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KVM or container VPS: what the virtualisation type changes

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KVM or container VPS: what the virtualisation type changes

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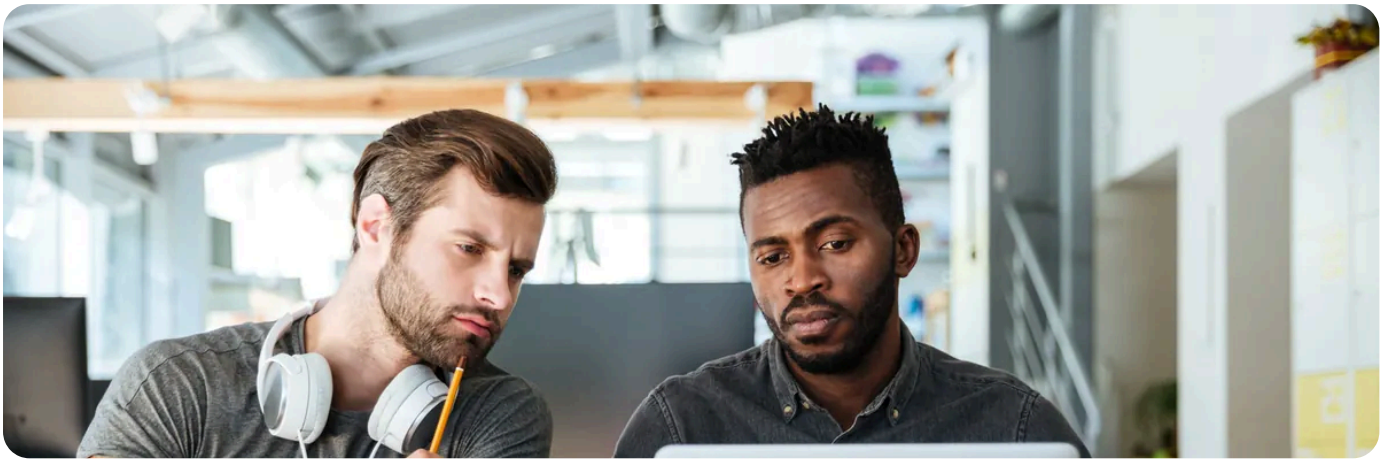

A KVM VPS is a complete virtual machine, with its own operating system kernel; a container VPS shares the physical server's kernel with the others. Our VPS plans are KVM, with root access over SSH and a choice of operating system when you order. In practice that means you can install what you like, Docker included, without asking the host for permission.

The difference in two sentences

With **KVM**, the physical server simulates a whole machine for you: it has its own kernel, its own virtual disk and boots your system like a computer. With a **container** (technologies such as OpenVZ and LXC), there is a single kernel, the host's, and each customer gets an isolated slice of the system, with no kernel of their own.

Side by side

Aspect	KVM	Container
Kernel	Yours. You can update it and load modules.	The host's. You cannot change it.
Operating system	Several Linux distributions, or Windows.	Linux only, and within what the host's kernel supports.
Docker	Works as on an ordinary computer. See **installing Docker and Docker Compose on a VPS**.	May be limited or switched off, depending on the host.
Features that depend on the kernel (some VPNs, advanced firewall rules)	Available.	Depend on what the host allows.
Isolation	Stronger: each machine has its own kernel.	Weaker: the kernel is shared.

Aspect	KVM	Container
Weight	A little heavier.	Lighter and quicker to start.

Why it is useful to know

1. **Going to use Docker, a VPN, or programs that touch the system?** With KVM there are no surprises. It is the environment where n8n, Evolution API and other programs that run in containers work as their documentation describes.

2. **Need Windows?** Only a complete virtual machine runs it. See **which operating system to choose for your VPS**.

3. **Comparing VPS offers?** Always ask the virtualisation type. “VPS” alone does not say whether it is a complete machine or a container.

Seeing what your own server is

Connected to the VPS over SSH, the next command reports the virtualisation type: **kvm** on a complete virtual machine, **openvz** or **lxc** in a container.

```
systemd-detect-virt
```

These commands are yours: support does not run or repair them on an unmanaged VPS. See **how far our support goes**. For the first steps, see **first steps with your VPS**.

KVM does not mean “no limits”.
The machine has the resources of the plan you chose (processor, memory, disk), and anyone who exceeds the plan feels it in performance. The values for each plan are on the **VPS server** page.

Do not confuse VPS with Cloud or dedicated.
They are three different products and the difference lies elsewhere (the network, the reserved resources). See **VPS vs Cloud: the difference is the network** and **VPS vs dedicated server**.

NEED A HAND?

Want to know whether what you plan to install runs on a KVM VPS? Tell us the program and we will see.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- First steps with your VPS
- Installing Docker and Docker Compose on a VPS
- Which operating system to choose for your VPS or server
- VPS server

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