USER MANUAL

Blog Lite

Step-by-step guides for installing, writing with AI, managing comments and configuring every setting. 34 pages, written in plain English.

NetArt Media · 3 November 2026
Online version: https://www.netartmedia.net/manuals/blog-lite/

Contents

Getting started

1. What is Blog Lite 2?
2. System requirements
3. Installing Blog Lite 2
4. First setup and your first post
5. Folder structure
6. The config.php file

Your blog

1. The blog homepage
2. The article page
3. Comments and replies for visitors
4. Search, categories and tags
5. The contact page
6. Dark mode and mobile design
7. RSS feed and sitemap

Admin panel

1. The admin dashboard
2. Writing and publishing a post
3. Writing posts with the AI writer
4. Getting and adding an AI API key
5. Managing your posts
6. Managing categories
7. The media library
8. Moderating comments
9. The messages inbox

Settings

1. General settings
2. Appearance settings
3. Comments and contact settings
4. AI writer settings
5. Account settings

Advanced and help

1. Pretty URLs (clean addresses)
2. Customising the design
3. Backup, restore and moving your blog
4. The XML data files
5. Security

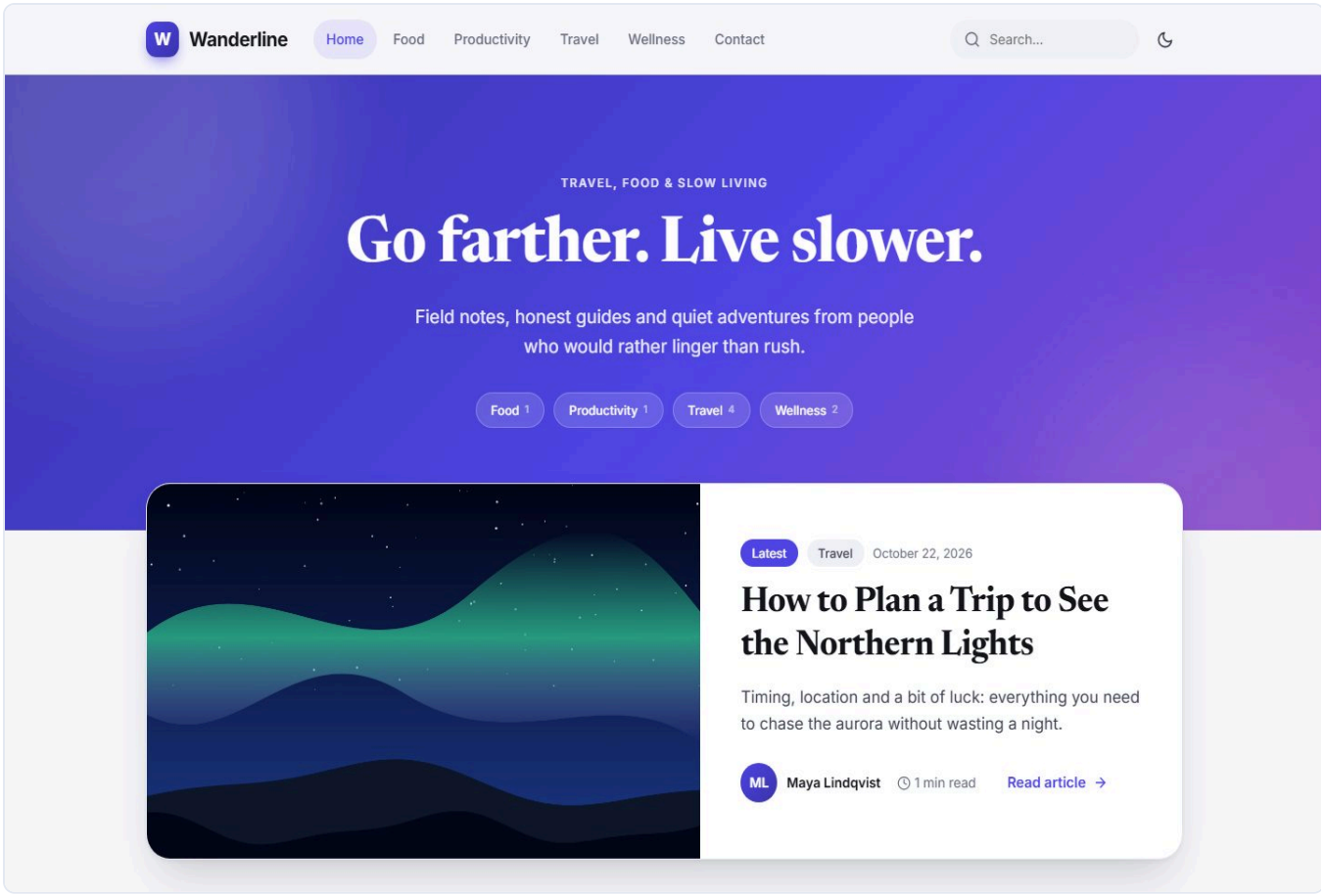
6. Troubleshooting
7. Frequently asked questions

GETTING STARTED

What is Blog Lite 2?

Blog Lite 2 is a PHP blog script with an AI writing assistant, comments, a modern admin panel and no database. See what it does and how it works.

Blog Lite 2 is a ready-to-use blog for your website. You upload it to any PHP hosting, create an administrator account, and start publishing. Visitors read your articles and leave comments, while you manage everything from a clean admin panel.



The public homepage of a Blog Lite 2 blog.

Main features

- **AI writing assistant** - describe a topic and the AI writes a full draft with a title, summary and tags. Works with Groq (free plan available), DeepSeek and OpenAI. See AI writer.
- **No database** - posts, comments and settings are stored in simple XML files. There is nothing to create or maintain in MySQL.
- **Modern design** - a responsive public theme with dark mode, and a polished admin panel.
- **Comments with replies** - visitors can comment and reply to each other, and you approve comments before they appear.
- **Visual editor** - headings, lists, quotes, links and images, with cover images for every post.
- **Categories, tags and search** so readers can find what they want.
- **Contact page** with a messages inbox in the admin panel.

- **SEO basics** - custom descriptions, clean article addresses, an RSS feed and a sitemap.
- **Easy to customise** - small, readable PHP files and plain HTML templates.

How it works

The script has two parts that share the same data:

Part	Address	Purpose
Public blog	`yoursite.com/`	What visitors see: homepage, articles, categories, search, contact. See Your blog.
Admin panel	`yoursite.com/admin/`	Where you write posts and manage the blog. See The admin panel.

Everything you write is saved in the `data` folder as XML files, and uploaded images go to the `uploads` folder. To back up your blog you only need to copy those two folders. See Backup and moving.

Who is it for?

Bloggers and writers, small businesses that want a news section, agencies building blogs for clients, and niche content sites. Because the code is small and clearly organised, even people with little PHP knowledge can adjust the design. See Customising the design.

Next step

Check the System requirements, then follow the installation guide. It takes about two minutes.

GETTING STARTED

System requirements

Check what you need to run Blog Lite 2: PHP 7.4 or newer, a few standard extensions and writable folders. No database required.

Blog Lite 2 runs on almost any standard PHP hosting. It does not need MySQL or any other database.

Server requirements

Requirement	Details
PHP	Version 7.4 or newer. PHP 8.x is recommended.
Web server	Apache (the included `.htaccess` files work out of the box) or Nginx (needs a few lines of configuration, see Pretty URLs).
Database	None. Data is stored in XML files.
Writable folders	`data/` and `uploads/` must be writable by PHP.

PHP extensions

These extensions are enabled on virtually every hosting account:

- `SimpleXML` and `DOM` - read and write the XML data files
- `mbstring` - correct handling of non-English text
- `cURL` - needed only for the AI writer, which talks to the AI service
- `iconv` - optional, creates cleaner article addresses from titles with accents

Not sure what your server has? Create a file called `info.php` containing `<?php phpinfo();`, open it in the browser, and delete it afterwards.

For the AI writer

- Your server must be able to make outgoing HTTPS connections.
- You need an API key from Groq, DeepSeek, OpenAI or another compatible service. Groq offers a free plan. See AI API keys (Groq, DeepSeek, OpenAI).

For you and your visitors

Any modern browser works. The visual editor in the admin panel is loaded from a public CDN, so you need an internet connection when writing. If it cannot load, the editor falls back to a plain HTML box and everything keeps working.

Use HTTPS on your site. It protects your admin login and is good for search engines.

GETTING STARTED

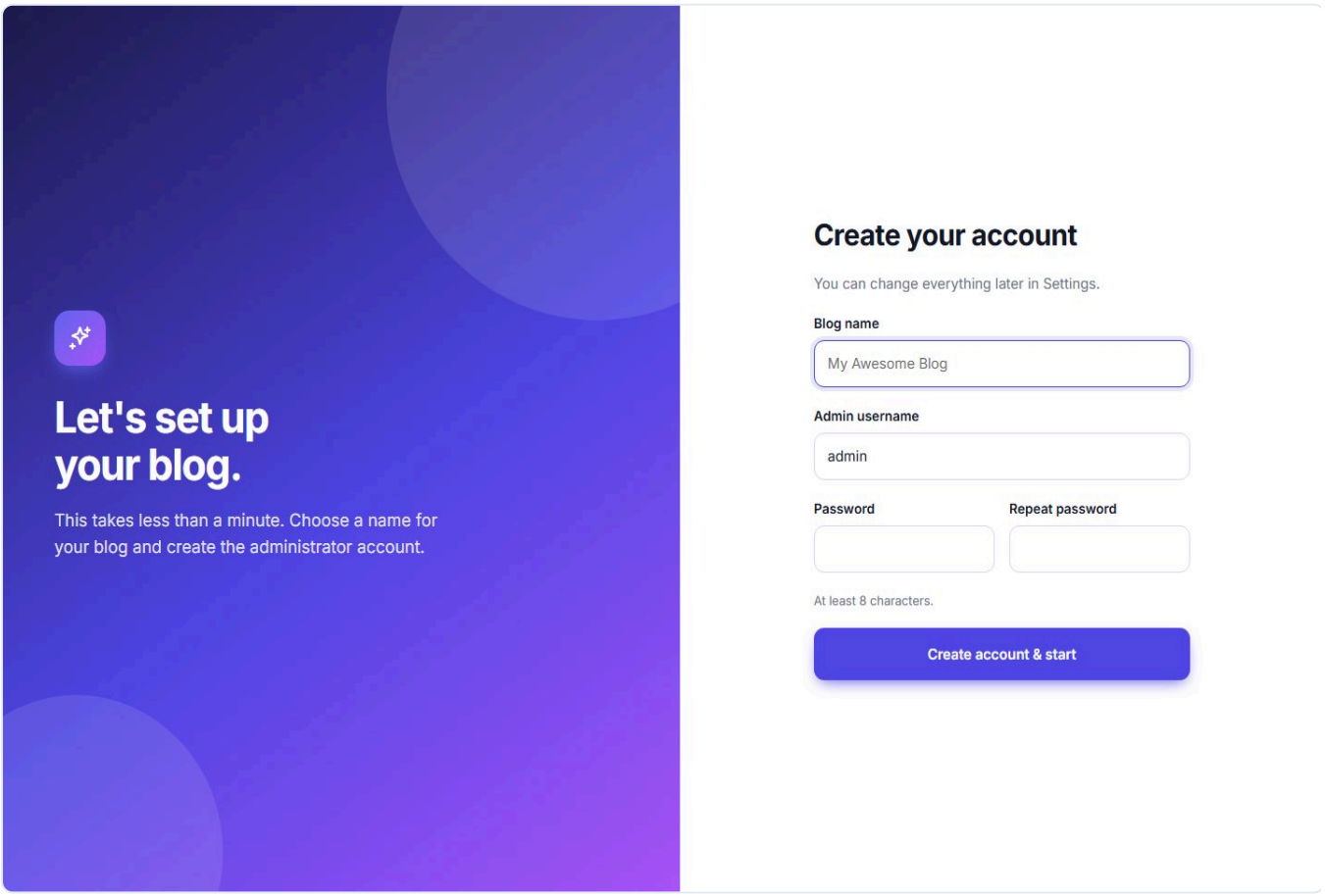
Installing Blog Lite 2

Step-by-step guide to install Blog Lite 2: upload the files, set folder permissions and create your admin account. No database setup needed.

Installing Blog Lite 2 takes about two minutes. There is no installer wizard and no database to create.

Install on your hosting

1. **Unzip the package** on your computer. You will see folders such as `admin`, `app`, `assets`, `data`, `themes` and `uploads`.
2. **Upload everything** to your hosting with FTP or your hosting file manager. Upload to the main folder (often `public_html`) to run the blog at `yoursite.com`, or to a subfolder such as `blog` to run it at `yoursite.com/blog`.
3. **Make two folders writable.** Set the permission of `data` and `uploads` to `755` (or `775` if 755 does not work on your host). The blog cannot save posts or images without this.
4. **Open the admin address** in your browser: `yoursite.com/admin/`.
5. **Create your account.** The first time, you will see the setup screen. Choose a blog name, a username and a password. See First setup.



The setup screen appears the first time you open the admin address.

Install on your own computer (XAMPP)

You can try Blog Lite 2 locally before uploading it:

1. Install XAMPP and start Apache.
2. Copy the Blog Lite 2 folder into `C:\xampp\htdocs\blog`.
3. Open `http://localhost/blog/admin/`.

AI on XAMPP

If the AI writer shows an SSL certificate error on your own computer, set `'ai_verify_ssl' => false` in `config.php`. Do this only on a local test machine. See config.php options.

After installing

- Visit `yoursite.com` to see your new blog. It shows a friendly "No posts yet" message until you publish.
- Open **Settings** to set your tagline, colours and logo. See General.
- Add your AI key to unlock the writing assistant. See AI API keys (Groq, DeepSeek, OpenAI).

Problems?

If you see a blank page or a "cannot write" message, read Troubleshooting. Nine times out of ten it is a folder permission.

GETTING STARTED

First setup and your first post

Create your Blog Lite 2 administrator account, name your blog and follow the quick checklist to publish your first post.

The first time you open `yoursite.com/admin/`, Blog Lite 2 asks you to create the administrator account.

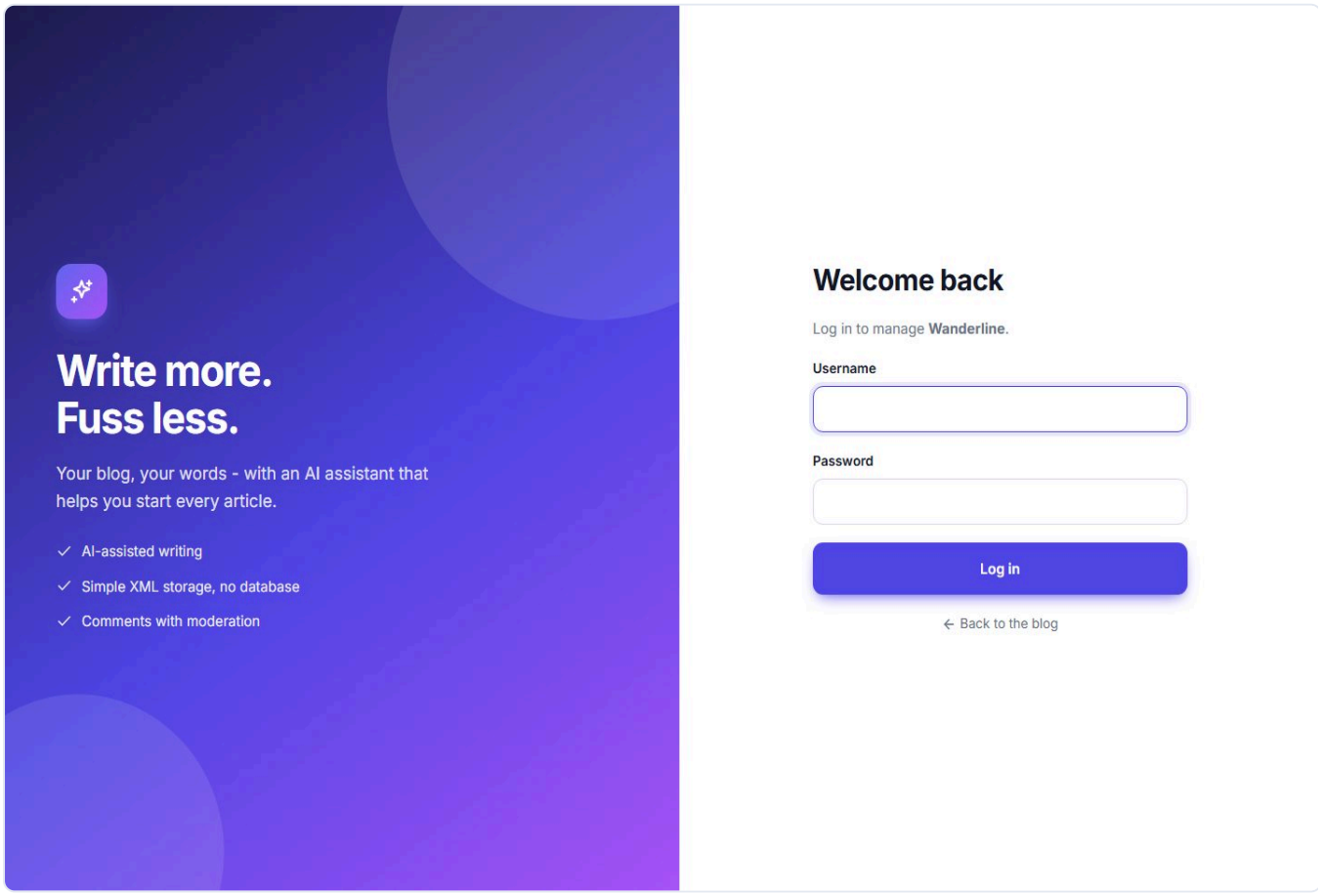
The setup screen

Field	What to enter
Blog name	The name shown in the header and browser title. You can change it later in Settings.
Admin username	At least 3 characters. Avoid obvious names if you can.
Password and repeat	At least 8 characters. Passwords are stored as secure hashes, never as plain text.

Press **Create account & start**. You are logged in straight away and taken to the new post screen.

Logging in later

Next time, open `yoursite.com/admin/` and log in with your username and password.



The admin login screen.

After five wrong passwords the login is blocked for 15 minutes. See Security.

A quick checklist

1. **Set your blog details** in *Settings* → *General*: tagline, home page headline and author name. See General.
2. **Choose your look** in *Settings* → *Appearance*: accent colour, logo and theme. See Appearance.
3. **Create a few categories** such as "News" or "Guides". See Categories.
4. **Add your AI key** in *Settings* → *AI writer* to use the writing assistant. See AI API keys (Groq, DeepSeek, OpenAI).
5. **Write your first post.** See Writing posts.

The dashboard helps you

The dashboard shows tips for anything you have not set up yet, such as a missing AI key or an unwritable folder. See Admin dashboard.

Forgot your password?

See Troubleshooting for the safe way to reset the admin account.

GETTING STARTED

Folder structure

A guide to the Blog Lite 2 folders and files: where the code, templates, data and uploads live, and which files are safe to edit.

Blog Lite 2 is organised so you can find things easily. Here is what each folder is for.

```
blog/
  index.php          public website entry point
  config.php         a few technical options
  admin/             admin panel entry point and its templates
  app/               the code ("engine")
    classes/         one small class per job
    controllers/     one file per kind of page
  themes/default/    public website templates
  assets/            CSS and JavaScript
  data/              your XML data files
  uploads/           your uploaded images
```

What is safe to edit?

Folder or file	Purpose	Edit it?
`config.php`	Time zone, debug mode, folders, upload size.	Yes. See config.php options.
`themes/default/`	HTML templates for the public site: `layout.php`, `home.php`, `post.php` and more.	Yes. See Customising the design.
`assets/css/site.css`	Styles of the public site.	Yes.
`admin/views/`	Templates of the admin panel.	Rarely.
`app/classes/`	The engine: storage, posts, comments, AI, login.	Only if you know PHP.
`data/`	Your content in XML files.	Back it up, but do not edit while the site is in use. See XML data files.
`uploads/`	Images you upload.	Back it up.

The engine in plain words

Class	Job
`Storage`	Reads and writes the XML files. The only file that knows the XML format.
`PostRepository`	Finds, saves and deletes posts.
`CommentRepository`	Comments and replies.
`CategoryRepository`	Categories.

`MessageRepository`	Contact form messages.
`Settings`	Blog options saved from the Settings page.
`Auth`	Login, sessions and form protection.
`AiGenerator`	Talks to Groq, DeepSeek or OpenAI.
`ImageUploader`	Saves uploaded images safely.
`View`	Shows a template inside a layout.

