BEGINNER · 7 min read · November 6, 2026 · By Kelly Stratton

How to Organize Photos With AI: Let Claude Sort Them Into Folders

Sort hundreds of photos into folders without touching one. One prompt in the Claude app looks at every picture, files each one where it belongs, and builds you a dashboard where you can click any folder and see what's inside.

Sorting photos by hand is the job everyone puts off. Hundreds of pictures, screenshots, and downloads, all piled in one place with names like IMG_4471. This guide hands the whole job to Claude. You paste one prompt, and Claude opens every picture, looks at what’s in it, makes folders that make sense, and files each photo where it belongs. Then it builds you a dashboard where you can click any folder and see every photo inside. I sorted 735 images into 13 folders this way and didn’t touch a single one.

> WHAT THIS DOES
>
> Claude looks at each photo the way you would, by what's in the picture, not by its file name. It creates folders inside your photo folder, moves every photo into the one that fits, puts anything it isn't sure about in a folder called Not Sure, and builds a page that shows all your folders with a count and a preview of each.

> WHAT YOU NEED
>
> The Claude desktop app for Mac or Windows, on Claude's $20 plan or higher. The web version and the phone app can't reach the folders on your computer. And a folder of photos on your computer.

STEP 1 Put Your Photos in One Folder on Your Desktop

Claude sorts one folder at a time, so start by gathering the photos you want sorted into one new folder. Making it on your Desktop keeps every step after this easy to find.

1. **Make the folder.** On a Mac, right-click an empty spot on your Desktop and choose **New Folder**. On Windows, right-click an empty spot on your Desktop and choose **New**, then **Folder**.
2. **Name it.** Type **Photos to Sort** and press Return (Mac) or Enter (Windows).
3. **Copy your photos into it.** Open the folder where your photos are now. Select the ones you want sorted (press Command-A on a Mac or Ctrl-A on Windows to select them all). Copy them with Command-C or Ctrl-C. Then open your new Photos to Sort folder and paste with Command-V or Ctrl-V.

Copying, instead of moving, leaves your originals exactly where they were. The prompt tells Claude never to delete anything, but for your first run, a copy means zero worry.

Are your photos in the Photos app on a Mac? Open Photos and select the pictures you want (click the first one, then hold Shift and click the last one, or press Command-A for all). In the menu bar at the top of your screen, click **File**, then **Export**, then **Export Unmodified Originals**. Click **Export**, choose the **Photos to Sort** folder on your Desktop, and click **Export Originals**.

Are your photos in Google Photos? Go to photos.google.com. Hover over a photo and click the small circle in its corner to select it, then do the same for the others you want. Click the **three dots** in the top right corner and choose **Download**. Your photos download as one zipped file into your Downloads folder. On a Mac, double-click the zipped file to open it. On Windows, right-click it and choose **Extract All**. Then copy the photos into your **Photos to Sort** folder.

STEP 2 Make Sure the Photos Are on Your Computer

This is the step that trips people up. Many computers keep the Desktop in iCloud (on a Mac) or OneDrive (on Windows), and some photos may be stored only in the cloud. Claude can't look at a photo that isn't actually on your computer, so download them first.

- **On a Mac:** right-click the **Photos to Sort** folder on your Desktop. If you see **Download Now** in the menu, click it, and give it a minute or two to finish, longer if you have a lot of photos. If you don't see Download Now, your photos are already on your Mac, and you can go straight to Step 3.
- **On Windows:** right-click the **Photos to Sort** folder on your Desktop. If you see **Always keep on this device**, click it and let it finish. If you don't see it, your photos are already on your computer.

If you skip this step, Claude will notice. When I ran this, 705 of my 735 photos were still in iCloud, and Claude stopped and told me to download them before it sorted anything.

STEP 3 The Photo Sorting Prompt

1. **Open the Claude desktop app** and start a new chat.
2. **Copy the prompt below.** Click the **Copy** button in the top right corner of the prompt box, then click in Claude's message box and paste (Command-V or Ctrl-V).
3. **Check the folder name.** The prompt says **Photos to Sort** on your Desktop. If you named your folder something else, change those words to match.
4. **Press Return or Enter** to send it.
5. **If Claude asks for permission** to open the folder, say yes. Some computers ask and some don't, so if it just starts working, you're all set.

