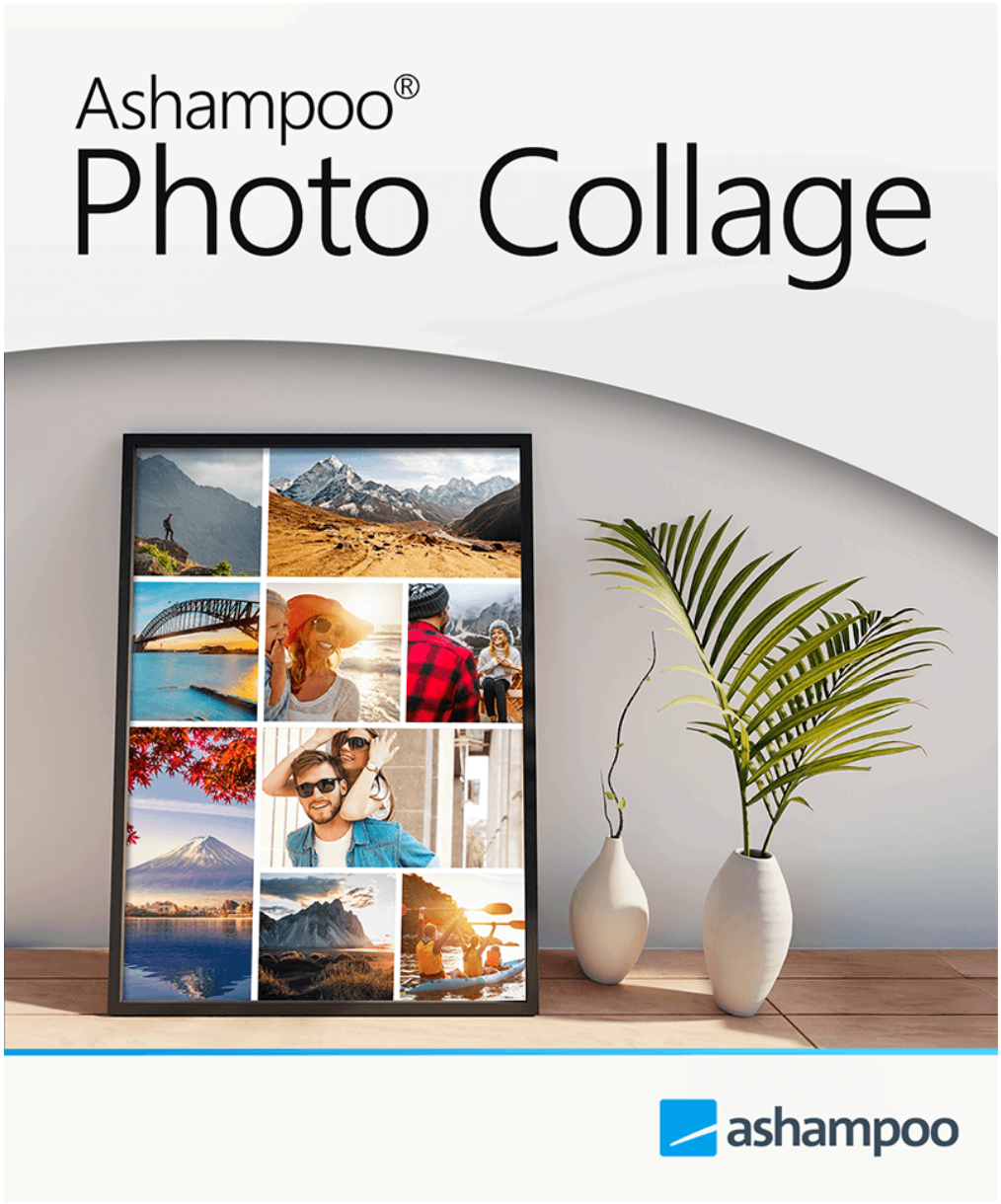
ashampoo



Manual

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1. Photo Collage: Manual

Ashampoo Photo Collage lets you turn your photos into a collage in just a few steps – for social media, for printing or as a poster. This manual walks you through all features of the program.