Protected folders

The `data`, `app` and `admin/views` folders contain `.htaccess` files that block direct downloads on Apache. On Nginx you must add the rules yourself. See Security.

GETTING STARTED

The config.php file

Learn every option in Blog Lite 2 config.php: time zone, debug mode, data and upload folders, maximum upload size and AI SSL verification.

Most settings are changed in the admin panel under **Settings**. The file `config.php` only holds a few technical options. You edit it with any text editor.

```
return [
    'timezone'      => 'UTC',
    'debug'         => false,
    'data_dir'      => __DIR__ . '/data',
    'upload_dir'    => __DIR__ . '/uploads',
    'max_upload_mb' => 5,
    'ai_verify_ssl' => true,
];
```

The options

Option	Default	What it does
`timezone`	`UTC`	The time zone used for post dates and comment times. Use a name from the PHP time zone list, for example `Europe/London` or `America/New_York`.
`debug`	`false`	When `true`, PHP errors are shown on screen. Turn it on only while fixing a problem, then turn it off.
`data_dir`	`data` folder	Where the XML files are stored. The folder must be writable.
`upload_dir`	`uploads` folder	Where uploaded images are stored. The folder must be writable.
`max_upload_mb`	`5`	Largest image you can upload, in megabytes. Your server may have a lower limit (`upload_max_filesize` in `php.ini`).
`ai_verify_ssl`	`true`	Whether to verify the SSL certificate when contacting the AI service. Set to `false` only on a local test server that shows an SSL error.

Examples

Set your time zone

```
'timezone' => 'Europe/Berlin',
```

Move the data folder outside the web root

For extra safety you can store the data folder above the public web folder:

```
'data_dir' => '/home/youraccount/blog-data',
```

Create the folder first and make it writable, and move the existing XML files into it.

Careful

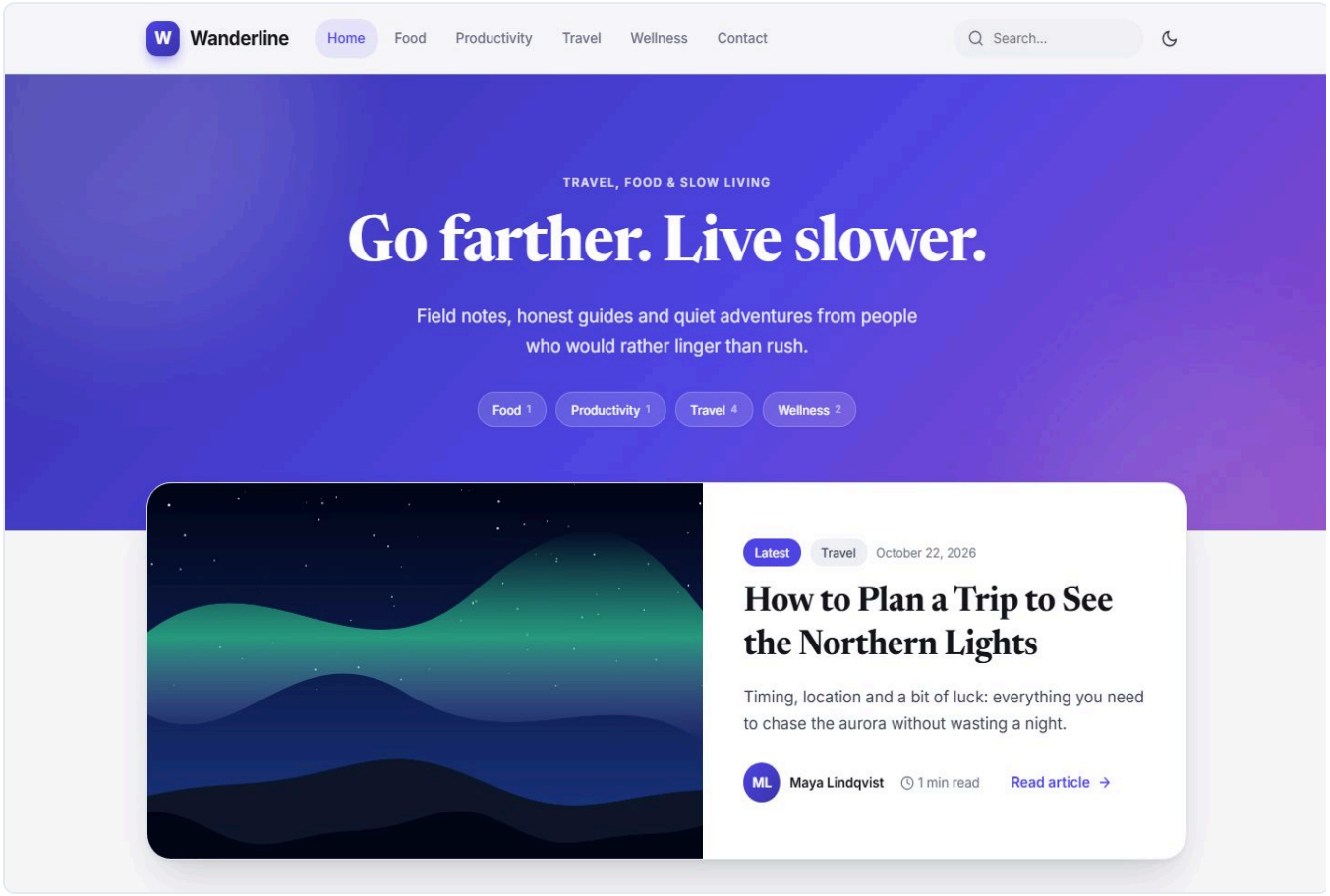
Keep the commas and quotes exactly as they are. A typo can make the site show a blank page. If that happens, set `debug` to `true` to see the message, or restore your backup of the file.

YOUR BLOG

The blog homepage

How the Blog Lite 2 homepage works: the hero section, featured latest post, article grid, popular posts, tags and menu, and how to customise each part.

The homepage is the first thing visitors see. Blog Lite 2 builds it automatically from your latest posts.



The top of the homepage: menu, hero and featured post.

The header and menu

The header is always visible while scrolling. It shows your logo (or blog name), a menu, a search box and the light/dark switch. The menu contains **Home**, up to five of your categories that have posts, and **Contact** if the contact page is turned on.

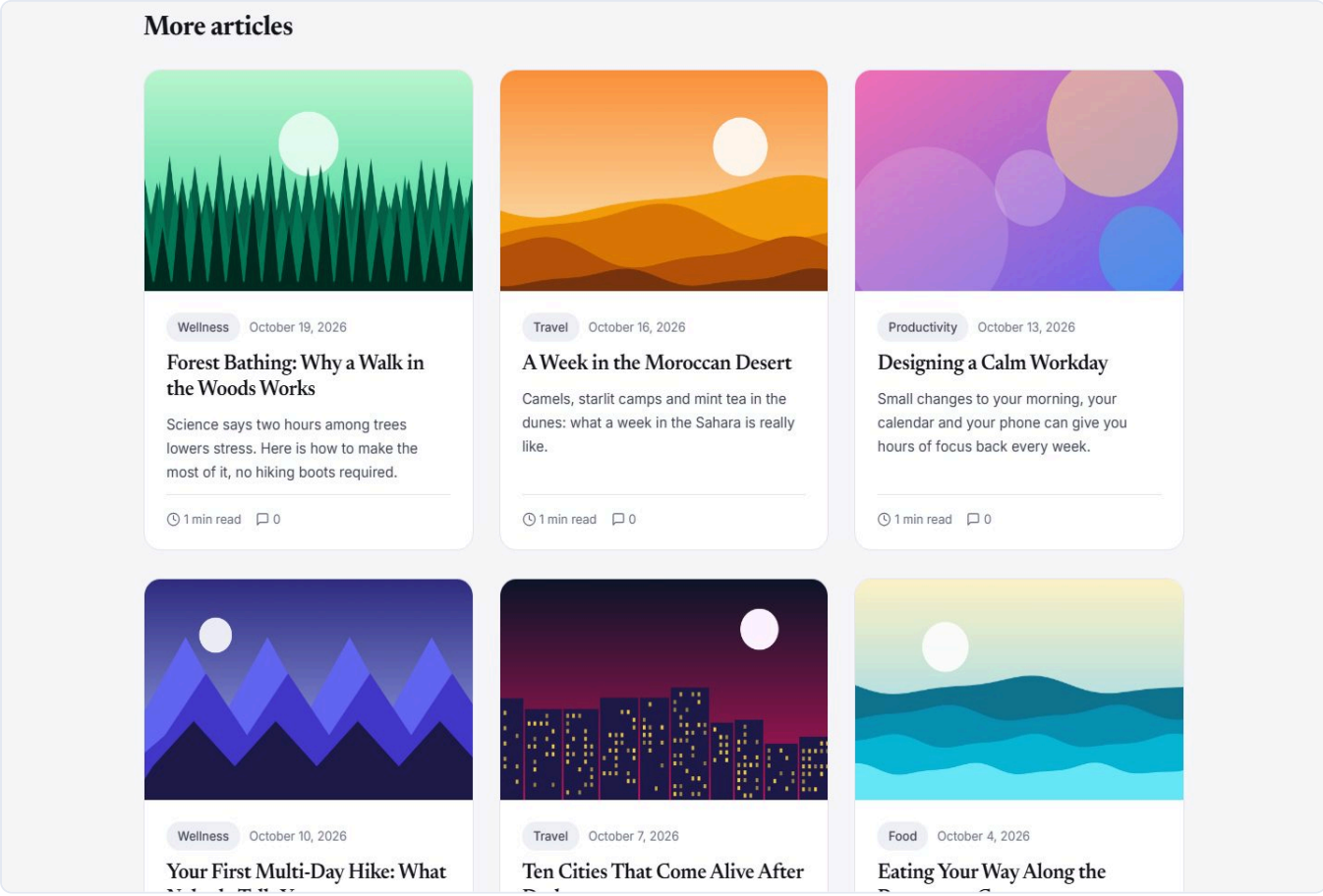
The hero section

The large coloured area shows your tagline, a big headline and a short intro text, plus a chip for each category with the number of posts. Change the texts in *Settings* → *General* (General) and the colour in *Settings* → *Appearance* (Appearance).

The featured post

On the first page, your newest published post is shown large below the hero with its cover image, category, date, author and reading time.

The article grid



Every other post appears as a card in a responsive grid.

Each card shows the cover image, category, date, title, a short summary, reading time and the number of comments. Hovering lifts the card slightly.

- If a post has no cover image, a colourful gradient with the first letter of the title is created automatically.
- The summary is the post's *excerpt*. If you left it empty, the first part of the text is used. See Writing posts.
- The number of posts per page is set in Settings (1 to 50). Page numbers appear below the grid.

Popular posts and tags

Below the grid, a **Popular right now** section lists your four most-read posts, and a tag cloud shows your most used tags. This section appears once you have at least two posts.

The footer

The footer shows your "About the blog" text, links to categories and the contact page, your social links and an RSS icon. See RSS feed and sitemap.

No posts yet?

A new blog shows a friendly empty state with a button that takes you to the editor. Publish your first post and the homepage fills itself.

YOUR BLOG

The article page

What readers see on a Blog Lite 2 article page: cover image, reading time, view count, share buttons, tags, comments and related posts.

The article page is designed for comfortable reading, with large serif text and plenty of space.



The top of an article: category, date, headline, summary, author and cover image.

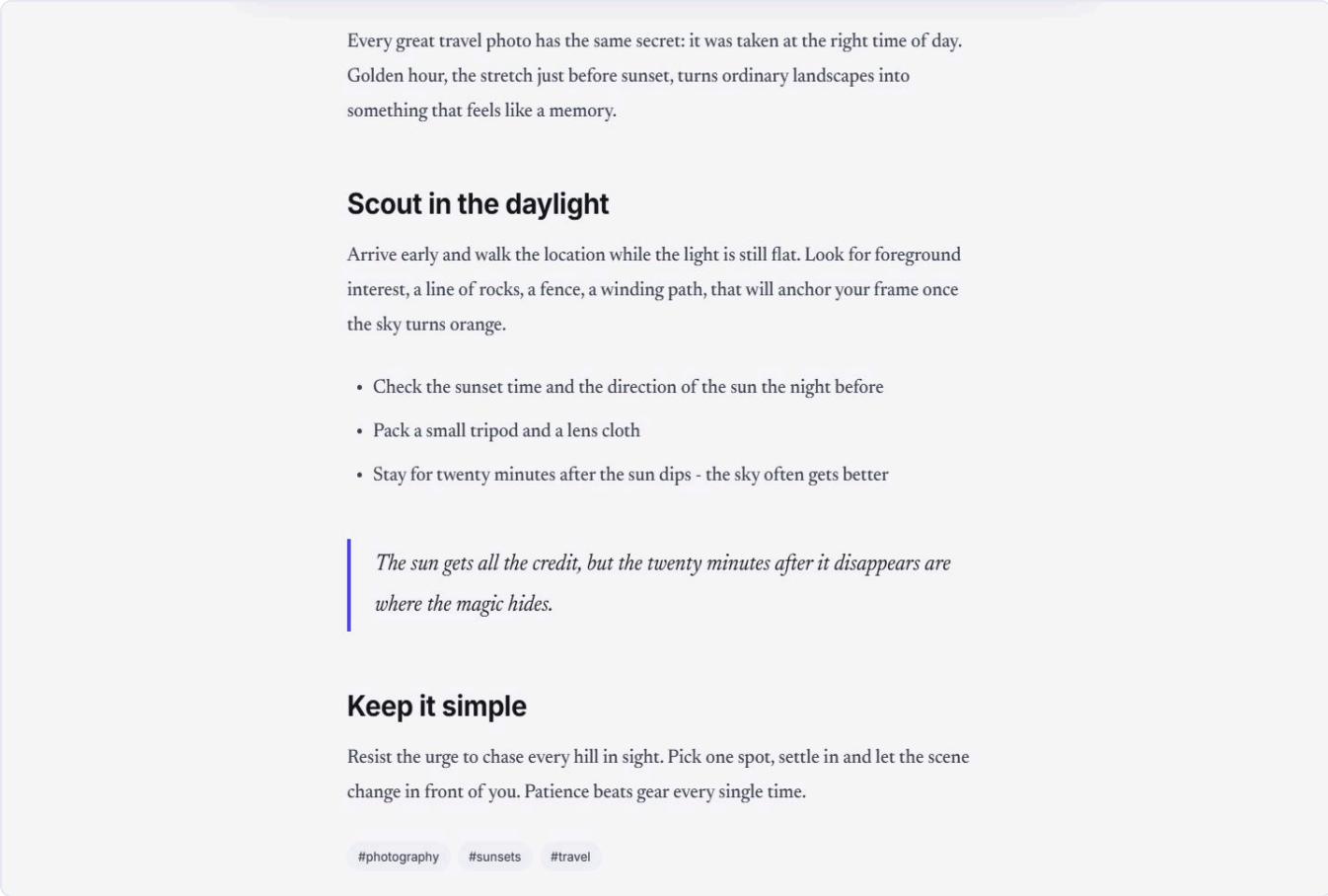
What is shown

- **Category and date** above the headline. The category links to its page.
- **Headline and summary** - the summary is the excerpt you wrote (or the AI suggested).
- **Author, reading time and views.** Reading time is calculated from the word count. Views are counted once per visitor session, and your own visits as a logged-in administrator are not counted.
- **Cover image** in a wide frame. Without one, a gradient is created.
- **The article body** - headings, lists, quotes, images and links styled automatically.

Reading progress bar

A thin coloured bar at the top of the page shows how far the visitor has read.

Tags and sharing



Formatted text, tags and share buttons at the end of the article.

Under the text, tags link to a page listing every post with that tag. The **Share** row has buttons for Facebook, X (Twitter) and LinkedIn, plus a **Copy link** button.

Comments

Below the share buttons visitors can read and write comments. See Visitor comments.

Related posts

At the bottom, **Keep reading** shows up to three posts that share the same category or tags, to lead readers to the next article.

Draft preview

When you are logged in as administrator you can open a post that is saved as a *draft*. A notice says "This is a draft - only you can see it". Visitors get a "page not found" message. See Managing posts.

Search engines

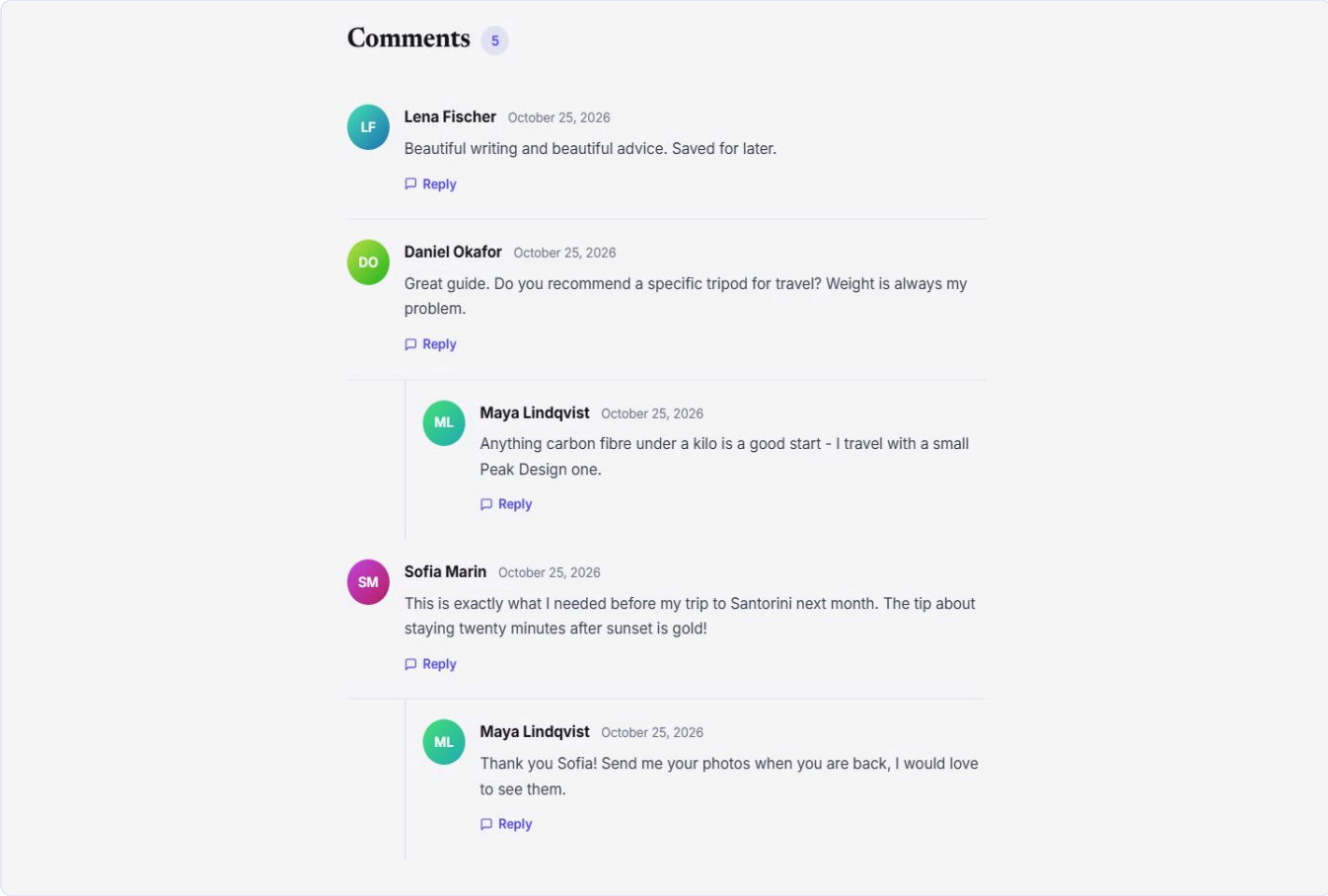
The browser title and description of each article come from the post title and its *SEO description* field. Fill that field for every post. See Writing posts.

YOUR BLOG

Comments and replies for visitors

How comments work in Blog Lite 2: commenting without registering, threaded replies, spam protection, moderation and the rules visitors must follow.

