a one-time download and can be removed again to free space.
Appearance	System, Light or Dark theme, and the keyboard shortcut that opens Magpie from anywhere.
General	Start with Windows, pause on battery, open the data folder, rebuild the index, the version, this guide, privacy and third-party notices.



Indexing: file types and Find by meaning.



Text recognition: English by default; add more languages.



Dark theme. Magpie follows Windows by default.

13 How it works inside

1. **Scan.** Magpie lists the supported files in your folders and compares each with the database by size, date, and how it was read. New and changed files are queued, newest first; entries for deleted files are removed. A folder that's temporarily missing (an unplugged USB drive) keeps its entries.
2. **Extract.** One background thread with below-normal priority reads one file at a time. Documents, PDFs and notes go first because they're read in milliseconds; pictures wait in a second queue for text recognition.
   - Office and OpenDocument files are ZIP packages of XML; Magpie reads the text parts directly, no Office needed.
   - PDFs are read with PdfPig. Pages without a text layer are rendered with Windows' PDF engine and read with OCR.
   - Text files have their encoding detected (UTF-8, UTF-16, or the Windows code page).
   - Pictures: a PaddleOCR detector finds every line of text; recognisers for your languages read each line and the most confident reading wins. Lines in Persian, Arabic and similar scripts are read by Tesseract. Fast mode uses the Windows built-in reader.
3. **Store.** The text goes into a local SQLite database with an FTS5 full-text index. Before indexing, text is normalised so searches match the way people type: case and accents, Persian and Arabic letter variants and digits, and per-character indexing for Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Thai.
4. **Understand (optional).** For Find by meaning, each file's text is cut into passages of about a paragraph. A small language model (MiniLM or multilingual e5) turns each passage into 384 numbers that describe its meaning, stored compactly in the same database.
5. **Search.** Your words are matched against the full-text index (partial words, phrases, exclusions, filters), ranked by relevance with a small boost for pinned and often-opened files. With Find by meaning, your question gets its own 384 numbers, the closest passages are found, and both lists are merged with *reciprocal rank fusion*.
6. **Watch.** A folder watcher picks up changes while Magpie runs, and a rescan after sleep catches anything missed. Renamed and moved files keep their text without being read again.

14 Performance and low-end PCs

Magpie is built to stay out of your way, including on older laptops.

- **Tuned at first run**: weaker PCs get the light Windows reader and a single worker thread (see section 3).
- **Gentle background work**: one file at a time on a below-normal-priority thread, a short pause between pictures, and no CPU use at all when there's nothing to do. Optional pause on battery.
- **Efficiency mode**: with no window open, Windows runs Magpie in Efficiency mode (the green leaf in Task Manager).
- **Models are unloaded** when the queue is empty, and memory is handed back to Windows.
- **Closing the window frees it completely.** Thumbnails are decoded at the size they're shown, results load 60 at a time, and only visible rows exist in memory.

Measured on the test set (Windows 11, 8 threads, 16 GB)	Memory
Window closed, idle in the tray	≈ 20 MB in use (working set), 0% CPU

While reading pictures and learning meanings, window open	≈ 260–280 MB, given back when finished

15 Privacy and your data

- **Nothing is uploaded.** Text extraction, text recognition, Find by meaning and search all run on your PC.
- Magpie only reads the folders you add and the kinds of files you choose. It never changes your files; the duplicate finder only moves a copy to the Recycle Bin after you confirm.
- The only internet access is downloading the models you enable (text-recognition languages and the Find by meaning model). These are ordinary file downloads; no personal data, file or text is sent. There is no analytics, advertising or tracking.
- Everything Magpie stores is in `%LocalAppData%\Magpie` : `magpie.db` (the index), `settings.json` (settings and recent searches), `models\` and `magpie.log`. Settings › General › **Open data folder** shows it. Uninstalling keeps it so a reinstall needn't read everything again; delete the folder to remove it.

16 Keyboard shortcuts

Keys	Action
`Ctrl` + `Shift` + `Space`	Open or close Magpie from anywhere (changeable in Settings › Appearance)
`Ctrl` + `F`	Search box (or Find in text when the preview has focus)
`↓` / `Enter`	Into the results / open the selected file
`Space`	Show the selected file's full text
`F3` / `Shift` + `F3`	Next / previous match in the text
`Ctrl` + `C` / `Ctrl` + `Shift` + `C`	Copy the picture or file / copy its text
`Ctrl` + `E`	Show in Explorer
`Ctrl` + `D`	Pin or unpin
`Ctrl` + `L`	List or grid
`Ctrl` + `1` / `Ctrl` + `2`	Simple / Advanced search
`Ctrl` + `P`	Choose the scope (collection or folder)
`Ctrl` + `,`	Settings
`F1` / `F5`	Search tips / rescan folders
`Esc`	Back (narrow window), clear the search, or close the window

17 Troubleshooting and questions

A file I know is there doesn't show up

- Is its folder in Settings › Folders, with **Subfolders** ticked if it's deeper down? Is its kind ticked in Settings › Indexing?
- Is Magpie still reading? Look at the status line. Use ⋯ › **Rescan folders now** to check again.
- Hidden files, files in `node_modules` / `.git` / `bin` / `obj`, files over 300 MB, and old binary Office files (.doc, .xls, .ppt) aren't read. Password-protected documents can only be found by name.
- Try fewer words, partial words, **Typo-tolerant** (Advanced), or **Find by meaning**.

Text in my pictures isn't found

- If the pictures contain another language, tick it in Settings › Text recognition. Pictures are read again automatically.
- "Downloading the text-reading model" in the status line means Magpie is waiting for a download; check your internet connection.
- Very small, blurry or rotated text may not be readable. Accurate mode reads small screen text better than Fast mode.

Other questions

- **The shortcut doesn't work.** Another app may use it; choose another in Settings › Appearance.
- **Magpie uses CPU after I add a big folder.** That's the first reading; it runs at low priority and stops when done. Pause it from the tray if you need full speed for something else.
- **Something looks wrong with the index.** Settings › General › **Rebuild index** reads everything again in the background.
- **How do I remove everything?** Uninstall Magpie, then delete `%LocalAppData%\Magpie`.

18 Feature summary

Area	Features
Reading files	Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OpenDocument, RTF, PDF (with OCR for scanned pages), text, Markdown, logs, custom text extensions, pictures with OCR
Text recognition	PaddleOCR + Tesseract with 17 language packs covering 50+ languages, or Windows OCR; English by default; mixed-script screenshots; dark-mode screenshots
Search	Instant full-text search, partial words, phrases, exclusions, typo-tolerance, regular expressions, query language, plain-English dates, sorting
Find by meaning	On-device semantic search (English or multilingual), combined with word matches
Results	List or grid, highlighted snippets, kind chips, pins, recent searches, scopes and collections, drag and drop, copy picture/file/text/path
Full text	Preview pane with all extracted text, highlights, find in text, resizable, full-screen on narrow windows
Tools	Duplicate finder (SHA-256, Recycle Bin only), rescan, pause, search tips
Setup	First-run folder picker, automatic hardware tuning, animated live indexing screen
Everyday use	Tray app, global shortcut, live folder watching, start with Windows, pause on battery, light/dark theme, works at any window size
Privacy and resources	Fully local, no tracking, low-priority indexing, Efficiency mode, models unloaded when idle, about 20 MB idle in the tray

Magpie Search 3.0 · Third-party components (PaddleOCR models, Tesseract, ONNX Runtime, SQLite, PdfPig, sentence-transformer models) are listed in THIRD-PARTY-NOTICES.txt next to the program.