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- Overview
- 1. Templates
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- 3. Collage Settings
- 4. Text
- 5. Projects
- Exporting the collage as an image
- Other program features

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 How Photo Collage works

Photo Collage is designed so that you build your collage step by step, from top to bottom. The five areas in the left-hand bar correspond exactly to these steps. We recommend working through them in this order:

1. Templates – First, define the format and layout of your collage.
2. Images – Add your photos and arrange them in the image slots.
3. Collage Settings – Adjust the background, spacing and corner radius.
4. Text – Add headings or captions if you like.
5. Projects – Save your project so you can continue working on it later.

Finally, save the finished collage as an image file using **Export as Image**.

Tip: You can return to an earlier step at any time. Keep in mind, however, that switching templates changes the layout of your collage. It is best to set the format and template before you place any images.

1.1.2 The interface at a glance

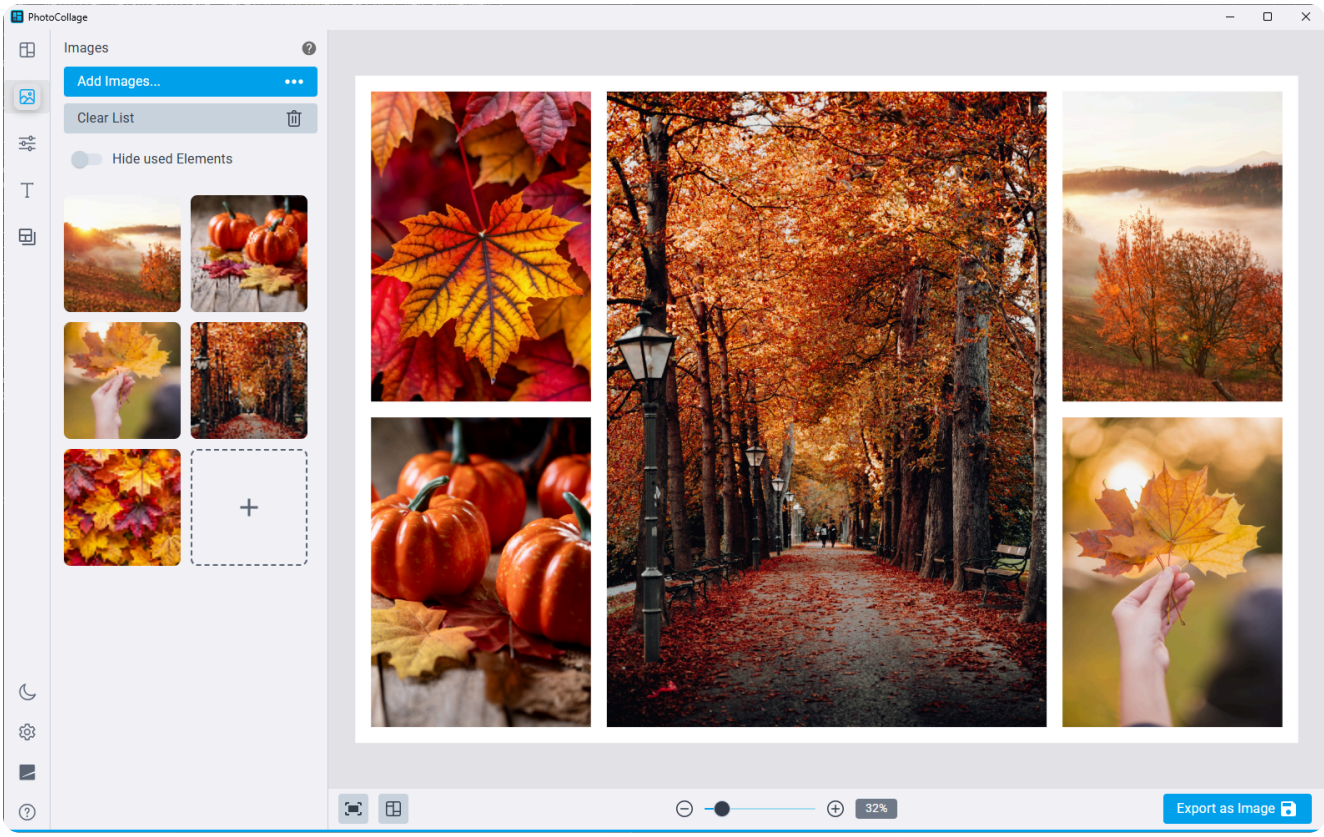
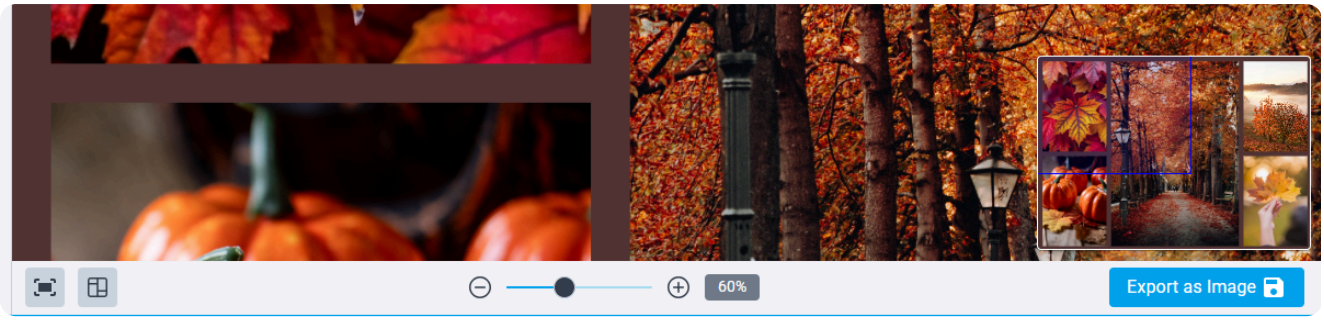