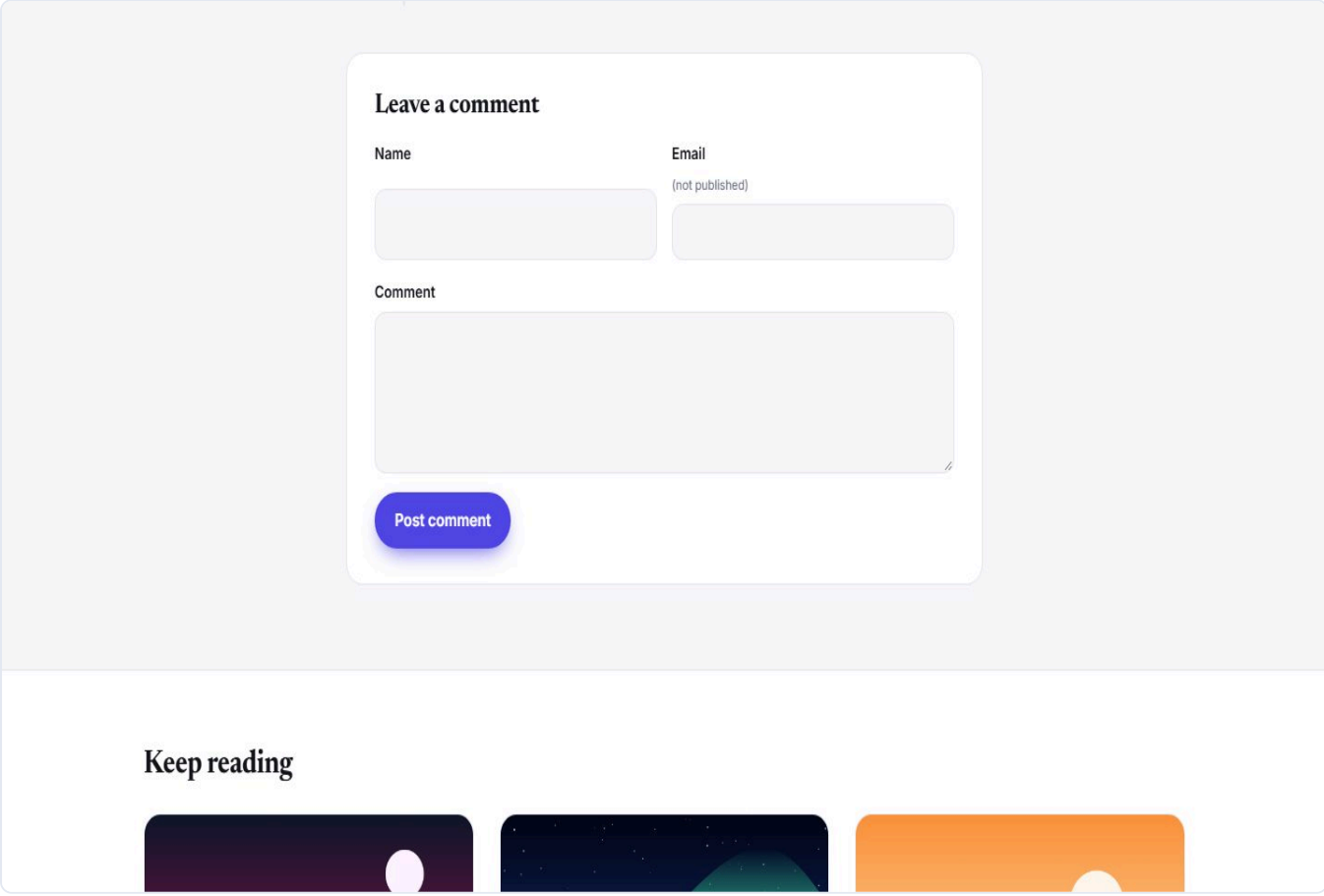
Visitors can discuss your articles without creating an account. You stay in control because new comments wait for your approval by default.



Comments appear under each article, with replies indented below the comment they answer.

Leaving a comment

At the bottom of every article there is a **Leave a comment** form.



The comment form.

Field	Rules
Name	2 to 60 characters. Shown publicly.
Email	A valid address. It is **never** shown publicly.
Comment	3 to 2000 characters, with at most 2 links.

Replying to a comment

Under each comment there is a **Reply** button. It moves the visitor to the form with a "Replying to..." banner. The reply is shown indented under the comment. Replies are one level deep: a reply to a reply is attached to the original comment, which keeps threads easy to read.

What happens after sending

- With **moderation on** (the default), the visitor sees "Your comment will appear after it has been approved". You approve it in the admin panel. See Comment moderation.
- With moderation off, the comment is published immediately.
- You can switch comments off for the whole blog, or for a single post. See Comments and contact.

Built-in spam protection

- A hidden field that humans never fill in, but spam bots do.

- A minimum time between opening the page and sending the form.
- At most one comment every 30 seconds from the same visitor.
- A limit of two links per comment.
- A security token on every form so nobody can submit comments from another website.

Privacy

Visitor emails are stored in `data/comments.xml` and are visible only to you in the admin panel.

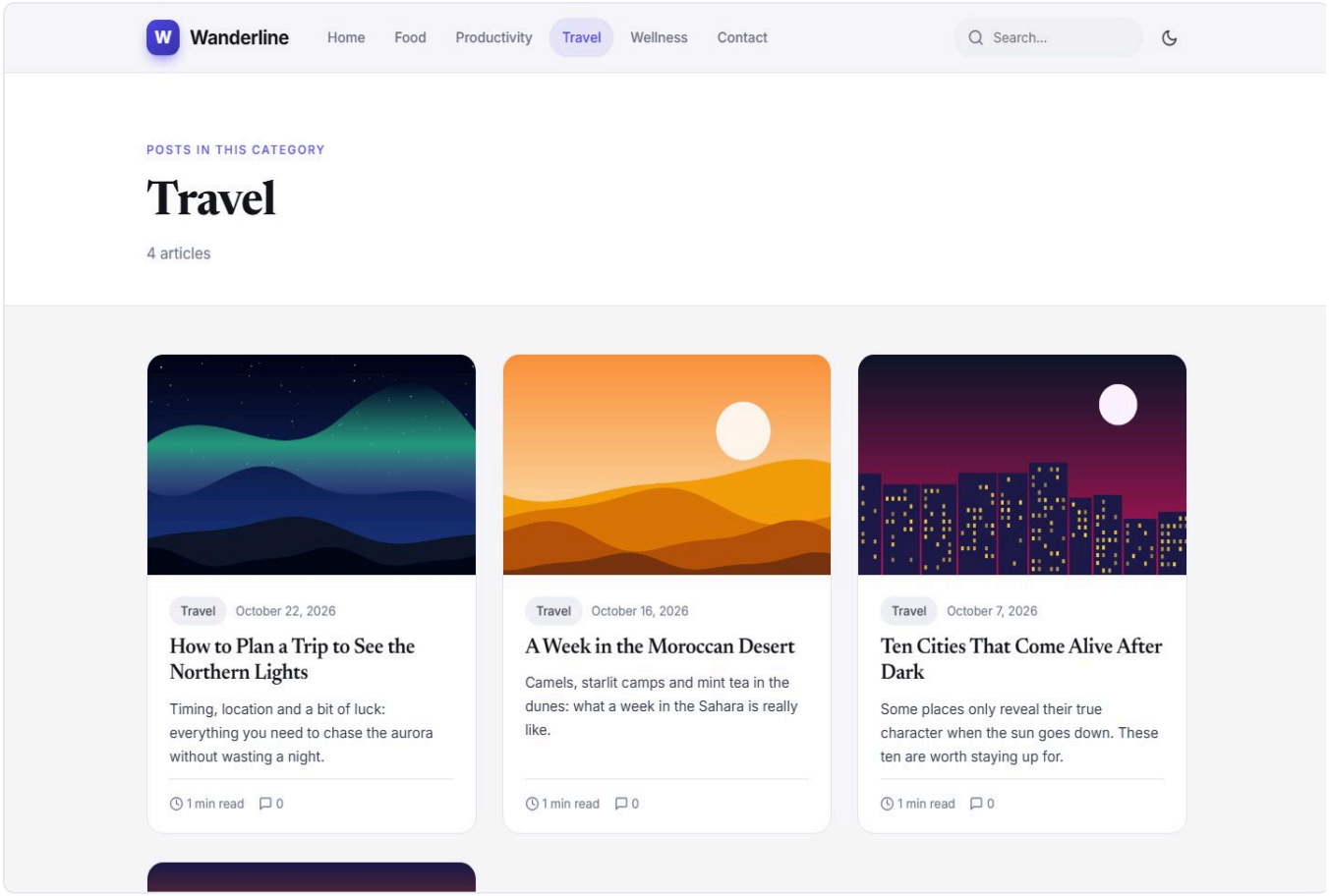
YOUR BLOG

Search, categories and tags

How visitors find content in Blog Lite 2: instant search in the header, category pages, tag pages and pagination, plus how to set them up.

Blog Lite 2 gives readers three ways to find what they are looking for.

Categories



A category page lists every post in that category.

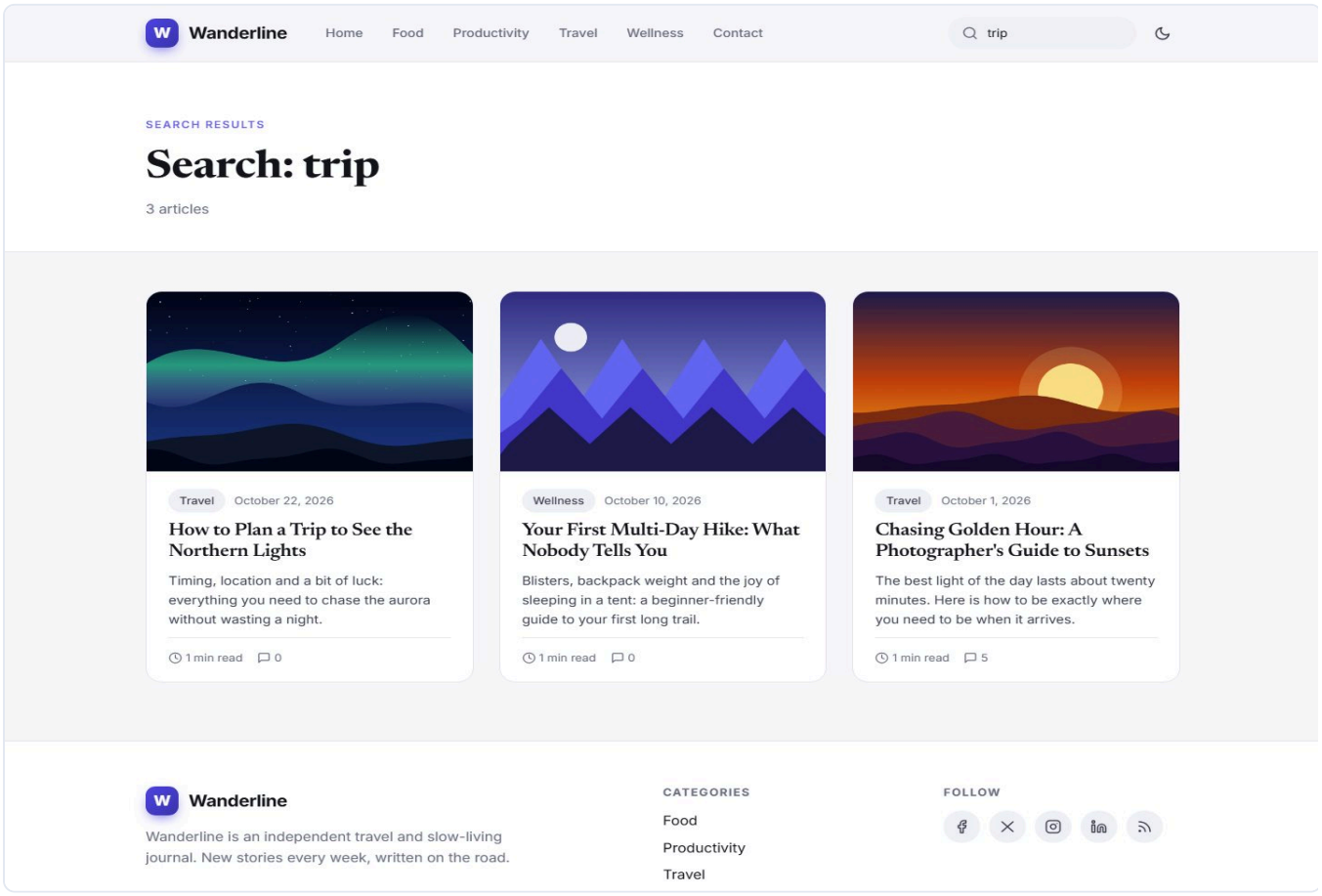
Every category with at least one published post gets its own page. Categories appear in the header menu (the first five), as chips on the homepage and in the footer. The address of a category page is `yoursite.com/category/name` when pretty URLs are on.

A post belongs to one category. Create and manage categories in the admin panel: Categories.

Tags

Tags are free keywords such as "recipes" or "travel tips". You type them, separated by commas, in the post editor. Under an article, each tag links to a page listing all posts with that tag. Use tags for topics that cut across categories.

Search



Search results for the word "trip".

The search box in the header searches the title, summary, full text and tags of every published post. Results are shown as cards with page numbers. Drafts are never included.

- Search is simple and fast: it looks for your words anywhere in the post.
- If nothing matches, visitors see a friendly "Nothing found" message with a link back to the homepage.

Pagination

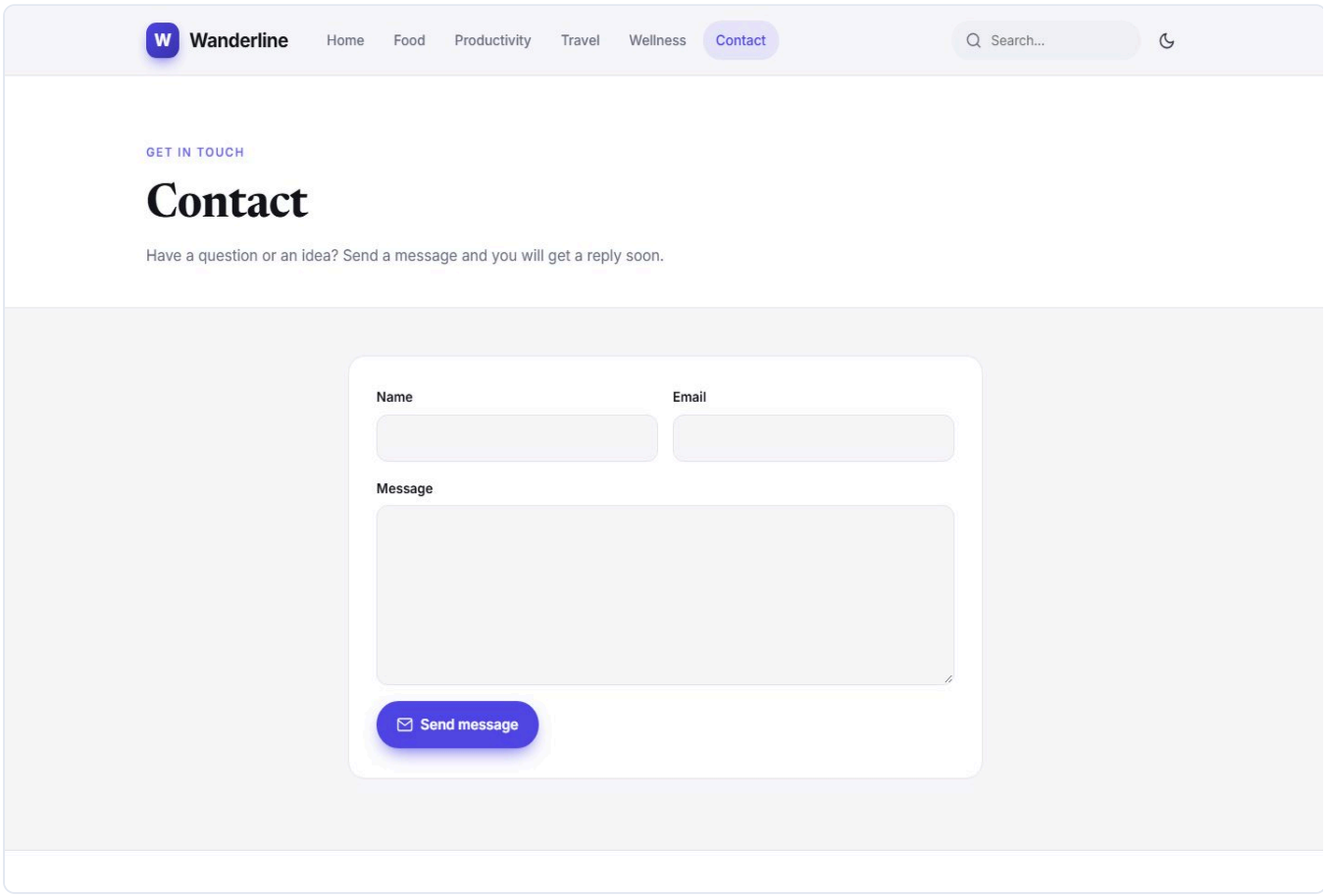
Long lists are split into pages. Change the number of posts per page in *Settings* → *General* (General).

YOUR BLOG

The contact page

How the Blog Lite 2 contact form works: what visitors enter, where messages arrive, optional email notifications and how to turn the page off.

Blog Lite 2 includes a contact page so readers, customers and partners can write to you.



The contact page.

What visitors enter

Field	Rules
Name	2 to 60 characters
Email	A valid address, so you can reply
Message	5 to 4000 characters

The form has the same spam protection as comments: a hidden trap field, a minimum time before sending and a limit of one message per minute from the same visitor.

Where messages go

- **Always:** every message is saved in **Admin** → **Messages**, with a red badge in the sidebar for unread ones. See Messages inbox.

- **Optionally:** a copy is also emailed to the address you enter in *Settings → Comments & contact*. This needs a working `mail()` function on your server. Most hosting accounts have it, but many local test servers do not.

Never lose a message

Because messages are saved in the admin panel first, you do not lose anything even if email sending fails on your server.

Turn it off or on

Go to *Settings → Comments & contact* and switch **Show the contact page**. When it is off, the page disappears from the menu and footer and its address shows "page not found". See Comments and contact.

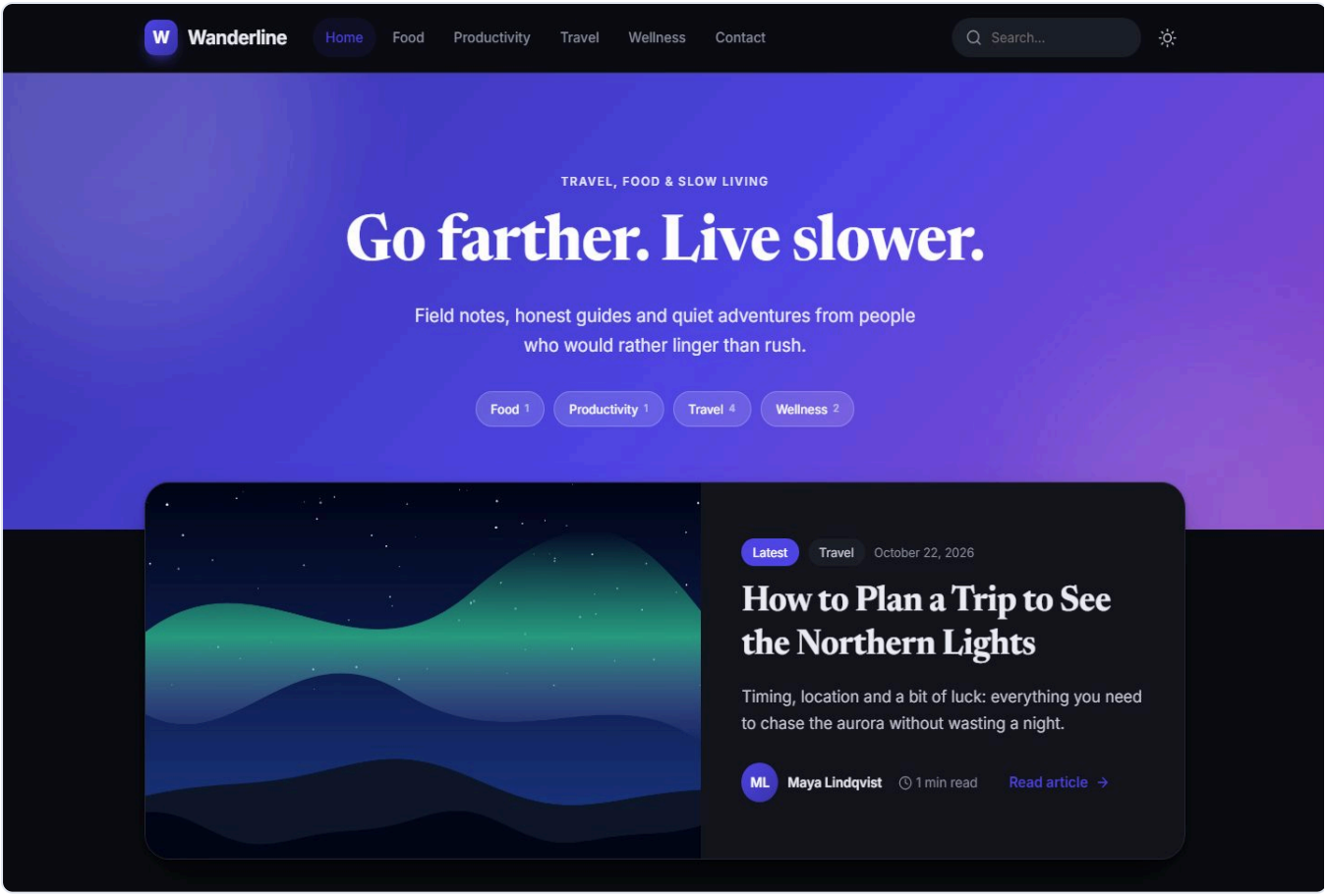
YOUR BLOG

Dark mode and mobile design

Blog Lite 2 adapts to phones, tablets and desktops, and offers a dark mode that visitors can switch on or that you can set as the default.