Don’t drag the folder into the chat. Claude counts every photo as a separate attachment, and it stops at 20. Just name the folder in the prompt and Claude goes and gets it.

PROMPT

```
Go to the folder called Photos to Sort on my Desktop. Open each image and look at what's in it. Don't sort by file name.

1. Pick 8 to 12 clear folder names that fit what you see. Create those folders inside this folder and move every image into the one that fits best. Put any image you're not sure about in a folder called Not Sure. Don't delete or rename anything, and don't move anything outside this folder. When you're done, show me a table of each folder and how many images went into it.

2. Then build me a dashboard as one HTML file called sort-dashboard.html inside this folder, and open it in my browser. The center is the star: a planet made of my real photos. Small thumbnails of every image cover a slowly spinning 3D globe on a deep night-sky background, with a ring of more photos orbiting around it like Saturn. After a few seconds the planet spins faster, then bursts, and every photo flies out to its folder card. The folder cards sit around the edge: white, rounded corners, soft shadows. Each one shows the folder name, a count that ticks up as photos land, and a few of its own thumbnails. At the top, a big total: how many images were sorted and into how many folders. Soft glow only, no neon. Make every folder card clickable: clicking it opens a gallery of every image in that folder right on the page, and clicking an image shows it full size, with a Back button to the dashboard. Add a Replay button so I can watch it again.
```

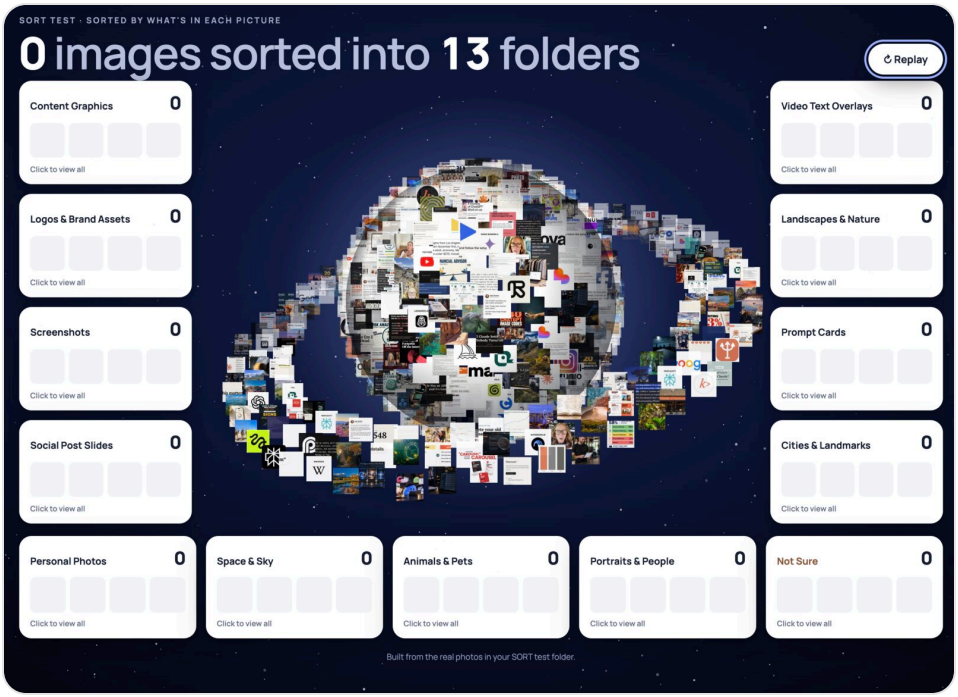
IF CLAUDE CAN'T FIND YOUR FOLDER

Give it the folder's exact address. **On a Mac:** right-click the Photos to Sort folder on your Desktop, then press and hold the **Option** key. The word Copy changes to **Copy "Photos to Sort" as Pathname**. Click it. **On Windows:** right-click the folder and choose **Copy as path**. Then reply to Claude with "The folder is here:" and paste (Command-V or Ctrl-V).