Photo Collage interface with sidebar, settings panel and canvas

The program window is divided into three areas:

- **Navigation bar (far left):** At the top you will find the five work areas *Templates*, *Images*, *Collage Settings*, *Text* and *Projects*. Below them are the program features such as dark mode, settings and help.
- **Settings panel (center left):** Shows all options for the selected work area. Click the question mark icon next to the heading to open the help for that area.
- **Canvas (right):** Shows your collage. All changes are displayed immediately.



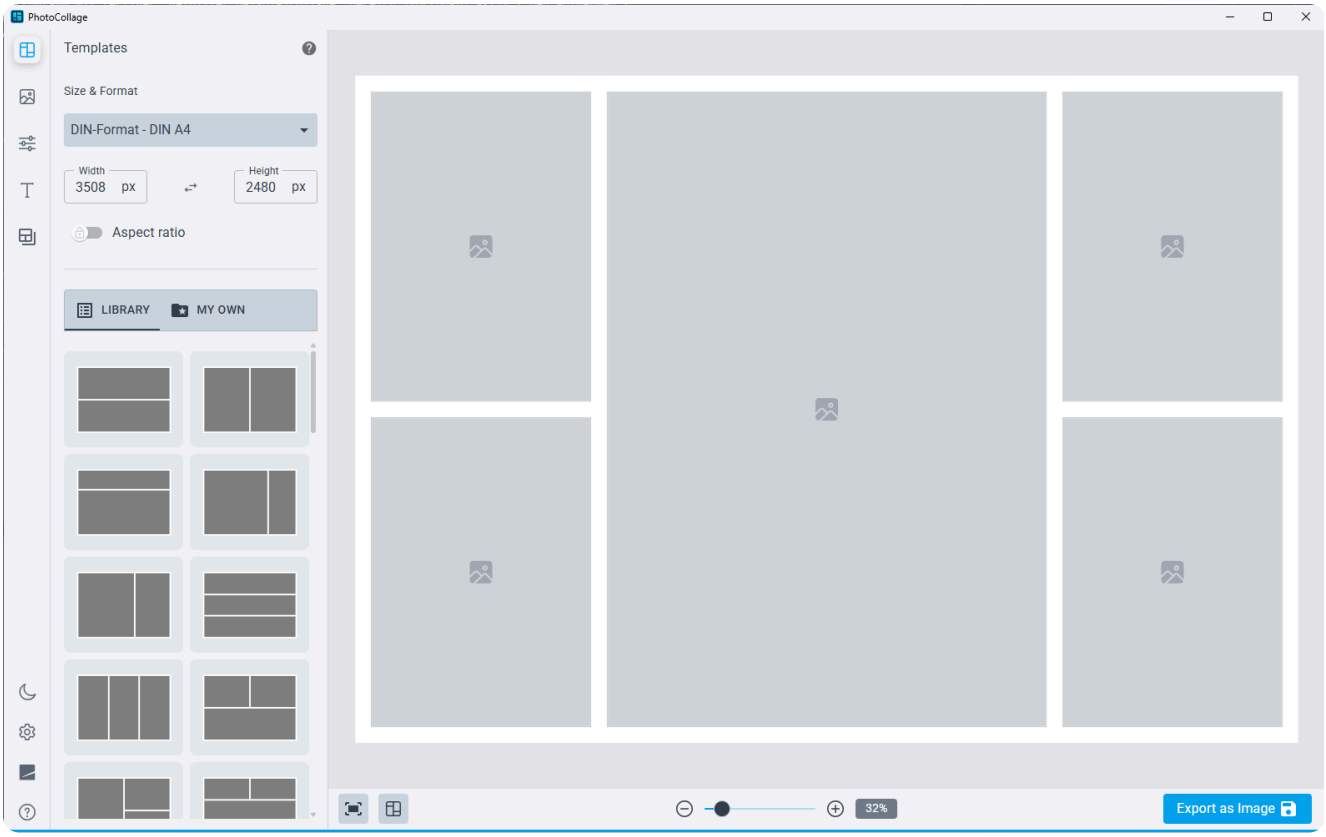
View controls below the canvas with overview window, Fit to window and zoom