Your blog looks good on every screen, in bright rooms and at night.

Dark mode



The homepage in dark mode.

Visitors can switch between light and dark with the moon/sun button in the header. Their choice is remembered in their browser.

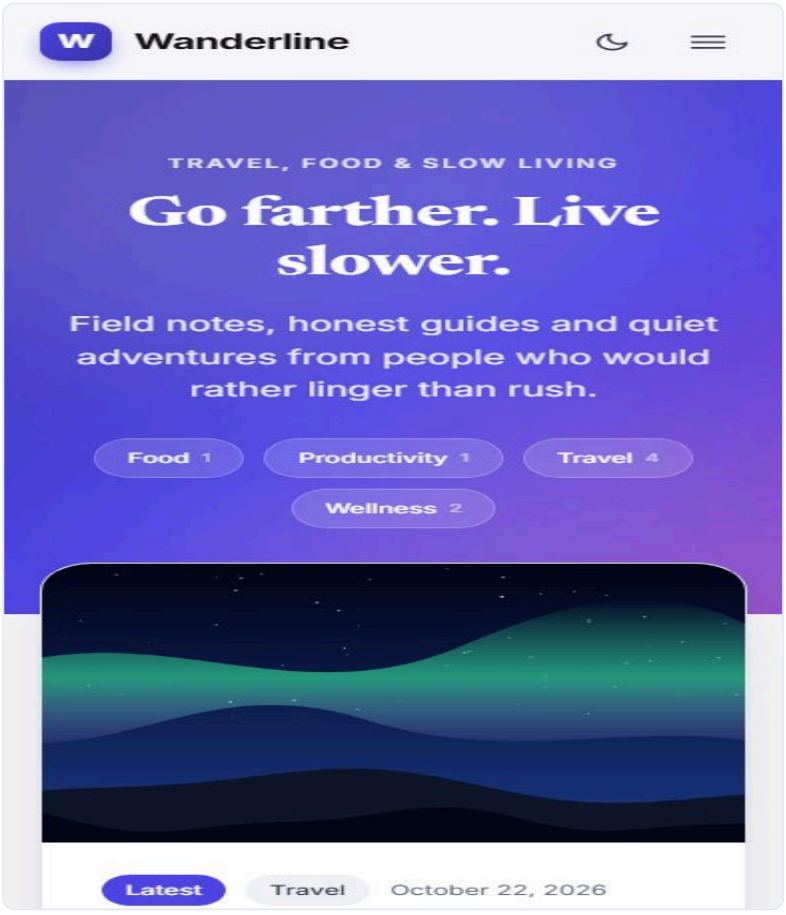
You decide what visitors see the first time in *Settings → Appearance → Default theme*:

Option	Result
Follow the visitor's device	Dark if their phone or computer is set to dark, otherwise light. This is the default.
Light	Always starts in light mode.
Dark	Always starts in dark mode.

See Appearance.

Mobile and tablet

The layout adapts automatically. Cards stack into one column on phones, the menu collapses into a button, and text stays easy to read.



The homepage on a phone.



An article on a phone.

Good for search engines

Search engines prefer sites that work well on phones. Because Blog Lite 2 is responsive out of the box, you do not need a separate mobile version.

The admin panel is responsive too

You can write and moderate comments from a phone: the sidebar becomes a slide-out menu.

YOUR BLOG

RSS feed and sitemap

Blog Lite 2 creates an RSS feed and an XML sitemap automatically. Learn their addresses and how to submit the sitemap to Google Search Console.

Two files are created automatically and always stay up to date: an RSS feed for your readers and a sitemap for search engines.

RSS feed

The feed contains your 20 newest published posts with title, link, date and summary. Readers can subscribe with any feed reader. A small RSS icon in the footer links to it.

Pretty URLs	Address
On	`https://yoursite.com/rss.xml`
Off	`https://yoursite.com/index.php?route=rss.xml`

Sitemap

The sitemap lists the homepage, every category and every published post, with the date each post was last updated. Drafts are never listed.

Pretty URLs	Address
On	`https://yoursite.com/sitemap.xml`
Off	`https://yoursite.com/index.php?route=sitemap.xml`

Submit your sitemap to Google

1. Open Google Search Console and add your website.
2. Choose **Sitemaps** in the left menu.
3. Enter your sitemap address and press **Submit**.

Better addresses

Turn on pretty URLs for clean addresses like `/post/my-title`. See Pretty URLs.

Tips for better search results

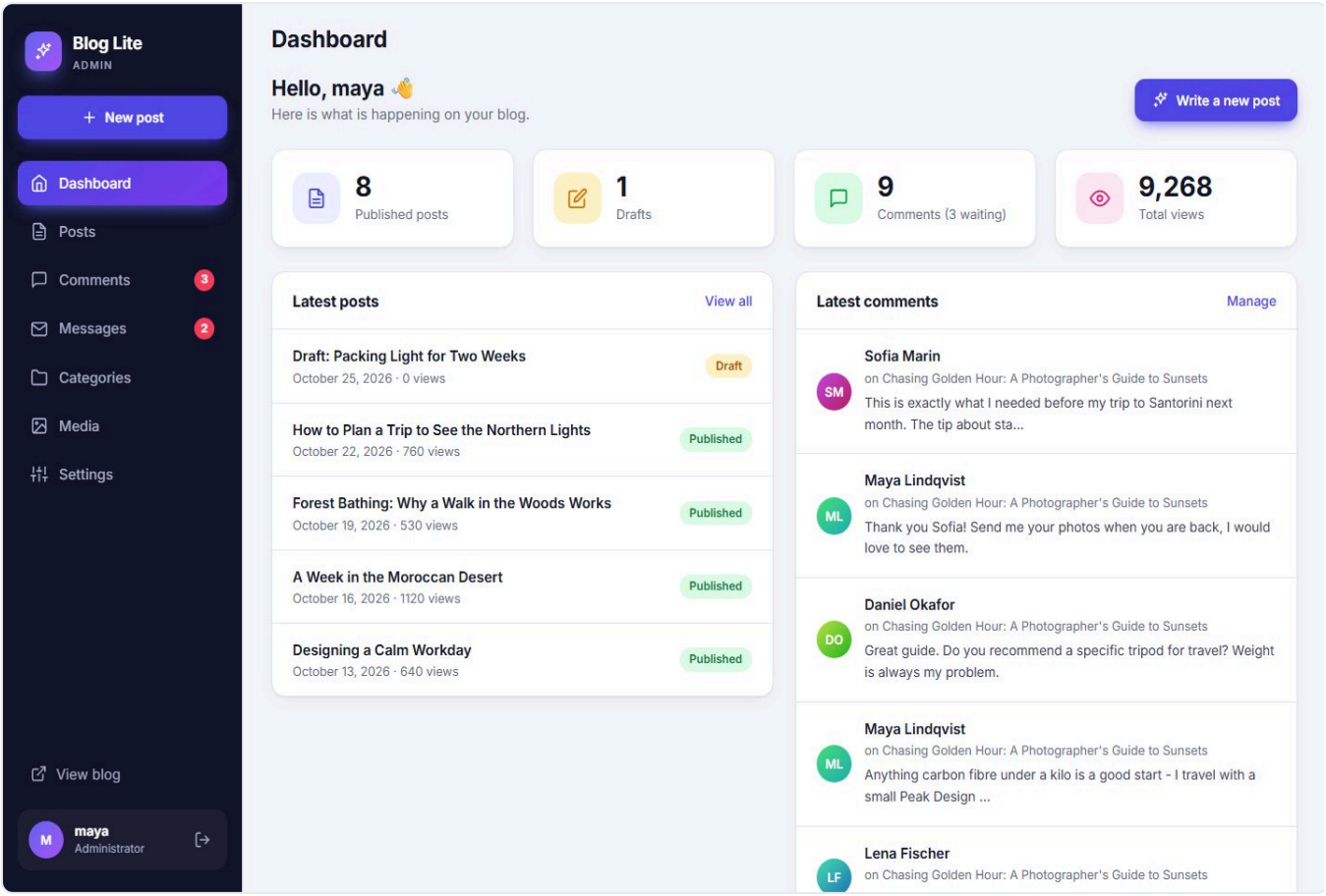
- Give every post a clear title and fill in the *SEO description* field. See Writing posts.
- Use a cover image and descriptive tags.
- Publish regularly. The AI writer can help you keep a steady rhythm. See AI writer.

ADMIN PANEL

The admin dashboard

Tour of the Blog Lite 2 admin panel: the sidebar, dashboard statistics, latest posts and comments, most read posts and setup tips.

After you log in at `yoursite.com/admin/` you land on the dashboard, your overview of the blog.



The admin dashboard.

The sidebar

Item	What it opens
New post	The post editor. See Writing posts.
Dashboard	This overview.
Posts	All posts and drafts. See Managing posts.
Comments	Approve or delete visitor comments. A red badge shows how many wait for approval. See Comment moderation.
Messages	Messages from the contact form, with a badge for unread ones. See Messages inbox.
Categories	See Categories.
Media	Uploaded images. See Media library.

Settings	All options. See General.

At the bottom you find **View blog** (opens your public site in a new tab) and your user card with the log out button.

Statistics

Four cards show the number of **published posts**, **drafts**, **comments** (with how many are waiting) and **total views** of all articles.

Latest posts and comments

Two panels list your five newest posts (with status and views) and your five newest comments. Click a post title to edit it. Comments waiting for approval carry a "Pending" label.

Most read

Once your posts have views, a bar chart shows your five most-read articles so you can see what your audience likes.

Setup tips

The dashboard warns you about things that need attention:

- The `data` or `uploads` folder is not writable.
- The AI writer is enabled but has no API key yet. See AI API keys (Groq, DeepSeek, OpenAI).
- You have not created a category yet.

On a phone

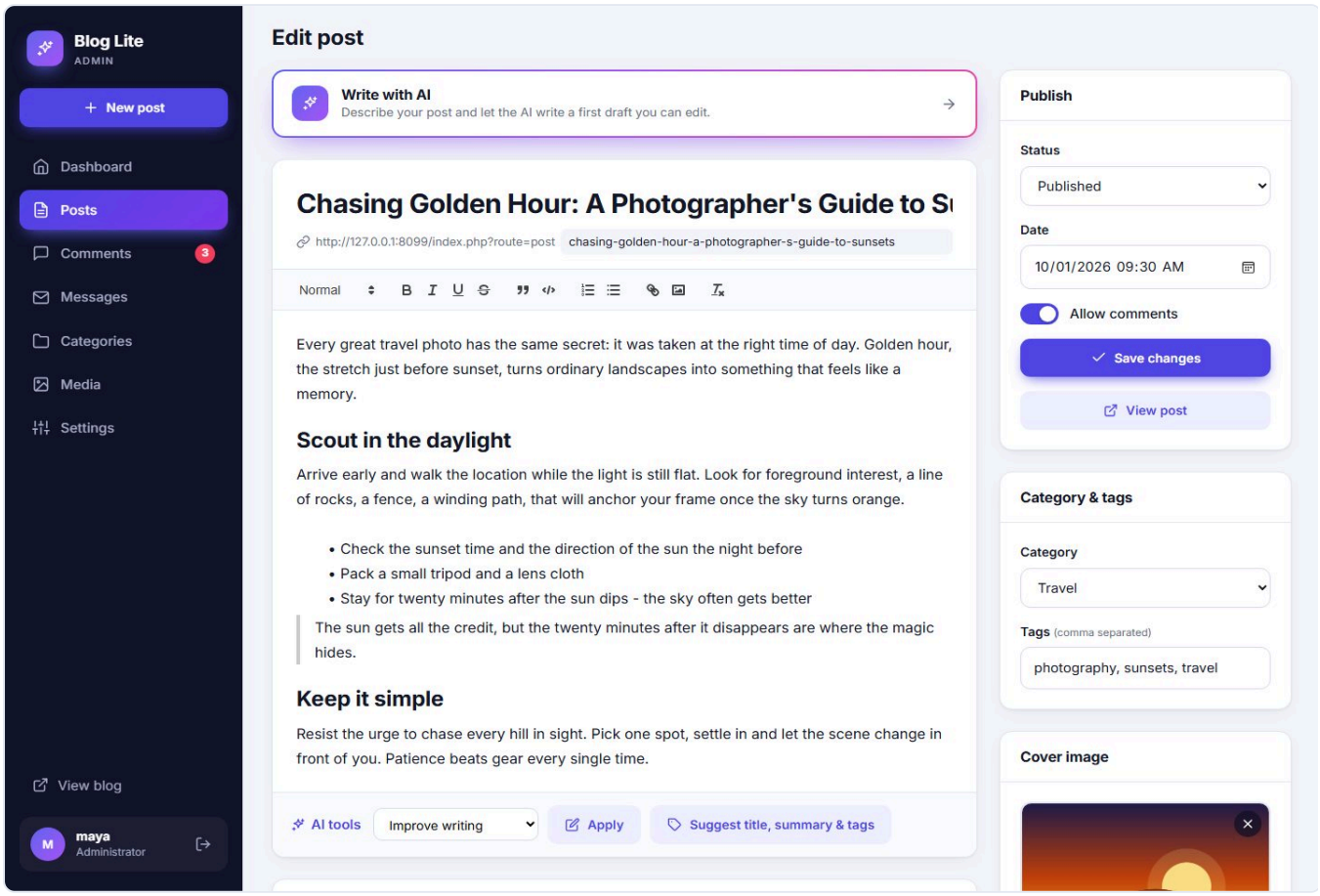
On small screens the sidebar becomes a slide-out menu. Tap the menu icon in the top left to open it.

ADMIN PANEL

Writing and publishing a post

Learn the Blog Lite 2 post editor: title, visual editor, cover image, category, tags, excerpt, SEO description, draft or publish, and comments.

The post editor is where you spend most of your time. Open it with the **New post** button in the sidebar, or click a title in the posts list to edit an existing post.



The post editor: writing area on the left, publishing options on the right.

Title and address

Type the **title** at the top. Below it, the **address** (also called the slug) is created automatically, for example `my-first-post`. You can change it. If another post already uses the same address, a number is added to keep it unique.

The visual editor

Write like in a word processor. The toolbar offers:

- **Normal / headings** - use Heading 2 for main sections and Heading 3 for subsections
- **Bold, italic, underline and strikethrough**
- **Quote and code block**
- **Numbered and bulleted lists**

- **Link** - select text and add an address
- **Image** - pick a file from your computer. It is uploaded to your media library and inserted at the cursor.
- **Clear formatting**

Use headings. They make your post easier to read and help search engines understand it. The article page turns them into a clear structure.

Excerpt and SEO description

- **Excerpt** - the short summary shown on cards and under the headline. Up to 400 characters. If you leave it empty, the first part of the text is used.
- **SEO description** - the text search engines show under your title. Aim for about 155 characters. If empty, the excerpt is used.

The publish box

Option	Meaning
Status	**Published** is visible to everyone. **Draft** is hidden: only you can preview it.
Date	The date shown on the post. New posts use now. You can set another date, for example for older content.
Allow comments	Switch comments on or off for this post only.
Publish / Save changes	Saves the post and keeps you on the page. A message confirms "Post published" or "Draft saved".
View post	Opens the post on your public site (shown for saved posts).

Category and tags

Choose one **category** from the list (create categories first, see Categories). Type **tags** separated by commas, such as `travel tips, packing`.

Cover image

Click the dashed box to upload an image (JPG, PNG, WebP or GIF). It appears as a preview straight away. The cross button removes it. Landscape images around 1200 × 750 pixels look best. Without a cover, a coloured gradient is shown on the site.

If the visual editor does not load

The editor is loaded from the internet. If your connection blocks it, a plain box appears where you can type HTML. Everything else, including the AI writer, still works.

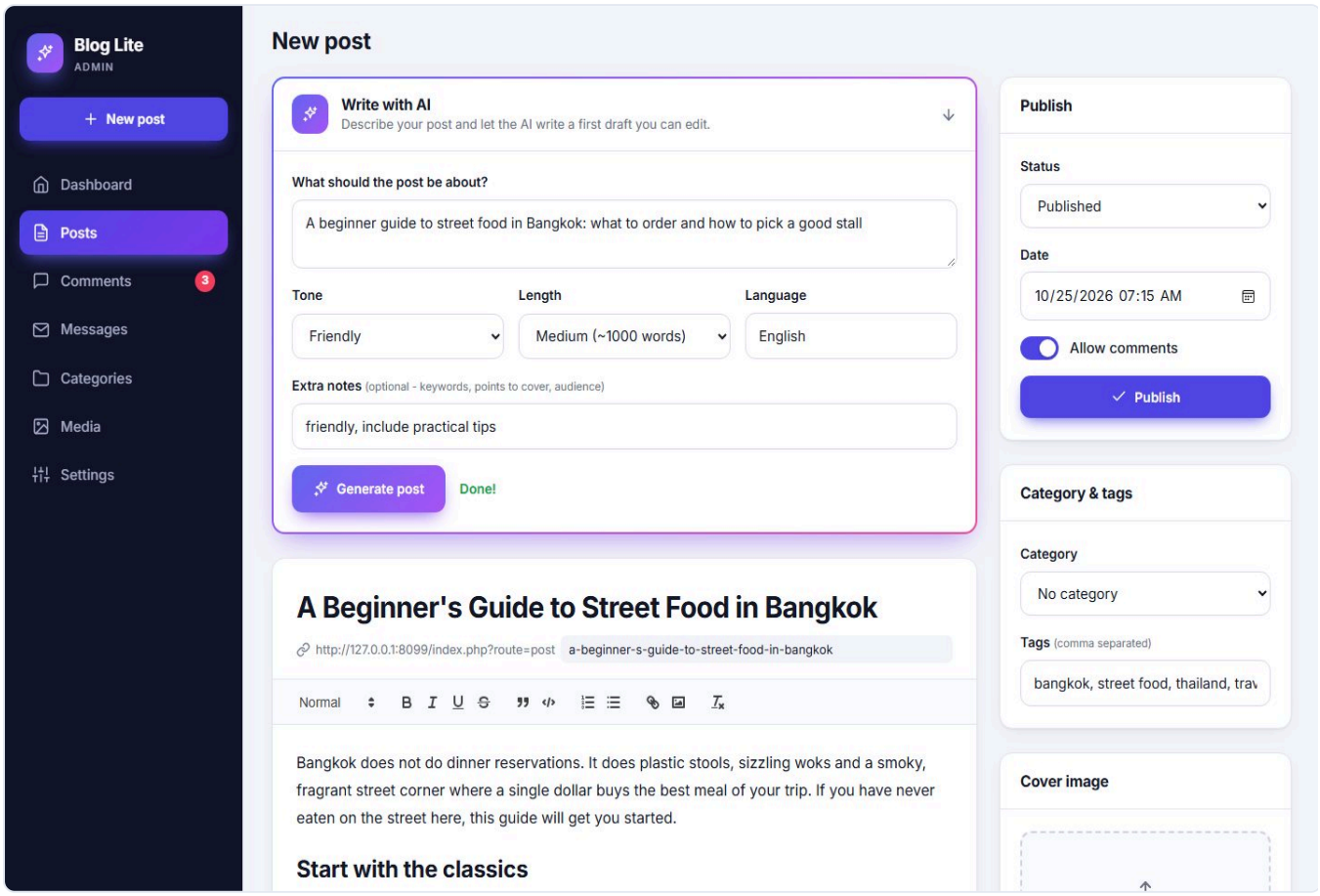
Want a first draft written for you? See the AI writer.