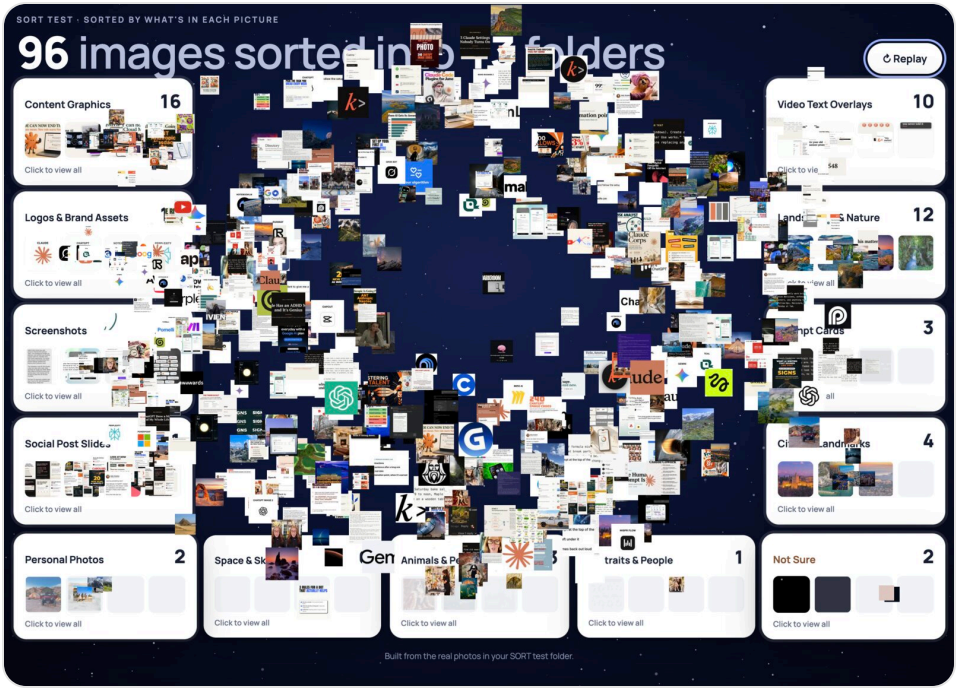
STEP 4 What Happens Next?

Claude gets to work. It opens your photos in batches and really looks at them, then makes the folders and moves everything in. A big folder takes a while, so let it run. When it's done, it shows you a table of every folder and how many photos landed in each, then opens your dashboard.

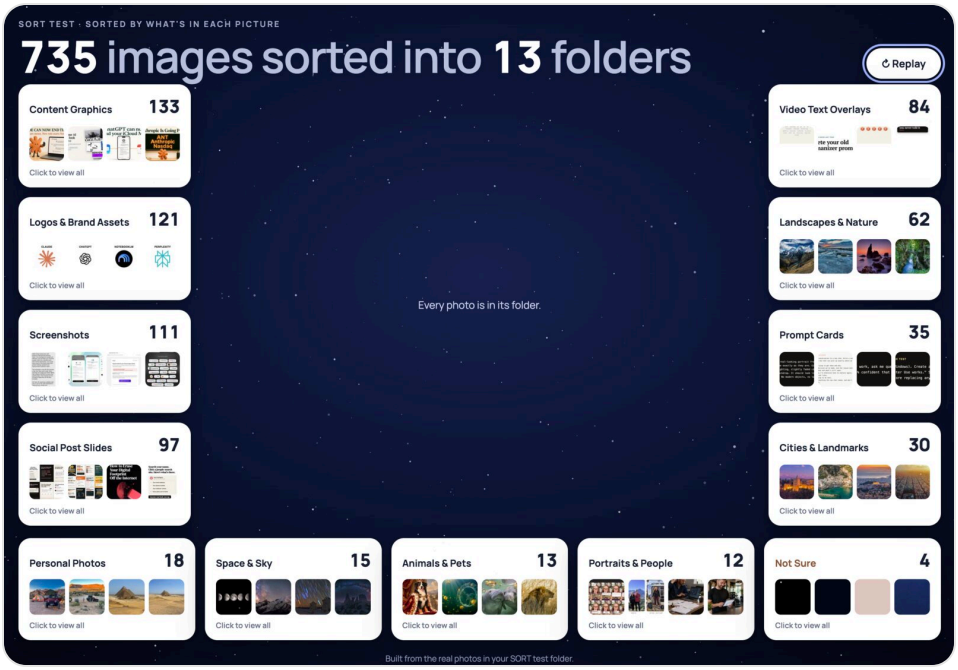
First, every photo you have forms one spinning planet:



Then the planet bursts, and the photos fly out to their folders while the counts tick up:



And when it settles, every photo is in its folder:



Click any card to open that folder’s gallery, click a photo to see it full size, and use Back to return. Replay plays the planet again.