Below the canvas you will find the view controls:

- **Fit to window** (left icon): Displays the entire collage to fit the window size.
- **Overview window:** As soon as you zoom in far enough that the collage is no longer fully visible, a small overview window automatically appears in the bottom right corner. It shows the entire collage in miniature, and the blue frame marks the area you are currently viewing. When you zoom out again, it disappears.
- **Zoom:** Use the slider or the **–** and **+** buttons to zoom the view in or out. The current zoom level is shown to the right. The zoom level only affects the view, not the size of your collage.

1.2 1. Templates

In the **Templates** area, you define how large your collage will be and how the images are arranged on it.

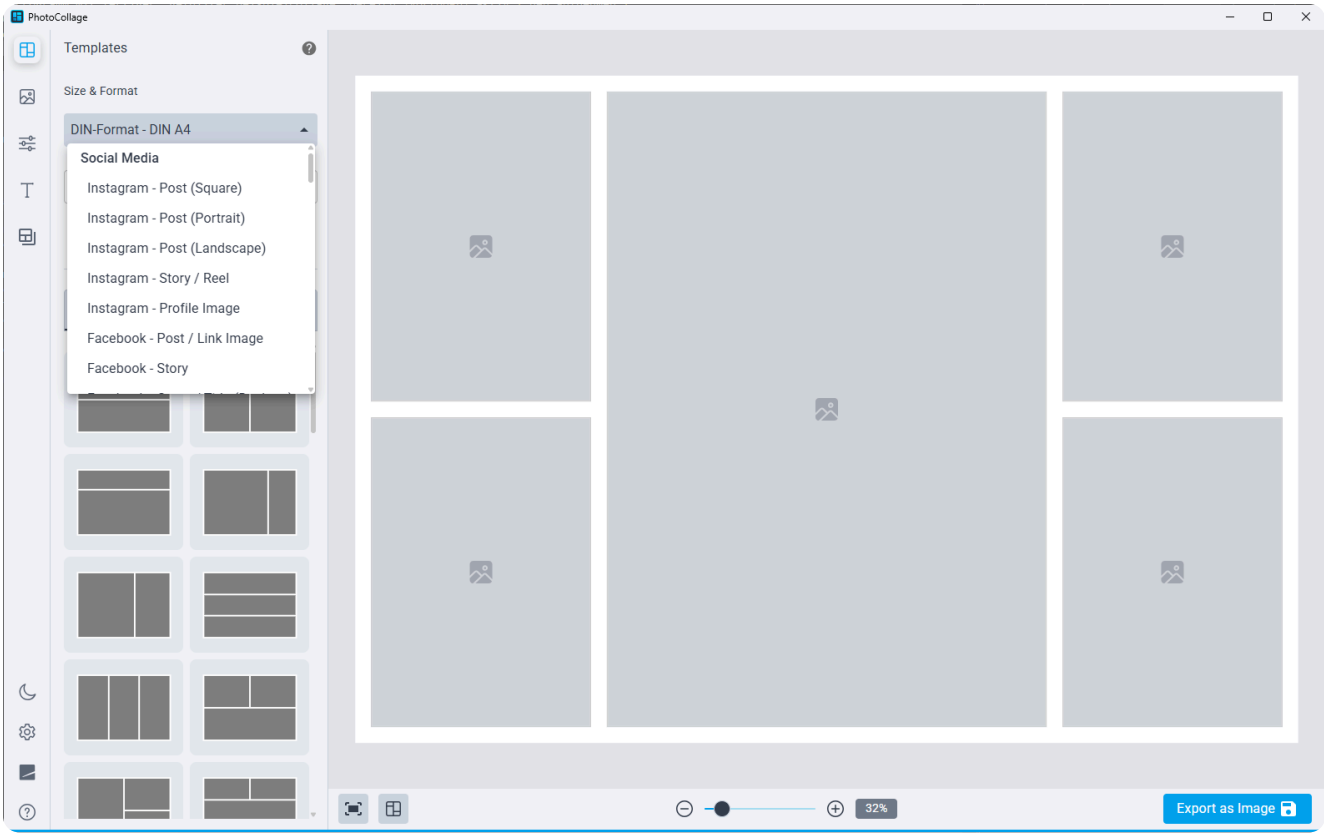


Templates area with Size & Format and the template library

1.2.1 Choosing size & format

Select the desired format from the drop-down menu under **Size & Format**. Options include:

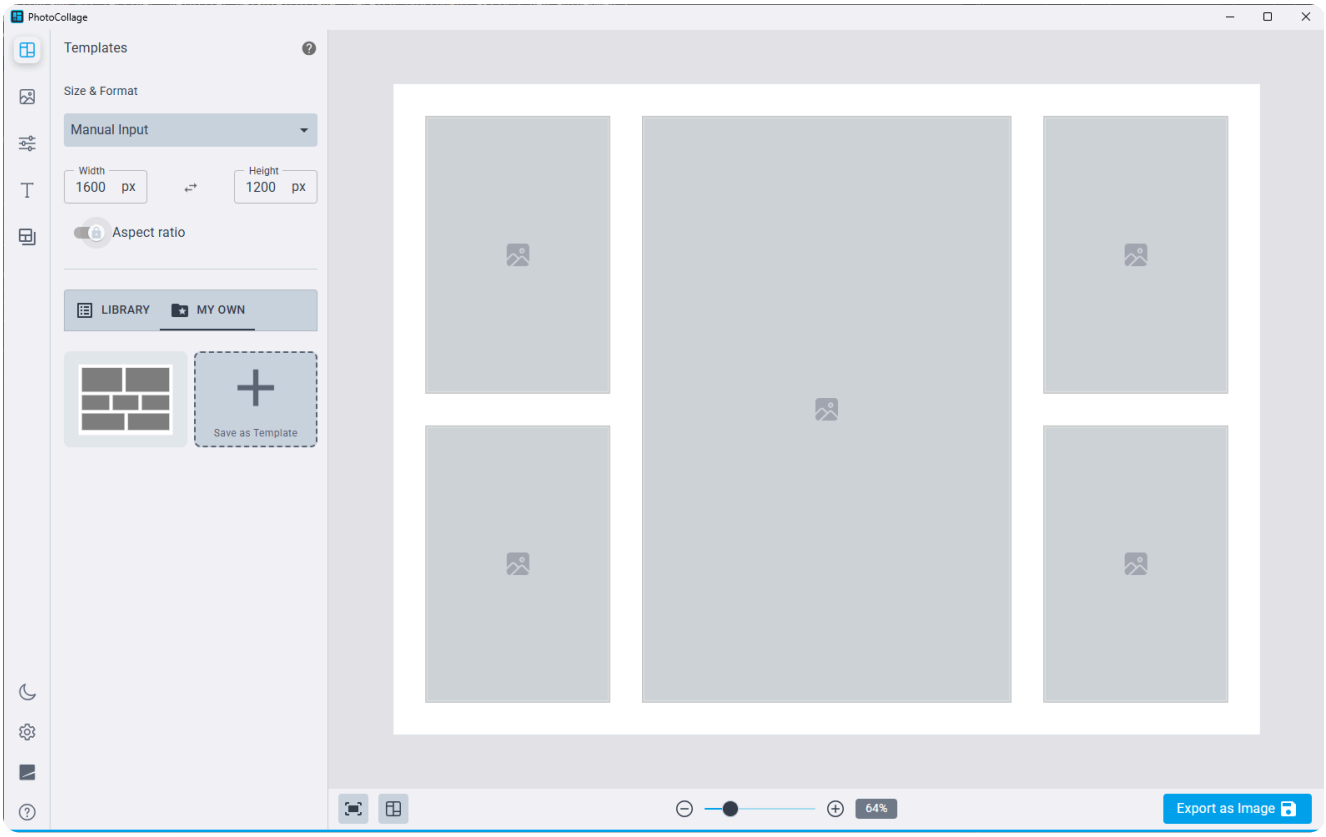
- **Social Media:** suitable sizes for posts and stories on social networks, e.g. Instagram and Facebook
- **Print media:** paper formats from A0 to A6 for printing
- **Posters and photo formats:** common poster and photo frame sizes