ADMIN PANEL

Writing posts with the AI writer

Use the Blog Lite 2 AI writer to generate a full blog post, title, excerpt and tags from a topic, then improve, shorten or expand your text with one click.

The AI writer creates a first draft of your article in seconds. You describe the topic, the AI writes, and you edit and publish. It never publishes anything by itself.



The Write with AI panel and the article it generated.

Before you start

The AI writer needs an API key. Add it once in *Settings → AI writer*. See AI API keys (Groq, DeepSeek, OpenAI). Without a key the panel shows a reminder and the button is disabled.

Generate a complete post

1. Open **New post**. The **Write with AI** panel is open on new posts. Click its title bar to open or close it.
2. Describe the post in **What should the post be about?** Be specific, for example *"A beginner guide to street food in Bangkok: what to order and how to pick a good stall"*.
3. Choose the **tone**, **length** and **language**, and add optional **extra notes** such as keywords or the audience.

4. Press **Generate post**. It takes from a few seconds to about a minute for long articles.
5. Read the result in the editor, edit it, add a cover image and publish.

The options

Option	Choices
Tone	Friendly, Professional, Casual, Inspiring, Humorous, Authoritative
Length	Short (about 500 words), Medium (about 1000), Long (about 1600)
Language	Any language you type, for example `German` or `Spanish`. Default: English.
Extra notes	Free text: keywords to include, points to cover, who the readers are.

What gets filled in

One click fills the editor with the article (headings, paragraphs, lists) and also suggests:

- the **title** (only if the title field is empty or the editor was empty)
- the **excerpt** and **SEO description** (only if they are empty)
- the **tags** (only if empty)

If the editor already contains text, you are asked to confirm before it is replaced.

AI tools for existing text

Under the editor, the **AI tools** bar works on what you have written:

Tool	What it does
Improve writing	Better clarity and flow, same meaning
Fix grammar	Corrects spelling and grammar only
Make shorter / longer	Condenses or expands the text
Add a conclusion	Adds a closing section with a call to action
More conversational / professional	Rewrites in another tone
Suggest title, summary and tags	Reads your article and proposes a title, excerpt, SEO description and tags

Choose a tool from the list and press **Apply**. The text in the editor is replaced with the improved version.

Tips for better results

- The more specific the topic, the better the article. Mention the audience and the angle.
- Always read and edit the draft. Check facts, names and numbers yourself.
- Add your own experience and examples. It makes the post unique.

- Use *Extra notes* for keywords you want to appear naturally.

Safe by design

Generated text is cleaned before it reaches the editor: scripts and unsafe code are removed.

If something goes wrong

Error messages appear in red next to the button. The most common causes are a wrong or missing API key, a used-up quota, or a local server without SSL certificates. See Troubleshooting.

ADMIN PANEL

Getting and adding an AI API key

How to get a free Groq API key, or a DeepSeek or OpenAI key, and add it to Blog Lite 2 so the AI writer can create posts for you.

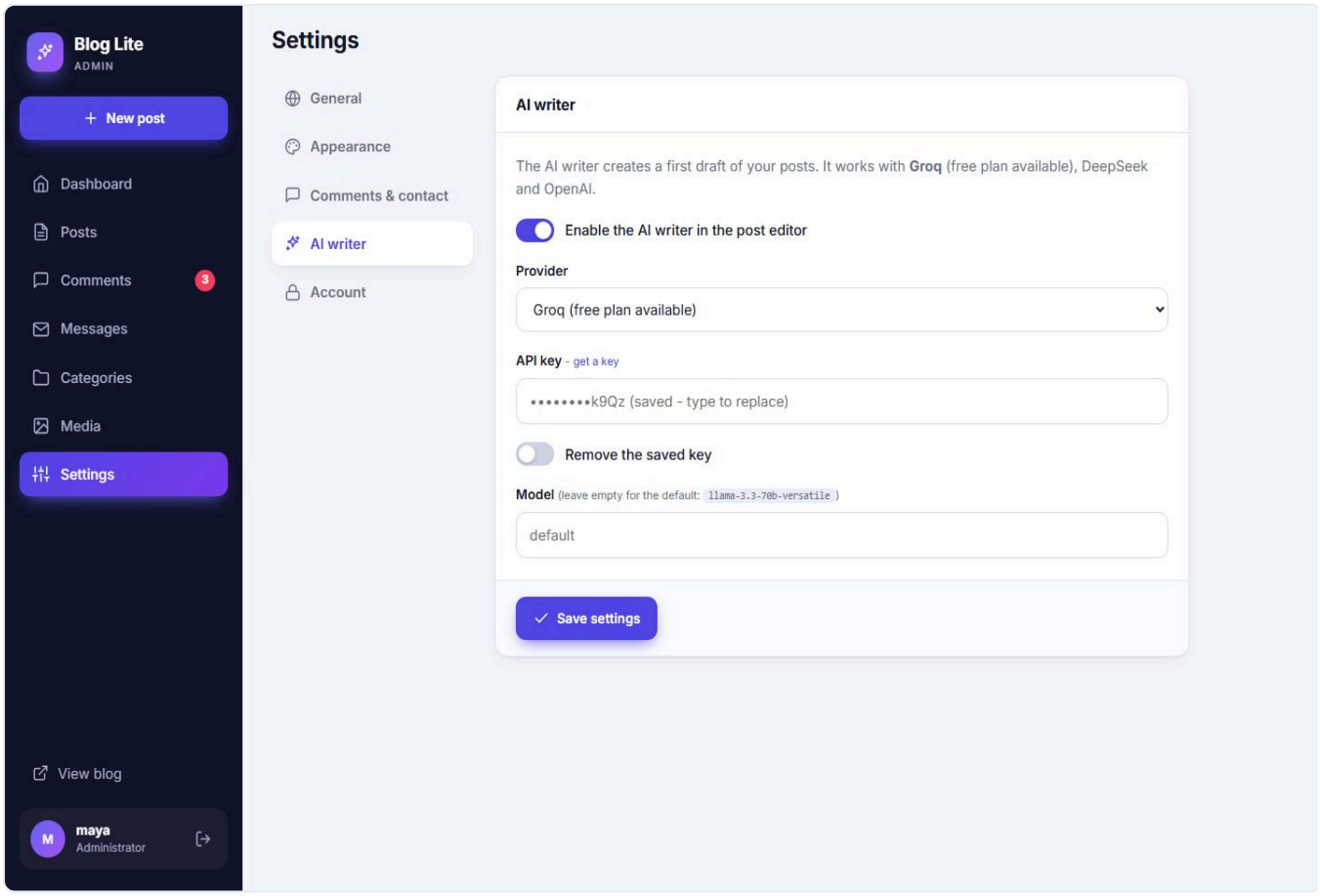
The AI writer needs an *API key*, a private password that lets your blog use an AI service. You get it from the AI company, usually in a few minutes, and paste it into the settings once.

Choose a provider

Provider	Good to know	Where to get a key
Groq (default)	Fast, with a free usage plan. Ideal to start.	console.groq.com/keys
DeepSeek	Very low cost.	platform.deepseek.com/api_keys
OpenAI (ChatGPT)	Paid, widely used models.	platform.openai.com/api-keys
Custom	Any service that is compatible with the OpenAI chat format.	Your provider

Plans, free limits and prices are set by each provider and can change. Check their websites for current conditions.

Add the key to your blog



Settings, AI writer tab.

1. Create an account with the provider and create an API key. Copy it.
2. In your admin panel open **Settings** → **AI writer**.
3. Make sure **Enable the AI writer** is on and select the **Provider**.
4. Paste the key into **API key**.
5. Press **Save settings**. Now open **New post** and try the AI writer.

The model

Leave the **Model** field empty to use the recommended model of the provider:

Provider	Default model
Groq	`llama-3.3-70b-versatile`
DeepSeek	`deepseek-chat`
OpenAI	`gpt-4o-mini`

You can type another model name if your provider offers one you prefer.

Using another compatible service

Select **Custom**, enter the **API address** (for example `https://api.example.com/v1`) and the **model name**. Blog Lite 2 sends requests to the `/chat/completions` address of that service.

Keep your key safe

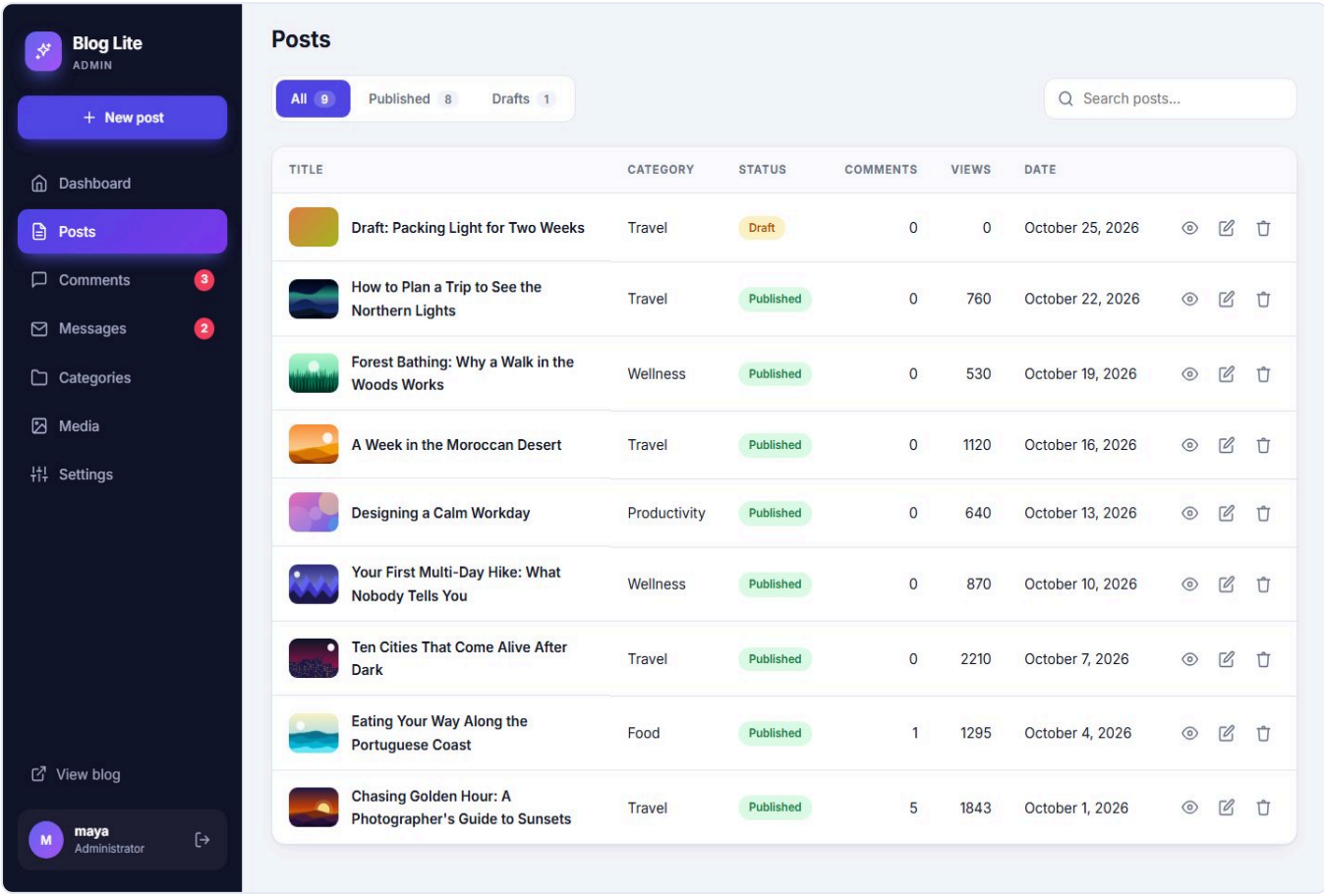
- The key is stored on your server in `data/settings.xml`, which is protected from downloading on Apache. See Security.
- After saving, the admin panel shows only the last four characters.
- To replace the key, type a new one. To delete it, tick **Remove the saved key**.
- Never share the key or post it publicly. If it leaks, delete it at the provider and create a new one.

ADMIN PANEL

Managing your posts

Use the Blog Lite 2 posts list to filter published posts and drafts, search by title, check views and comments, and edit, view or delete posts.

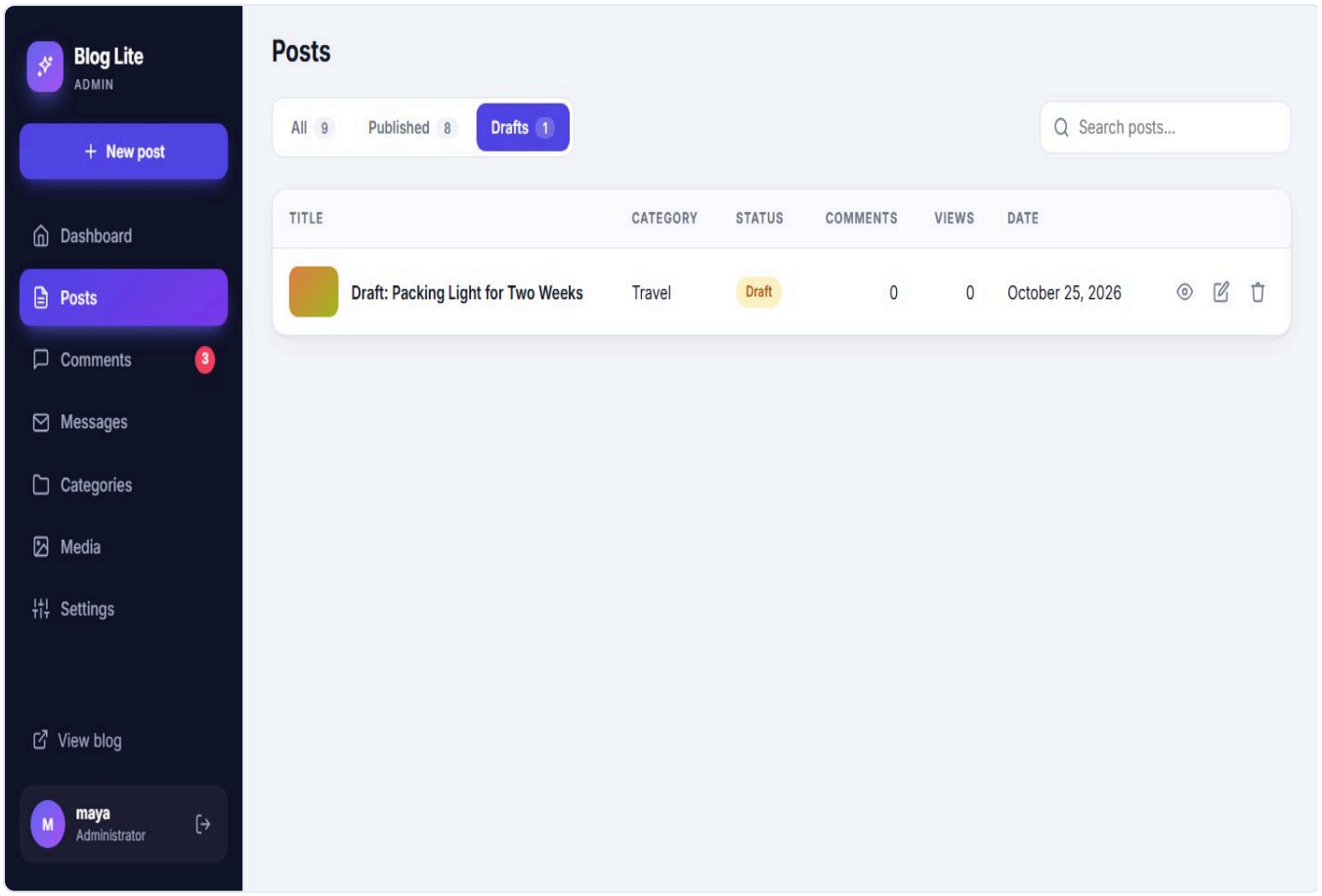
The **Posts** page lists everything you have written.



The posts list.

Filter and search

- The tabs **All**, **Published** and **Drafts** show how many posts each contains.
- The search box looks for words in the post titles.



The Drafts tab.

The columns

Column	Meaning
Title	With a small thumbnail of the cover image. Click to edit.
Category	The post's category.
Status	Published (green) or Draft (amber).
Comments	Number of approved comments.
Views	How many visitors have read it.
Date	The post date.

The actions

- **Eye icon** - open the post on your public site (also works for drafts while you are logged in).
- **Pencil icon** - edit the post. See Writing posts.
- **Bin icon** - delete the post after a confirmation.

Deleting cannot be undone

Deleting a post also deletes its comments. Make a backup first if you are unsure. See Backup and moving.

Drafts

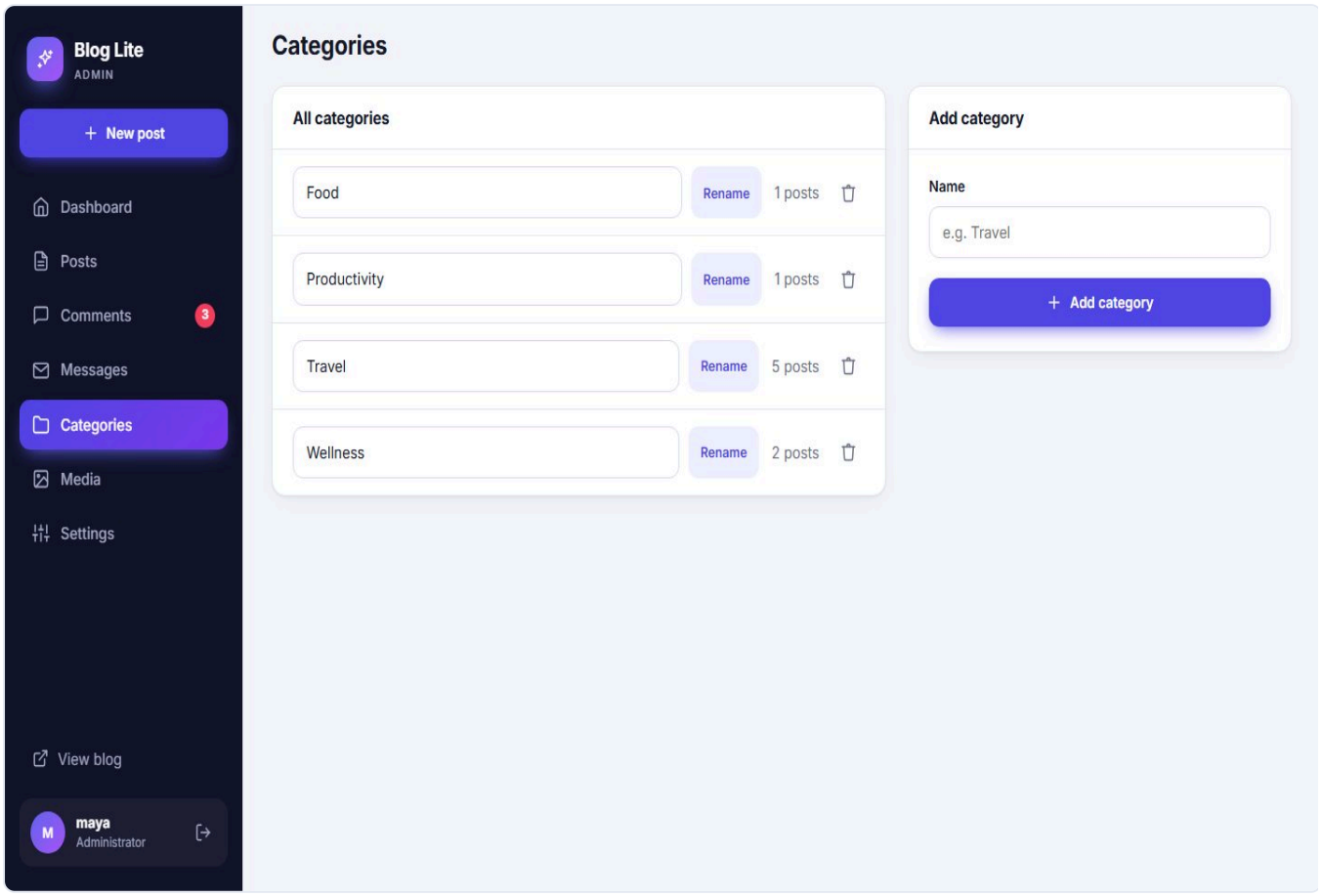
A draft is a post saved but hidden from visitors. Use drafts for work in progress, then change the status to **Published** when ready. To unpublish a post, set its status back to **Draft**.