FIND IT How Do You Find Your Dashboard Again?

The dashboard is a file on your computer, not a website, so closing the browser tab doesn’t lose it. Here’s every way back:

Ways to open your dashboard

Make a shortcut on your Desktop
Open your Photos to Sort folder and find the file called sort-dashboard.html. On a Mac, right-click it, choose Make Alias, and drag the new alias onto your Desktop. On Windows, right-click it, choose Show more options if you see it, then Send to, then Desktop (create shortcut). From then on, double-click that shortcut to open your dashboard.

Open it from your folder
Open your Photos to Sort folder on your Desktop. The dashboard is the file called sort-dashboard.html, sitting next to the folders Claude made. Double-click it and it opens in your web browser.

Bookmark it
With the dashboard open in your browser, press Command-D on a Mac or Ctrl-D on Windows.

Search for it
On a Mac, press Command-Space and type sort-dashboard. On Windows, type sort-dashboard in the search bar.

Ask Claude
In the Claude app, type "Open the photo dashboard in my Photos to Sort folder on my Desktop."

LATER How Do You Add More Photos Later?

Copy your new photos straight into your **Photos to Sort** folder, right next to the folders Claude made, not inside one of them. Then open the Claude app and paste this prompt:

PROMPT

```
Go to the folder called Photos to Sort on my Desktop. Sort only the loose images into the folders that are already there. Make a new folder only if nothing fits. Don't delete or rename anything. Then rebuild sort-dashboard.html so the totals and folder cards match.
```

Want a folder called something else? In the Claude app, type something like: “In my Photos to Sort folder, rename the Landscapes & Nature folder to Travel, then rebuild the dashboard.” Renaming on the dashboard page alone won’t change the real folder, so let Claude do both.

GOOD TO KNOW

Claude looks at your photos to sort them, the same way it reads anything you share in a chat. The dashboard itself stays a file on your computer. It isn't posted anywhere. Claude can file a photo in a different folder than you would, which is what the Not Sure folder is for. Glance through it and move anything by hand in a few seconds.

FAQ Questions People Ask About Organizing Photos With AI

Straight answers

Can AI organize my photos into folders?
Yes. In the Claude desktop app, one prompt has Claude open every picture in a folder, look at what's actually in it, make folders that fit, and move each photo into the right one. It doesn't go by file names, so a folder full of IMG files still gets sorted by what's in the pictures.

Can Claude organize files on my computer?
Yes, through the Claude desktop app for Mac or Windows on a paid plan. You tell it which folder to use, like the Photos to Sort folder on your Desktop, and it can read, create folders, and move files inside that folder. It works on the folders you give it, not your whole computer.

How do I sort thousands of photos?
Put them in one folder on your computer, make sure they're downloaded and not just stored in the cloud, and paste the prompt in this guide with your folder's name. Claude works through them in batches. A big folder takes longer, so start it and let it run.

Will Claude delete my photos?
The prompt in this guide tells Claude never to delete or rename anything, only to make folders and move photos into them inside the same folder. For your first run, use a copy of your photos so the originals stay exactly as they are until you like the result.

Can I organize my iPhone or Google Photos with AI?
Yes, once the photos are in a folder on your computer. From the Photos app on a Mac, select them and choose File, then Export. From Google Photos on the web, select them and choose Download from the three-dot menu. Then point Claude at that folder.

Do I need a paid plan to sort photos with Claude?
Yes. Working with folders on your computer is part of Claude's paid plans, starting with the $20 plan. You also need the Claude desktop app for Mac or Windows. The web version and the phone app can't reach folders on your computer.

SOURCES Where This Comes From

- Anthropic, Claude help center: working with files and folders on your computer requires the Claude desktop app and a paid plan. support.claude.com
- The run shown here is my own: 735 images sorted into 13 folders on my Mac on November 4, 2026, with the prompt in this guide.

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