Open Size & Format drop-down menu with format categories

Once selected, the **Width** and **Height** fields show the dimensions in pixels. The canvas adjusts immediately.

1.2.1.1 Setting a custom format



Width and Height fields with swap icon and Aspect ratio switch

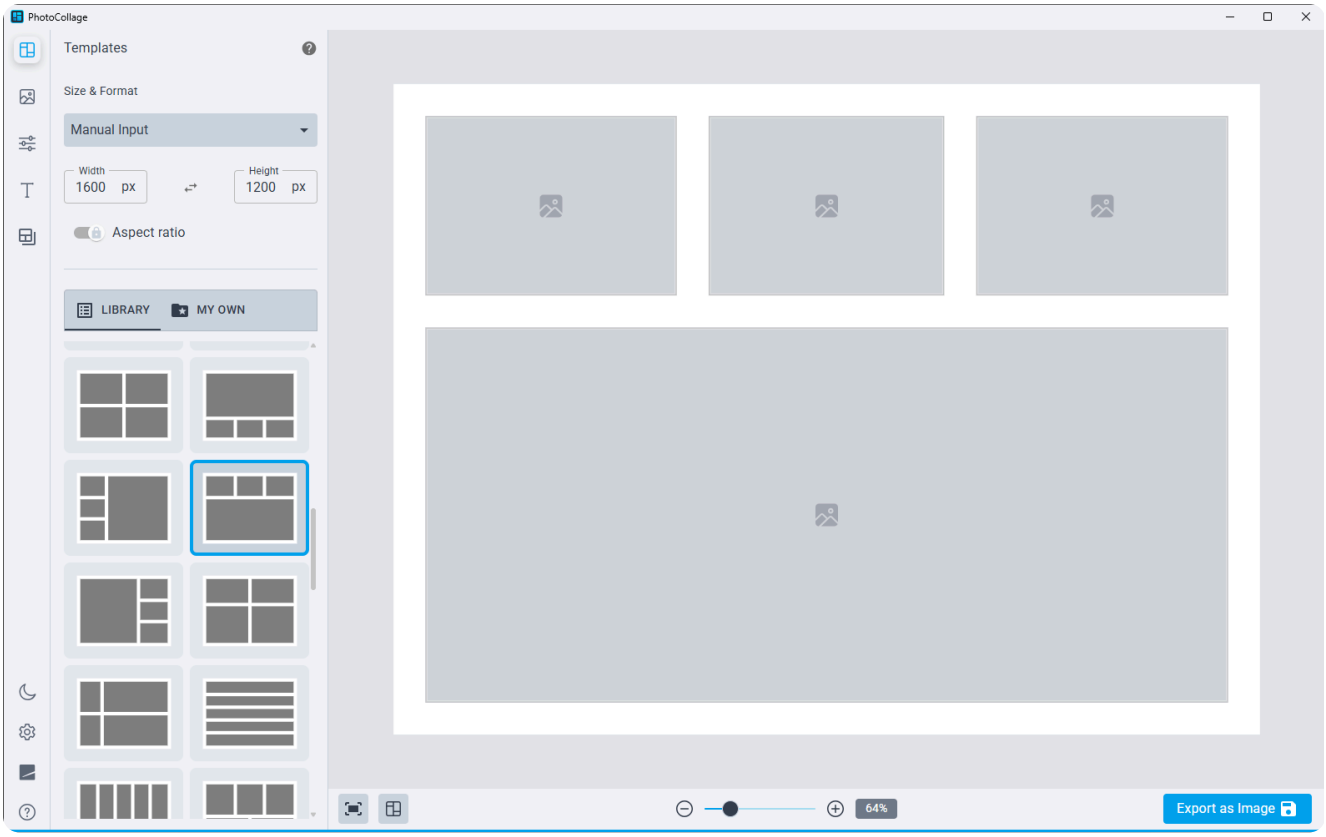
If you need a specific size, enter the values directly in the **Width** and **Height** fields, for example 1024 × 1024 px. The drop-down menu then shows **Manual Input**.