ADMIN PANEL

Managing categories

Organise your blog with categories in Blog Lite 2: add, rename and delete them, see how many posts each has and how they appear on the site.

Categories group your posts by topic, such as "Travel" or "Recipes". Visitors can browse them from the menu, the homepage and the footer.



The categories page.

Add a category

1. Open **Categories** in the sidebar.
2. Type the name in the **Add category** box and press the button.

The address of the category page is created from the name.

Rename a category

Change the name in the text box next to it and press **Rename**. The address changes with the name.

Delete a category

Click the bin icon and confirm. **Your posts are not deleted.** They simply become uncategorised.

How categories appear on your blog

- A category only appears on the public site once it has at least one *published* post.
- The header menu shows up to five categories. The homepage hero and footer list more.
- The number next to a category counts published posts.

Choose a category for a post

In the post editor, pick it from **Category** in the right-hand panel. Each post has one category. For extra topics use tags. See Search, categories and tags.

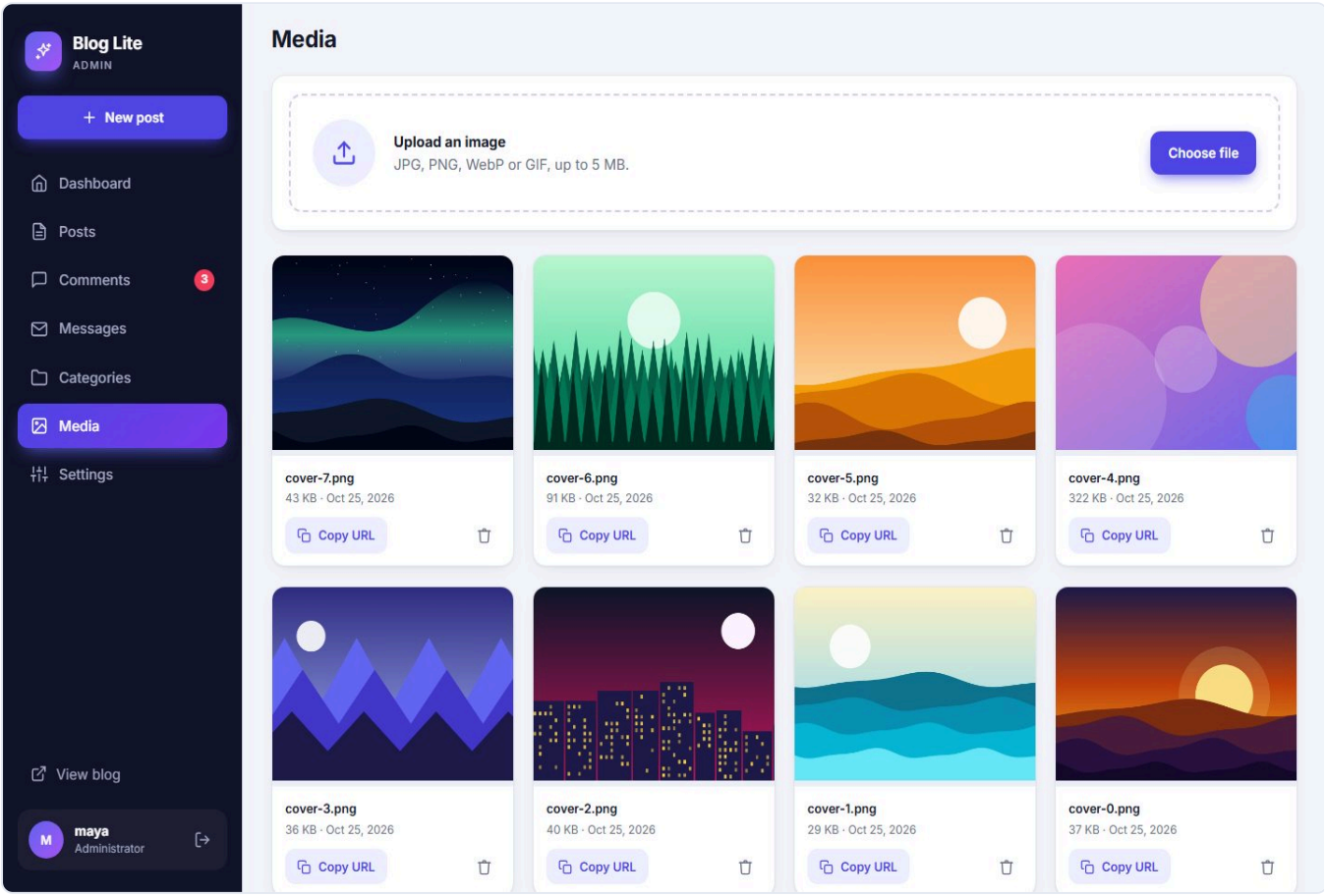
Keep the number of categories small (three to eight). Too many categories make it harder for visitors to choose.

ADMIN PANEL

The media library

Upload JPG, PNG, WebP and GIF images in Blog Lite 2, copy image links, delete files and learn about upload limits and cover image sizes.

The **Media** page shows every image you have uploaded.



The media library.

Upload an image

1. Open **Media**.
2. Press **Choose file** and select an image. It uploads immediately.

Images you add inside the post editor, and cover images, are saved to the same library automatically.

Allowed files

- JPG, PNG, GIF and WebP images only. Other files are rejected, even if renamed.
- Maximum size: 5 MB by default. Change it with `max_upload_mb` in config.php. Your server may have a smaller limit set in `php.ini`.
- Files are renamed automatically to avoid conflicts.

Copy an image link

Press **Copy URL** under an image to copy its full web address. Use it in links, newsletters or other websites.

Delete an image

Press the bin icon and confirm. Posts that still use that image will lose their picture, so check first.

Image tips

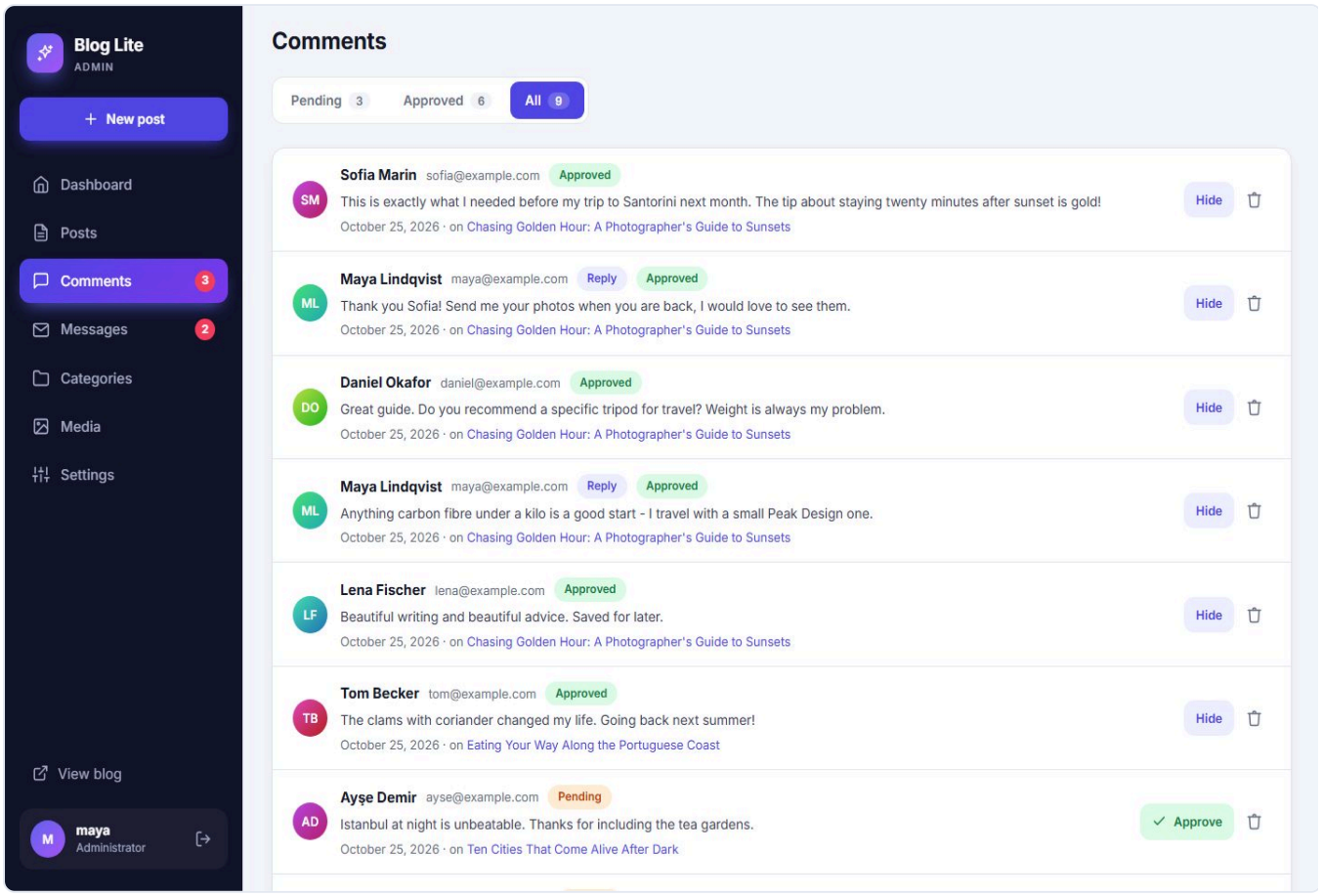
- Cover images look best at about **1200 × 750** pixels (landscape).
- Compress large photos before uploading. Smaller files make your pages load faster.
- Use descriptive text when you insert images. It helps readers and search engines.

ADMIN PANEL

Moderating comments

Approve, hide or delete visitor comments in the Blog Lite 2 admin panel, understand replies and pending comments, and keep spam away.

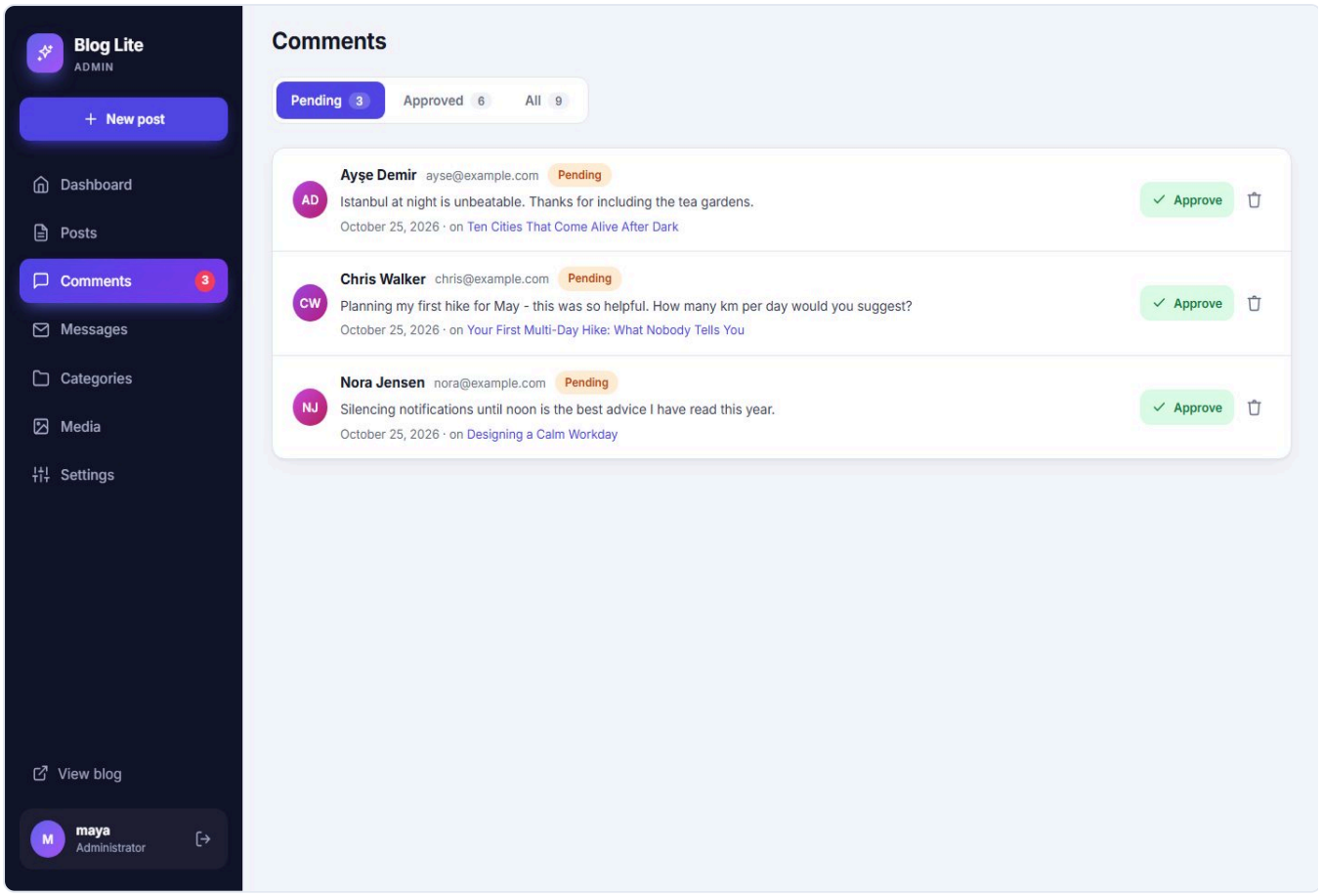
Open **Comments** in the sidebar to review what visitors have written. A red number next to the menu item tells you how many comments wait for approval.



The comments page, showing all comments.

The tabs

Tab	Shows
Pending	New comments waiting for your decision. They are not visible to visitors yet.
Approved	Comments that are live on your site.
All	Everything.



The Pending tab.

The actions

- **Approve** - publishes the comment.
- **Hide** - takes an approved comment off the site (it returns to Pending).
- **Bin icon** - deletes the comment for good, after a confirmation.

Each row shows the visitor's name and email (email is visible only to you), the text, the date and the post it belongs to. Click the post title to see the comment in context.

Replies

Replies carry a **Reply** label. A reply only appears on the site if it is approved. If you delete a comment, **its replies are deleted too**.

Answering a comment

Visitors can reply on the article page. Open the post, find the comment and press **Reply**. Your answer is posted like any other comment, so approve it if moderation is on.

Moderation settings

- Require approval for every comment (recommended) - see Comments and contact.
- Turn comments off for the whole blog, or for one post in its editor. See Writing posts.

Fighting spam

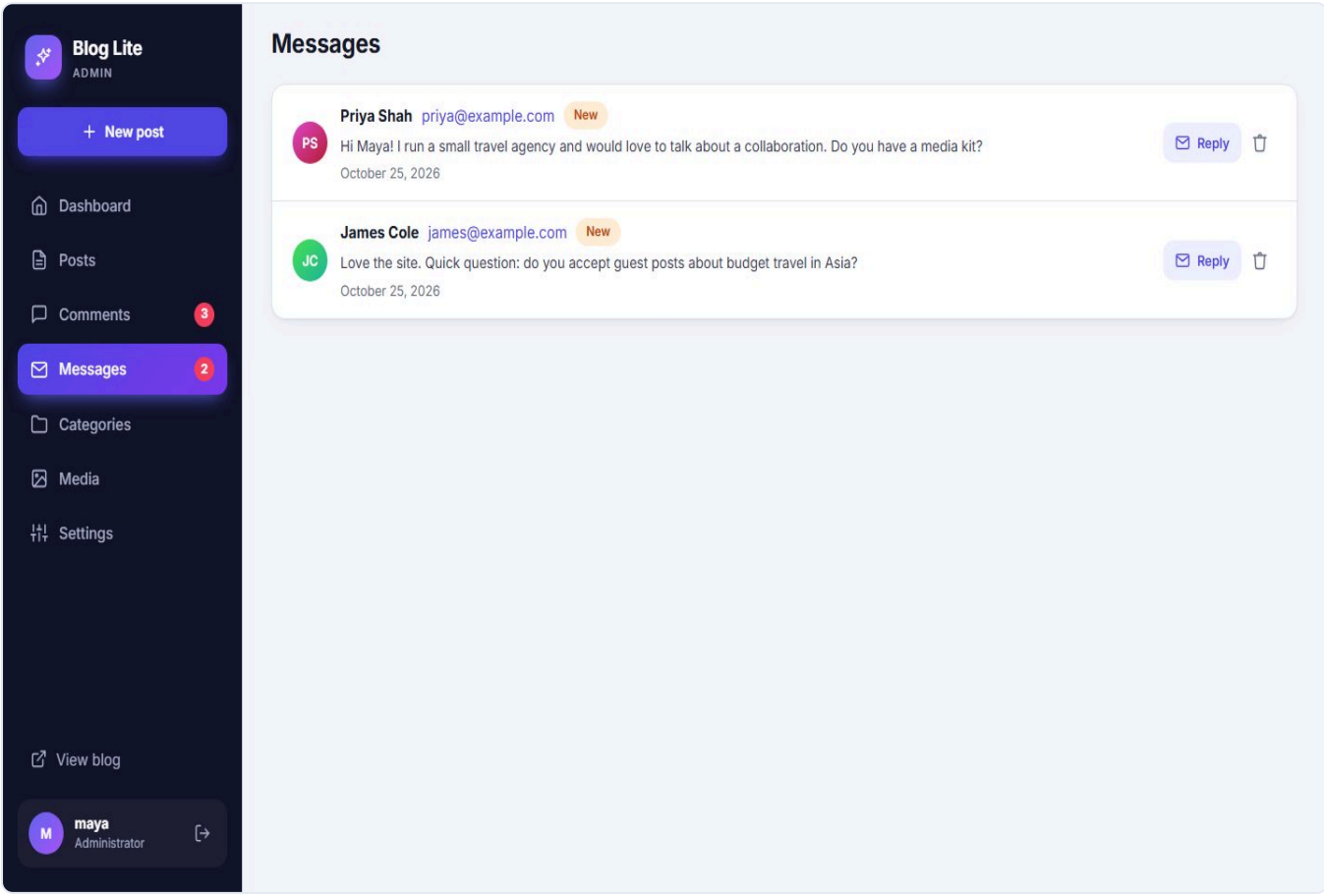
Hidden trap fields and rate limits stop most bots. Keep approval switched on and you will never see spam on your site. See Security.

ADMIN PANEL

The messages inbox

Read messages sent through the Blog Lite 2 contact form, reply by email with one click, see unread messages and delete old ones.

Everything visitors send from your contact page is collected under **Messages**.



The messages inbox.

Reading messages

- Newest messages come first.
- Unread messages carry a **New** label, and a red badge on the sidebar item shows how many are unread.
- When you open the Messages page, everything is marked as read.
- Each message shows the name, email, text and date.

Replying

Press **Reply** (or click the email address). Your email program opens with the visitor's address filled in. Blog Lite 2 does not send replies itself.

Deleting

Use the bin icon next to a message and confirm. Deleted messages cannot be restored.

Email notifications

If you enter an email address in *Settings → Comments & contact*, each new message is also emailed to you. See Comments and contact. The inbox always keeps a copy, even if email delivery fails.

Stored safely

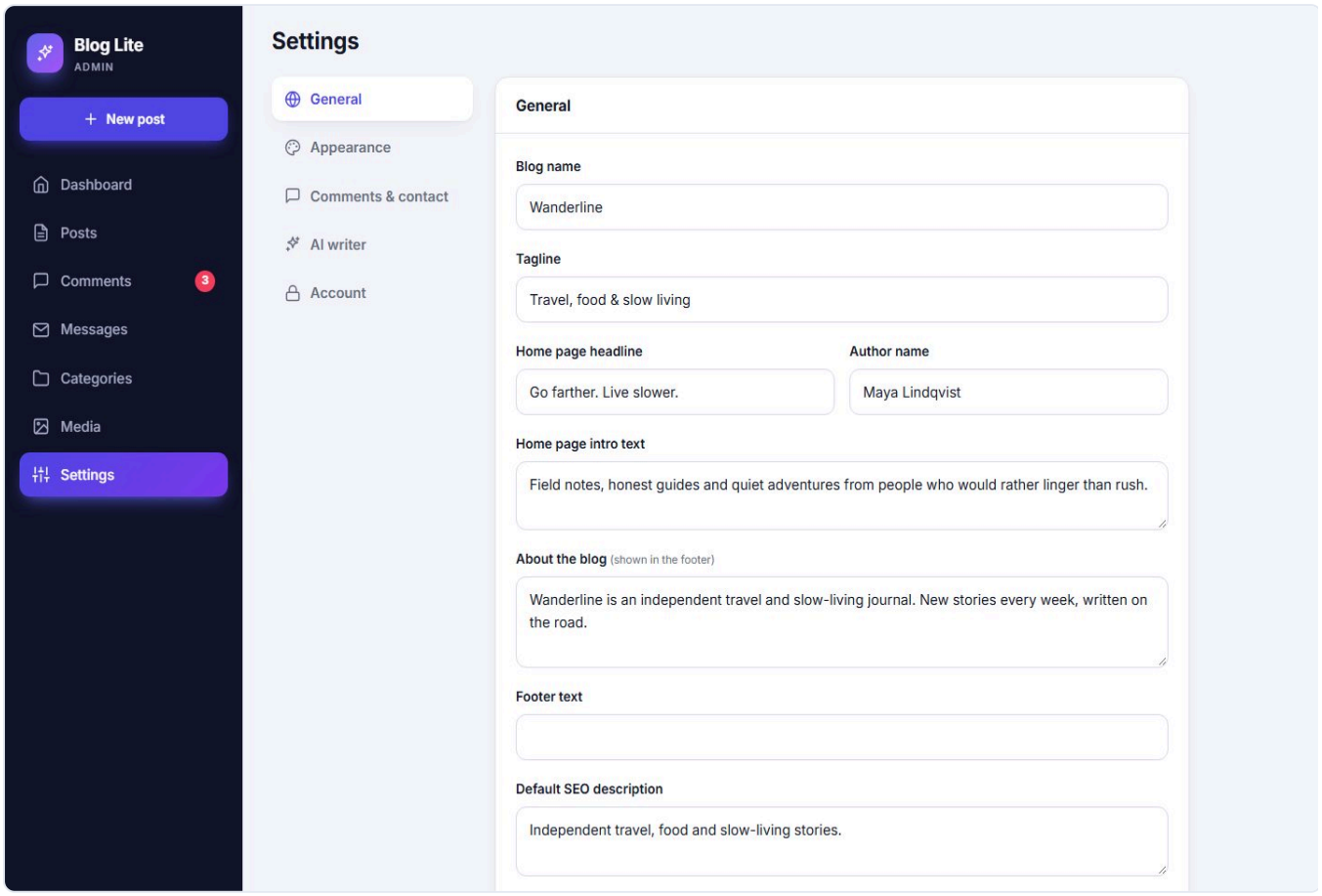
Messages live in `data/messages.xml`. Include the `data` folder in your backups. See Backup and moving.

SETTINGS

General settings

Every option on the General settings tab of Blog Lite 2: blog name, tagline, hero text, author, SEO description, posts per page, date format and pretty URLs.

Open **Settings** in the sidebar. The left-hand menu has five tabs. This page explains the first one, **General**. Press **Save settings** after changing anything.



Settings, General tab.

Fields

Setting	What it does
Blog name	Shown in the header and in the browser tab.
Tagline	A short line shown above the homepage headline and in the browser title of the homepage.
Home page headline	The big headline in the hero section.
Author name	Shown on posts and used for the avatar initials.
Home page intro text	The paragraph under the headline.

About the blog	A short description in the footer.
Footer text	An extra line next to the copyright, for example "All rights reserved".
Default SEO description	The description search engines may show for pages that do not have their own. Keep it under about 155 characters.
Posts per page	How many posts to show before page numbers appear (1 to 50).
Date format	How dates are shown, for example *October 25, 2026* or *25/10/2026*. The list shows today's date in each format.
Pretty URLs	Switches addresses to the clean form `/post/my-title`. See below.

Pretty URLs

With pretty URLs off, addresses look like `index.php?route=post/my-title`. With them on, they look like `/post/my-title`. Pretty URLs need Apache with `mod_rewrite` (the included `.htaccess` file) or an Nginx rule. Read Pretty URLs before switching them on.

Careful

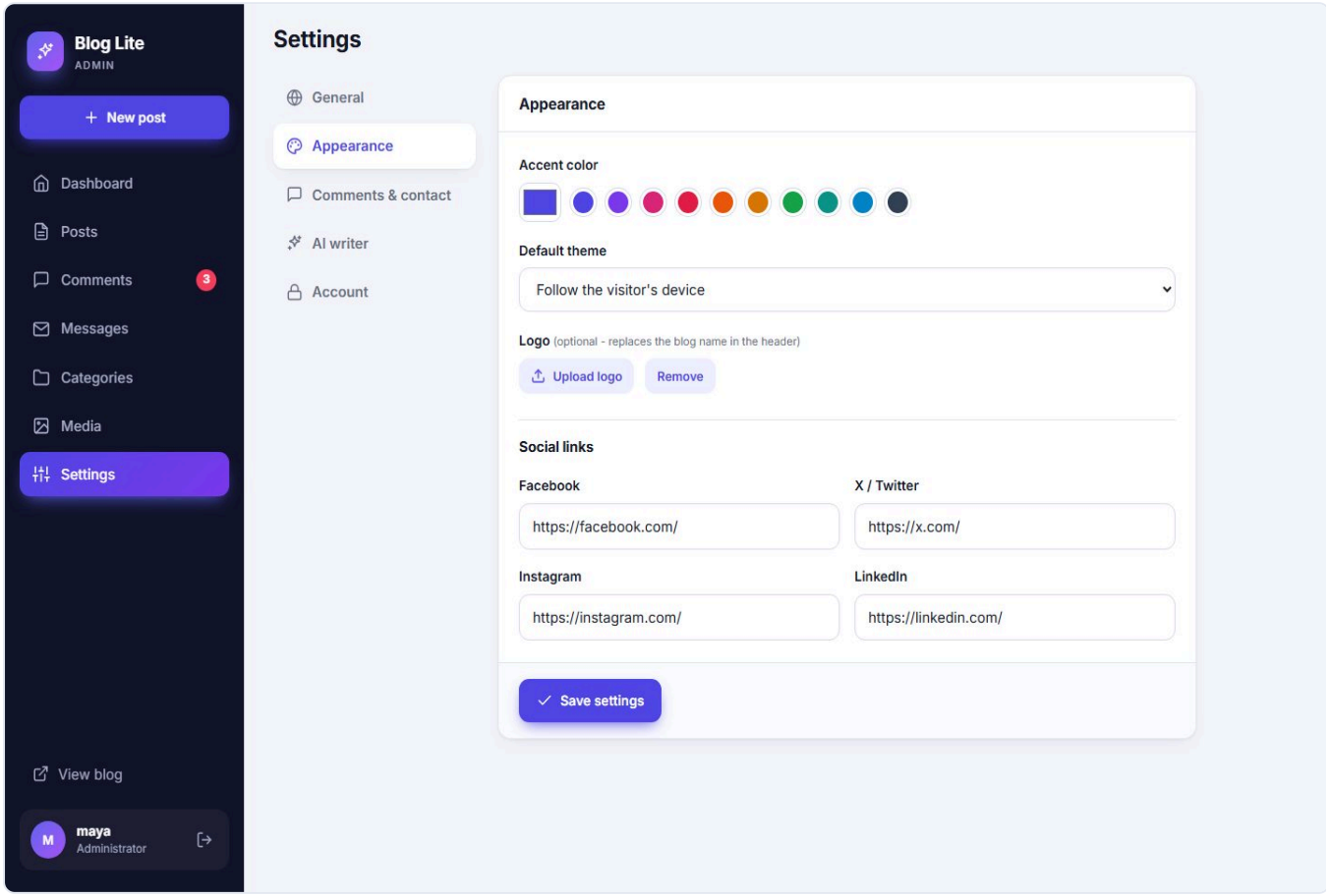
If you turn pretty URLs on and your server does not support them, the public pages may show "not found". The admin panel keeps working, so simply turn the option off again.

SETTINGS

Appearance settings

Customise your Blog Lite 2 blog without code: choose the accent colour, default light or dark theme, upload a logo and add social media links.

The **Appearance** tab changes how your public blog looks.



Settings, Appearance tab.

Accent colour

The accent colour is used for buttons, links, the hero background, badges and highlights. Click the colour box to choose any colour, or click one of the ready-made swatches. The whole site follows your choice.

Choose a medium to dark colour. White text on the hero and on buttons stays easy to read.

Default theme

Choose what a new visitor sees first: **follow the visitor's device** (light or dark), **light** or **dark**. Visitors can always switch with the button in the header. See Dark mode and mobile.

Logo

1. Press **Upload logo** and choose an image (PNG with a transparent background looks best).
2. Press **Save settings**.

The logo replaces the blog name in the header. Use **Remove** to go back to the name. A height of about 80 pixels is ideal.

Social links

Enter the full addresses (starting with `https://`) of your Facebook, X / Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages. Icons appear in the footer for every link you fill in. Empty fields are not shown.

Want more control?

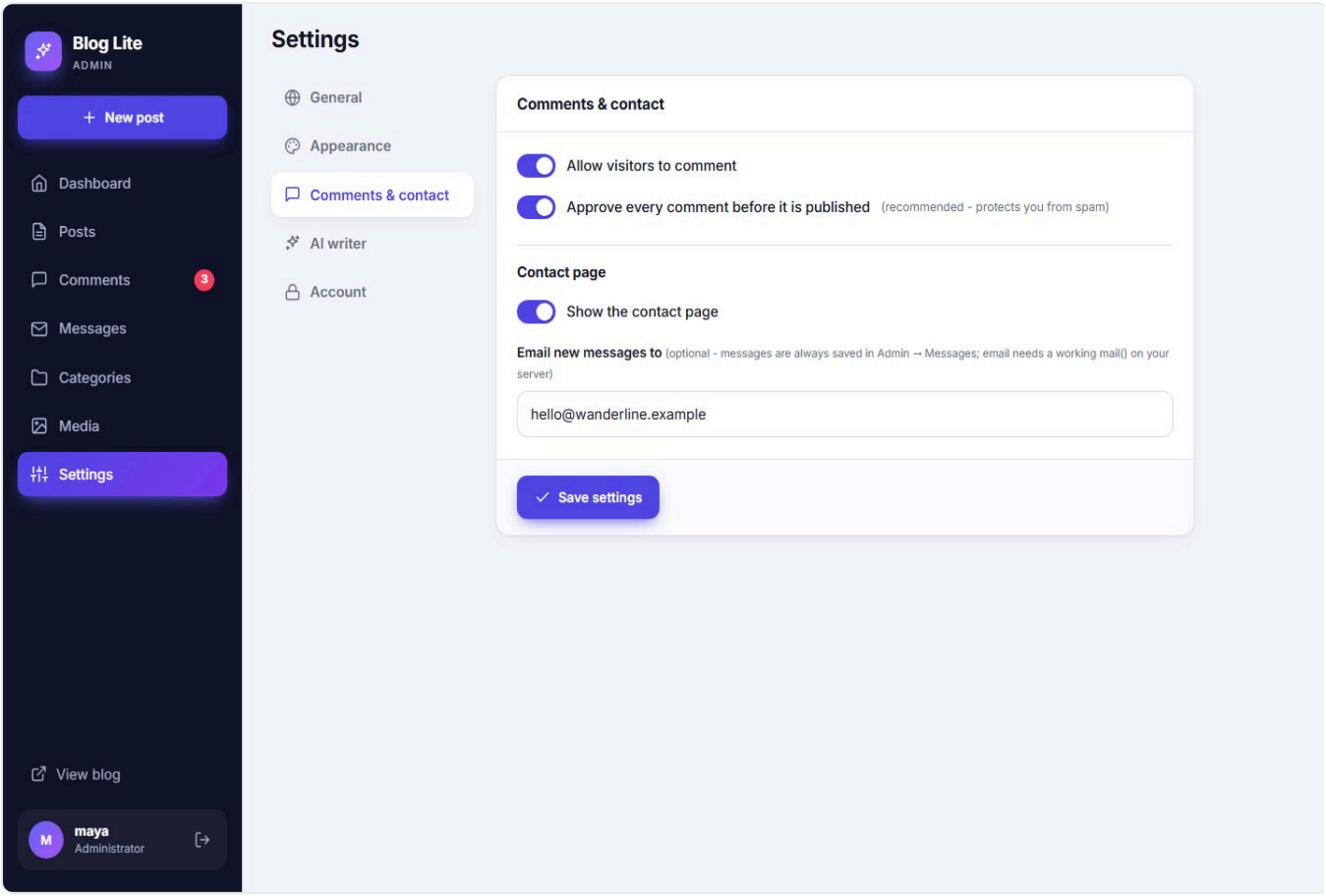
Fonts, spacing and layout can be changed in the CSS file. See Customising the design.

SETTINGS

Comments and contact settings

Turn comments and the contact page on or off in Blog Lite 2, require approval for new comments and get contact messages by email.

The **Comments & contact** tab controls how visitors can talk to you.



Settings, Comments & contact tab.

Comments

Setting	What it does
Allow visitors to comment	Turns the comment form on or off for the whole blog. When off, existing approved comments stay visible, but nobody can add new ones.
Approve every comment before it is published	Recommended. New comments wait in **Comments** → **Pending** until you approve them. Turn it off to publish comments instantly.

You can also switch comments off for one post in its editor. See Writing posts.

Contact page

Setting	What it does

Show the contact page	Adds a Contact link to the menu and footer and enables the form.
Email new messages to	Optional. A copy of every new message is emailed to this address. Leave empty to read messages only in the admin panel.

About email

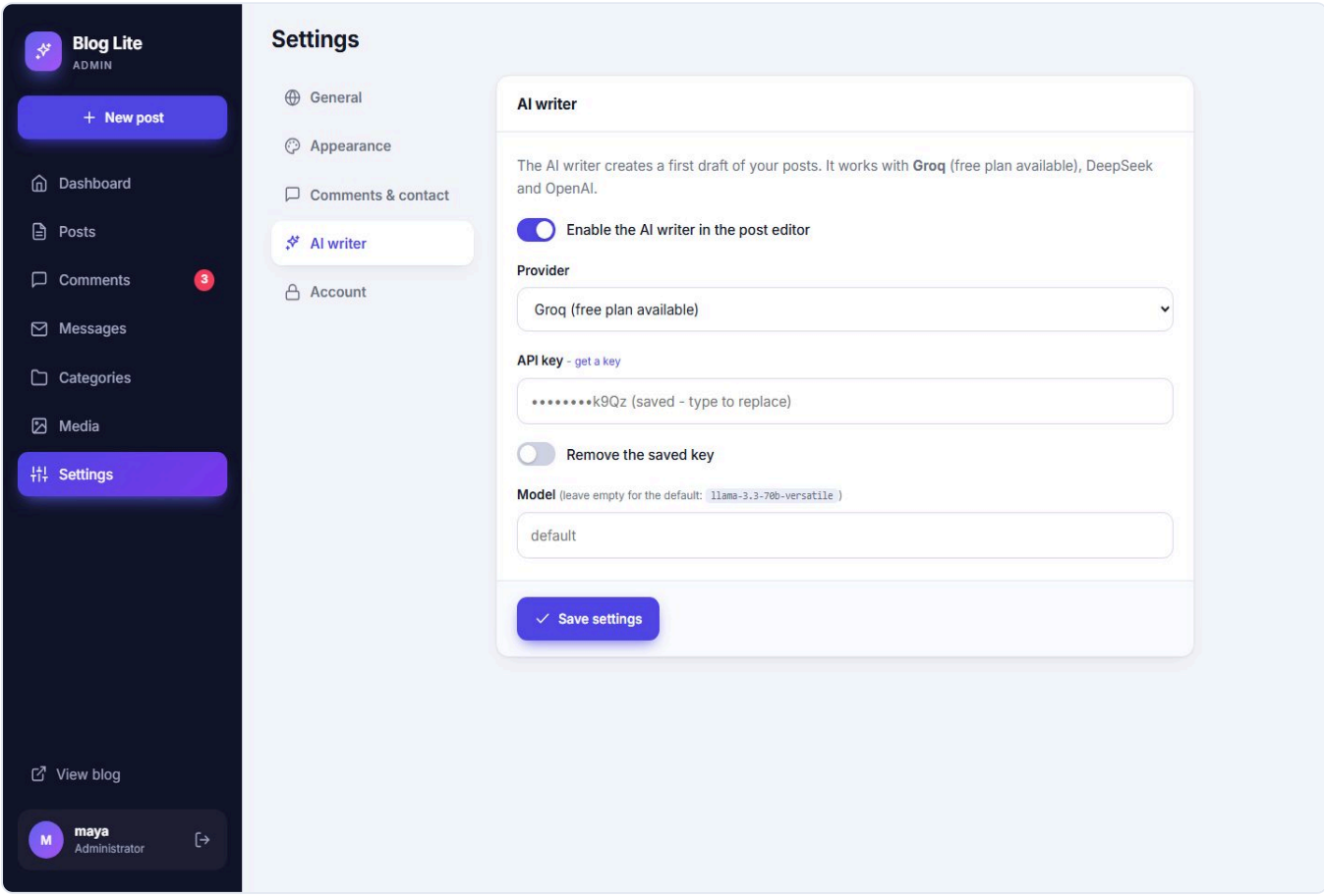
Sending uses the standard PHP `mail()` function. It works on most hosting accounts but usually not on a home computer. Messages are always saved in **Messages**, so nothing is lost. See Messages inbox.

SETTINGS

AI writer settings

Configure the Blog Lite 2 AI writer: enable or disable it, choose Groq, DeepSeek, OpenAI or a custom provider, set the model and manage your API key.

The **AI writer** tab controls the writing assistant in the post editor.



Settings, AI writer tab.

Fields

Setting	What it does
Enable the AI writer	Shows or hides the *Write with AI* panel and the AI tools in the post editor.
Provider	Groq (default, free plan available), DeepSeek, OpenAI or Custom.
API key	Your private key from the provider. Paste it once. After saving, only the last four characters are shown. A "get a key" link opens the provider's website.
Remove the saved key	Tick it and save to delete the key from your server.
Model	Leave empty to use the provider's default (shown in the hint). Enter a model name to use another one.

API address	Only for the **Custom** provider: the base address of an OpenAI-compatible service, for example `https://api.example.com/v1`.

Step by step

New to API keys? Follow AI API keys (Groq, DeepSeek, OpenAI) to get a key and enter it. Then see AI writer to start writing.

Switching providers

You can change provider at any time. Remember to enter the key that belongs to the new provider, and clear the *Model* field (or enter a model of the new provider) because model names differ between services.