- Use the **arrow icon** between the fields to swap width and height. This lets you switch quickly between portrait and landscape.
- Turn on the **Aspect ratio** switch to keep the ratio of width to height. When you change one value, the other is adjusted automatically.

Tip: For high-quality prints, choose sufficiently large dimensions. The print media presets are already designed for good print quality.

1.2.2 Choosing a collage template

Below the format settings you will find the templates for the layout of your collage. Each template shows a preview of how many image slots there are and how they are arranged. The previews adapt to the selected format, so you can see what your collage will look like before you click.



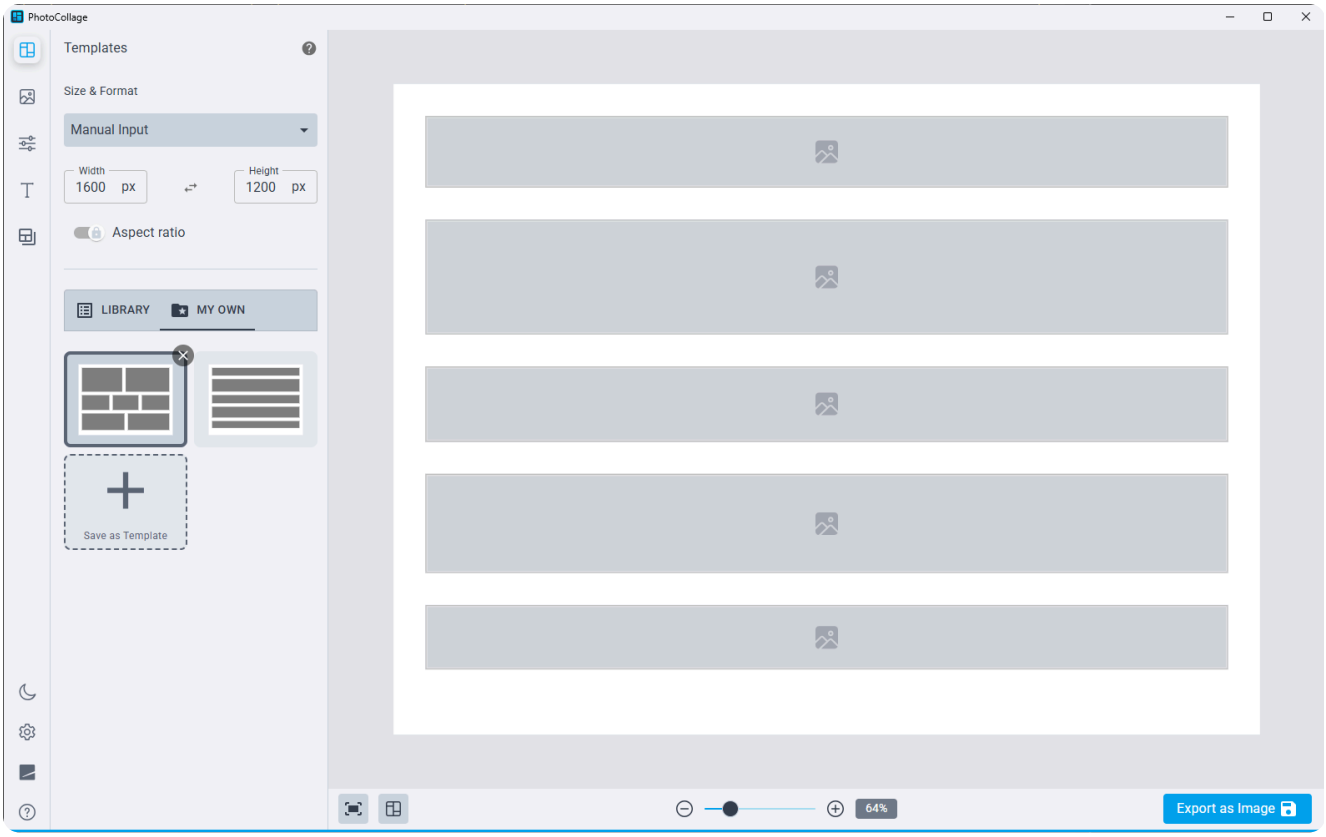
Template library with previews of different layouts