Costs

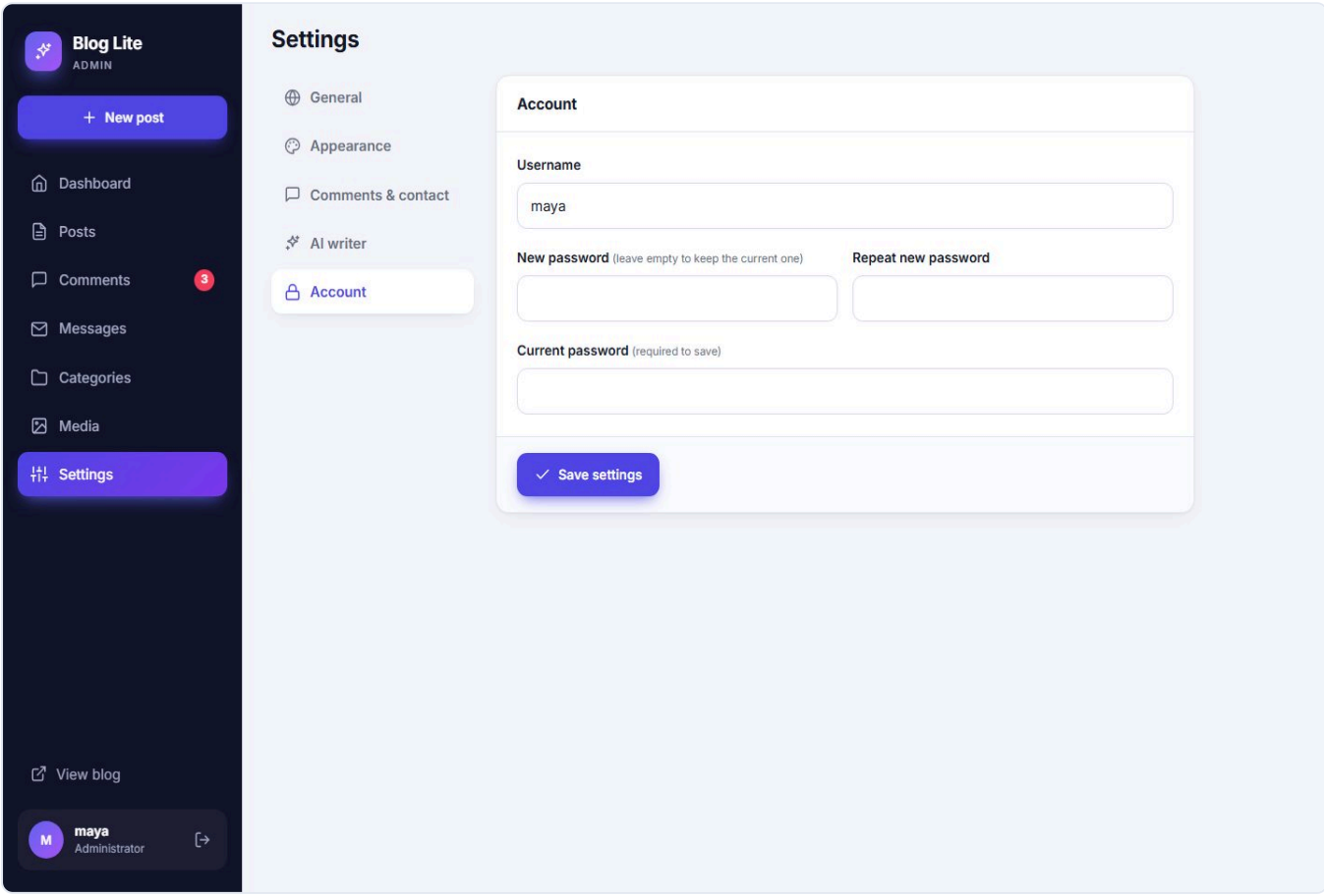
Usage is billed or limited by your AI provider, not by Blog Lite 2. Check the usage page of your provider if you generate many long articles.

SETTINGS

Account settings

Change your Blog Lite 2 administrator username and password from the Account tab, with tips for choosing a strong password and what to do if you forget it.

The **Account** tab lets you change your login details.



Settings, Account tab.

Change your username

Type a new username (at least 3 characters), enter your current password and press **Save settings**.

Change your password

1. Enter the **new password** (at least 8 characters) and repeat it.
2. Enter your **current password**. It is always required to save changes in this tab.
3. Press **Save settings**. You stay logged in.

Leave the new password fields empty if you only want to change the username.

A strong password

- Use 12 or more characters, mixing words, numbers and symbols.
- Do not reuse a password from another website.

- A password manager makes this easy.

Forgot your password?

There is no email reset, because there is only one administrator. You can reset the account safely through the data file. See Troubleshooting.

How passwords are stored

Passwords are saved as secure hashes. Nobody, including you, can read the original password from the data file.

ADVANCED AND HELP

Pretty URLs (clean addresses)

Turn on clean, SEO-friendly addresses like /post/my-title in Blog Lite 2. Setup for Apache with mod_rewrite and for Nginx, plus troubleshooting.

By default, Blog Lite 2 works on every server with addresses like `yoursite.com/index.php?route=post/my-title`. Pretty URLs turn them into `yoursite.com/post/my-title`, which are easier to read, share and remember.

Page	Default address	Pretty address
Article	`index.php?route=post/my-title`	`/post/my-title`
Category	`index.php?route=category/travel`	`/category/travel`
Tag	`index.php?route=tag/recipes`	`/tag/recipes`
Contact	`index.php?route=contact`	`/contact`

On Apache

The included `.htaccess` file already contains the rewrite rules. You only need:

1. Apache with `mod_rewrite` enabled (standard on almost all hosting).
2. `AllowOverride All` for your folder, so `.htaccess` is read. On shared hosting this is normally already set.
3. Go to *Settings* → *General*, switch **Pretty URLs** on and save.
4. Open your blog and click a post to test it.

On Nginx

Nginx ignores `.htaccess`, so add this to your server configuration (adjust paths if the blog is in a subfolder):

```
location / {
    try_files $uri $uri/ /index.php?route=$uri&$args;
}

# keep private folders private
location ~ ^/(data|app|admin/views)/ { deny all; }
location ~* ^/uploads/.*\.php$ { deny all; }
```

Reload Nginx, then switch **Pretty URLs** on in the settings. Make sure your `location ~ \.php$` block for PHP-FPM is also in place.

If the public pages show "not found"

Do not panic

The admin panel does not use pretty URLs, so you can always log in at `yoursite.com/admin/` and switch the option off again.

- Check that `mod_rewrite` is on and the `.htaccess` file was uploaded (some FTP programs hide files starting with a dot).
- Ask your host to enable `AllowOverride All`.
- Test on Nginx: confirm the `try_files` line is inside the right `server` block.

Other things to know

- The addresses of your RSS feed and sitemap change too. See RSS feed and sitemap.
- If you change this option on a live blog, update the sitemap in Google Search Console.
- The address of an article is created from its title when you first save it. You can edit it in the post editor. See Writing posts.

ADVANCED AND HELP

Customising the design

Change the look of your Blog Lite 2 blog: edit templates, CSS colours and fonts, translate texts and add your own pages, even with basic PHP knowledge.

Blog Lite 2 was written so that people with little PHP knowledge can adjust it. The public design lives in plain template files that are mostly HTML.

Before you edit

Make a copy of the file you are about to change. If something breaks, put the original back.

Start with the settings

Many changes need no code at all: accent colour, logo, default theme, headline, texts and social links. See Appearance and General.

The template files

All files are in `themes/default/`:

File	What it controls
`layout.php`	The frame of every page: head tags, header, menu, footer
`home.php`	The homepage: hero, featured post, grid, popular posts
`post.php`	The article page, including comments and related posts
`comment_item.php`	One comment
`card.php`	One post card in the grids
`list.php`	Category, tag and search result pages
`pagination.php`	Page numbers
`contact.php`	The contact page
`404.php`	The "page not found" page

Inside these files, normal HTML is mixed with small PHP pieces such as `<?= e($post['title']) ?>`, which prints the post title safely. Always print visitor-supplied text with `e(...)`.

Change colours, fonts and spacing

Open `assets/css/site.css`. The top of the file holds the main design values as variables:

```
:root {
    --bg: #f7f7fa;          /* page background */
    --surface: #ffffff;     /* cards */
    --text: #15161c;        /* main text */
    --radius: 18px;         /* roundness of cards */
    --font: 'Inter', ...;   /* body font */
    --font-serif: 'Newsreader', ...; /* headlines */
}
```

Dark mode values are in the `[data-theme="dark"]` block just below. The accent colour comes from the admin settings, so you do not edit it here.

Use another font

1. Choose a font on Google Fonts and copy its `<link>` address.
2. Replace the existing fonts `<link>` in `themes/default/layout.php`.
3. Change `--font` and `--font-serif` in `site.css`.

Edit the header or footer

Open `layout.php`. The menu, the footer columns and the "Powered by" line are plain HTML you can rearrange, translate or remove.

Translate the interface

Texts such as "Leave a comment", "Read article" or "Search..." are written directly in the template files. To translate them, open the files in `themes/default/` and replace the English words. Use your editor's "find in files" to locate a phrase quickly. The AI writer can write in any language. See AI writer.

Add your own page

For example, an "About" page:

1. Copy `themes/default/contact.php` to `about.php` and replace its content with your HTML.
2. In `index.php` add a `case 'about':` that calls a new `about()` method.
3. In `app/controllers/BlogController.php` add that method, copying the style of the `contact()` method.
4. Add a link in `layout.php`.

After editing

Reload the page. The browser automatically fetches changed CSS and JavaScript files. If you do not see your change, clear your browser cache. When you upgrade Blog Lite 2 later, keep a note of the files you edited. See Backup and moving.

ADVANCED AND HELP

Backup, restore and moving your blog

Back up Blog Lite 2 by copying two folders, restore it in minutes, move it to a new host or domain and upgrade to a new version without losing content.

Because Blog Lite 2 has no database, your entire blog is just files. Backing it up is simple.

What to back up

Folder or file	Contains
`data/`	All posts, comments, categories, messages, view counts and settings (including your AI key and admin login).
`uploads/`	Your images.
`config.php`	Your time zone and technical options.
`themes/` and `assets/`	Only if you changed the design.

Make a backup

1. Connect with FTP or open your hosting file manager.
2. Download `data` and `uploads` to your computer (or compress them to a zip first).
3. Store the copy somewhere safe. Better still, keep several dated copies.

How often?

Back up before you update, before you edit code, and regularly if you publish often. Many hosting panels can run a scheduled backup of your whole account. That is the easiest solution.

Restore a backup

Upload the saved `data` and `uploads` folders to your blog folder, overwriting the current ones, and make sure both are writable.

Move to a new host or domain

1. Upload the Blog Lite 2 files to the new hosting.
2. Upload your backed up `data` and `uploads` folders (and `config.php`).
3. Make `data` and `uploads` writable.
4. Open your blog and the admin panel to check everything.

Nothing needs to be edited: addresses are generated from the domain that visitors use, so the blog adapts to the new domain automatically. If you also changed the domain, submit the new sitemap to Google. See RSS feed and sitemap.

Image links inside posts

Images you insert inside the text of a post are saved with their folder path, for example `/blog/uploads/photo.jpg`. If the blog moves to a different folder (for example from `/blog` to the main folder), those images will not show until the paths are updated. Cover images and a move to a new host or domain with the same folder are not affected.

Upgrade to a new version

1. Make a full backup first.
2. Upload the new files over the old ones, but **do not overwrite** `data/`, `uploads/` and `config.php`.
3. If you customised templates or CSS, re-apply your changes from your backup copy of those files.

ADVANCED AND HELP

The XML data files

Understand the XML files Blog Lite 2 uses instead of a database: posts, comments, categories, messages, views and settings, and their fields.

Blog Lite 2 stores everything in readable XML files in the `data` folder. They are created automatically the first time they are needed.

The files

File	Contents
`settings.xml`	All settings from the admin panel, your admin username, your hashed password and your AI key.
`posts.xml`	Posts with their full text.
`comments.xml`	Comments and replies.
`categories.xml`	Categories.
`messages.xml`	Messages from the contact form.
`views.xml`	The number of views of each post.
`attempts.xml`	Failed logins, used to block attackers temporarily.

What a post looks like

```
<posts>
  <post>
    <id>1</id>
    <title>My first post</title>
    <slug>my-first-post</slug>
    <excerpt>A short summary.</excerpt>
    <content>&lt;p&gt;Hello world&lt;/p&gt;</content>
    <cover>20261019-205857-f8d5d2.png</cover>
    <category_id>2</category_id>
    <tags>news, hello</tags>
    <status>published</status>
    <allow_comments>1</allow_comments>
    <meta_description></meta_description>
    <created>2026-10-19 09:30:00</created>
    <updated>2026-10-19 09:30:00</updated>
  </post>
</posts>
```

Special characters are escaped, so the HTML of the post appears as text inside the XML. That is normal.

Fields of the other files

File	Fields
comments	id, post_id, parent_id (empty for top-level comments), name, email, content, status (approved or pending), created, ip (a hash, not the real address)
categories	id, name, slug
messages	id, name, email, message, created, read
views	id (post), count

Editing the files by hand

- You can open them in a text editor to inspect or fix something. Save as **UTF-8**.
- Do not edit while visitors or you are saving. Blog Lite locks the files during writing, but a hand edit is not protected.
- Keep the structure: one element per field, nothing removed. A broken file is treated as empty, so always keep a backup. See Backup and moving.

Is XML fast enough?

For personal and small business blogs with hundreds of posts, yes. The files are read quickly and every change is written safely with file locking. Very large sites with thousands of posts and heavy traffic are better served by a database.

Keep it private

The files contain visitor emails and your settings. They must never be downloadable. See Security.

ADVANCED AND HELP

Security

Security features of Blog Lite 2 and a checklist to keep your blog safe: login protection, spam traps, protected folders, HTTPS, updates and backups.

Blog Lite 2 was built with security in mind. Fewer moving parts (no database, no plugins) also means fewer things that can go wrong.

What is built in

Protection	How it works
Hashed passwords	The admin password is stored with a modern one-way hash. It cannot be read back.
Login lockout	After 5 wrong passwords, the visitor's address is blocked from logging in for 15 minutes.
Safe sessions	The login cookie is not readable by JavaScript and is not sent from other websites.
Form protection	Every form carries a secret token. Requests that do not have it, for example from a malicious website, are refused.
Escaped output	Anything visitors type (names, comments, search words) is escaped before it is shown, which prevents script injection.
Cleaned post content	Script tags, event attributes such as `onclick` and `javascript:` links are removed from post text, including AI generated text.
Spam traps	Hidden fields, timing checks, link limits and rate limits on comments and the contact form.
Safe uploads	Only real JPG, PNG, GIF and WebP images are accepted. Files are renamed, and scripts cannot run from the uploads folder.
Protected folders	`.htaccess` files block direct access to `data/`, `app/` and `admin/views/` on Apache.
Masked AI key	Your API key is never printed in the admin page, only its last four characters.

Your security checklist

1. **Use HTTPS** on your whole site, so your login and comments are encrypted.
2. **Choose a strong, unique password** and change it from time to time. See Account.
3. **Keep PHP up to date.** Ask your host to use a supported PHP version.
4. **Back up regularly.** See Backup and moving.
5. **On Nginx**, add the rules that deny access to `data`, `app` and `admin/views`. See Pretty URLs.
6. **Test it:** open `yoursite.com/data/settings.xml` in the browser. You must get an error such as "forbidden" or "not found", never the file.
7. **Delete files you do not need**, such as an `info.php` you created for testing.
8. **Moderate comments** so unwanted links never appear. See Comment moderation.

If the XML files can be downloaded, anyone could read visitor emails and your settings. If the test above shows the file, contact your host or fix your server configuration immediately, or move the data folder outside the web root with the `data_dir` option. See config.php options.

If your AI key leaks

Delete the key in the account of your AI provider, create a new one and enter it in *Settings → AI writer*. See AI API keys (Groq, DeepSeek, OpenAI).

ADVANCED AND HELP

Troubleshooting

Fix common Blog Lite 2 problems: blank page, cannot save posts, upload and AI writer errors, pretty URLs, missing comments and a forgotten password.

Most problems have a simple cause. Find your symptom below.

First, turn on error messages

Open `config.php` and set `'debug' => true`. Reload the page and you will see the real message. Set it back to `false` when you are done. See config.php options.

Installation and saving

Symptom	Cause and fix
Blank white page	A PHP error. Turn on debug (above). Check that your PHP version is 7.4 or newer and that all files were uploaded.
"Can not write to ... check the folder permissions"	The `data` folder is not writable. Set its permission to 755 or 775 and check the owner in your hosting panel.
The dashboard says a folder is not writable	Same fix for `data` or `uploads`.
I am logged out all the time	PHP cannot save sessions or cookies are blocked. Ask your host to make the session folder writable, and use the same address (with or without `www`) every time.
Dates or times are wrong	Set your `timezone` in config.php.

Images

Symptom	Cause and fix
"Only JPG, PNG, GIF and WebP images are allowed"	The file is another type or is damaged. Re-export it as JPG or PNG.
"The image is bigger than 5 MB" or upload error	Compress the image, or raise `max_upload_mb` in config.php and `upload_max_filesize` and `post_max_size` in `php.ini`.
"Could not save the image"	The `uploads` folder is not writable.

The AI writer

Message	Cause and fix
"AI is not set up yet"	No API key saved. See AI API keys (Groq, DeepSeek, OpenAI).
"AI service error: Invalid API Key"	The key is wrong or was deleted. Paste it again without spaces, and check that the selected provider matches the key.

"AI service error" about the model	The model name does not exist at that provider. Clear the Model field to use the default.
"AI service error" about quota or rate limit	You used up your free limit or credits. Wait a while or check your provider account.
"Could not reach the AI service: SSL certificate problem"	Typical on a local XAMPP server. Set `'ai_verify_ssl' => false` in config.php (local only).
"Could not reach the AI service" or a timeout	Your hosting blocks outgoing connections, or the provider is busy. Try a shorter length, or ask your host.
"The PHP cURL extension is not enabled"	Enable `curl` in your hosting panel or `php.ini`.
The Write with AI panel is missing	The AI writer is switched off in *Settings → AI writer*.

The public site

Symptom	Cause and fix
"Page not found" after turning on Pretty URLs	Your server lacks the rewrite rules. See Pretty URLs. Turn the option off to recover.
A comment does not appear	It is waiting for approval in **Comments → Pending**. See Comment moderation.
A visitor cannot comment	Comments may be off for the blog or this post, or the visitor submitted twice within 30 seconds.
Contact messages are not emailed	Check the email address in Settings. Your server may not support `mail()`. The messages are still saved in the inbox.
A category is missing from the menu	Categories only show when they have a published post.
A post is missing from the homepage	It may still be a draft. Check its status.
The editor is a plain box	The visual editor could not be downloaded (offline or blocked). Reload while online. You can still write HTML and use the AI writer.

Forgot your admin password

You can safely reset the account without losing any content:

1. Download `data/settings.xml` with FTP and make a copy.
2. Open it in a text editor and delete the lines `<admin_user>...</admin_user>` and `<admin_password>...</admin_password>`.
3. Upload the file again.
4. Open `yoursite.com/admin/`. The setup screen appears, where you create a new username and password. Your posts, comments and settings are kept.

Locked out after wrong passwords

After 5 wrong attempts the login is blocked for 15 minutes. Wait and try again, or delete `data/attempts.xml`.

Still stuck?

Read the FAQ or contact support with the exact error message and your PHP version.

ADVANCED AND HELP

Frequently asked questions

Answers to common questions about Blog Lite 2: databases, hosting, the AI writer and your content, languages, number of posts, admins and customisation.

Do I need MySQL or any database?

No. Blog Lite 2 stores everything in XML files in the `data` folder. See XML data files.

Which hosting do I need?

Any standard PHP hosting with PHP 7.4 or newer and the usual extensions. See System requirements.

Can I install it in a subfolder, like yoursite.com/blog?

Yes. Upload the files to that folder and open `yoursite.com/blog/admin/`. Everything works from any folder.

Is the AI writer included? Do I pay extra?

The AI writer is built in. You connect it to an AI service with your own API key. Groq offers a free usage plan, other providers charge by usage. See AI API keys (Groq, DeepSeek, OpenAI).

Does the AI publish posts by itself?

Never. It only fills the editor with a draft. You read it, edit it and decide when to publish.

What is sent to the AI company?

Only what you ask it to process: your topic and notes, or the text of the article when you use the AI tools. Nothing is sent in the background. Read your provider's privacy terms for how they handle requests.

Can the AI write in my language?

Yes. Type the language in the *Language* field of the AI panel, for example "French". See AI writer.

Can I change the language of the interface?

The texts are in English inside the template files. You can translate them by editing the files. See Customising the design.

Can there be several administrators or authors?

Blog Lite 2 has one administrator account. The author name shown on posts is set in Settings.

Can visitors register or log in?

No. Visitors read and comment without an account, which keeps things simple. Comments are moderated by you.

Can I schedule a post for the future?

There is no automatic scheduling. Posts are published as soon as you save them as *Published*. Use a *Draft* until you are ready.

How many posts can it handle?

It is designed for personal and small business blogs with hundreds of posts. Very large sites are better served by a database system.

Can I import posts from another blog?

There is no built-in importer. Posts are plain XML, so a developer can convert content into `posts.xml`.

Can a post have several categories?

One category per post, plus as many tags as you like. See Search, categories and tags.

How do I change the colours and logo?

In *Settings* → *Appearance*. See Appearance.

Is it good for SEO?

It gives you the basics: editable titles and descriptions, clean article addresses with pretty URLs, headings, fast pages, an RSS feed, a sitemap and a mobile friendly design. Good content does the rest.

How do I back up my blog?

Copy the `data` and `uploads` folders. See Backup and moving.

Is my blog secure?

It includes login protection, form protection, spam traps and safe uploads. Follow the checklist in Security.

I forgot my password. What now?

You can reset the account without losing content. See Troubleshooting.

Blog Lite User Manual · NetArt Media
https://www.netartmedia.net/manuals/blog-lite/