Use the two tabs to switch the view:

- **Library:** Contains all included templates. Scroll through the list to see more layouts.
- **My Own:** Contains your own saved templates.

Click a template to apply it.

1.2.2.1 Saving your own template



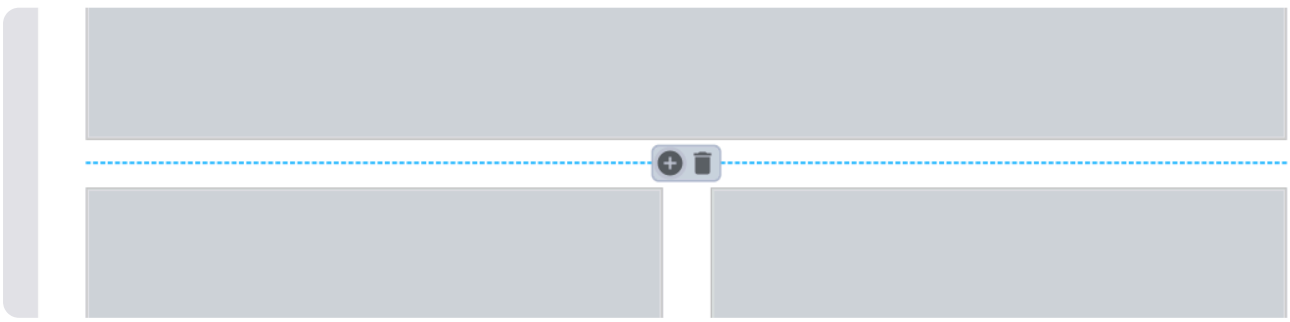
My Own tab with the Save as Template button

Once you have adjusted a layout to your liking, you can keep it for future collages. Switch to the **My Own** tab and click the field with the plus sign, **Save as Template**. The current template then appears in the list and can be reused at any time with a single click.

1.2.3 Adjusting the grid

Every template can be customized directly on the canvas – regardless of the selected format.

1.2.3.1 Moving dividers and adding image slots

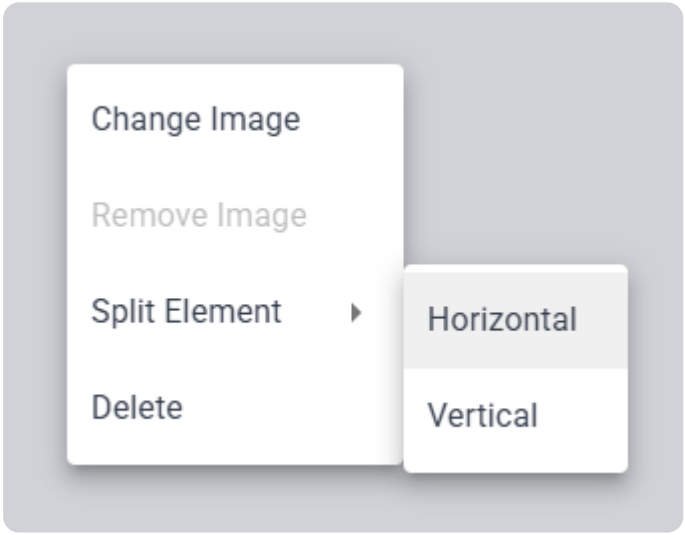


Highlighted divider between two rows of images with plus and trash icons

Move the mouse pointer over the gap between two image slots. The divider is highlighted as a blue dashed line.

- **Move:** Drag the divider up and down or left and right while holding down the mouse button. The adjacent image slots become larger or smaller.
- **Add image slot:** Click the **plus icon** on the divider to insert an additional image slot at this position.
- **Remove divider:** Click the **trash icon**. The divider disappears and the two adjacent image slots are merged into one.

1.2.3.2 Splitting and deleting image slots



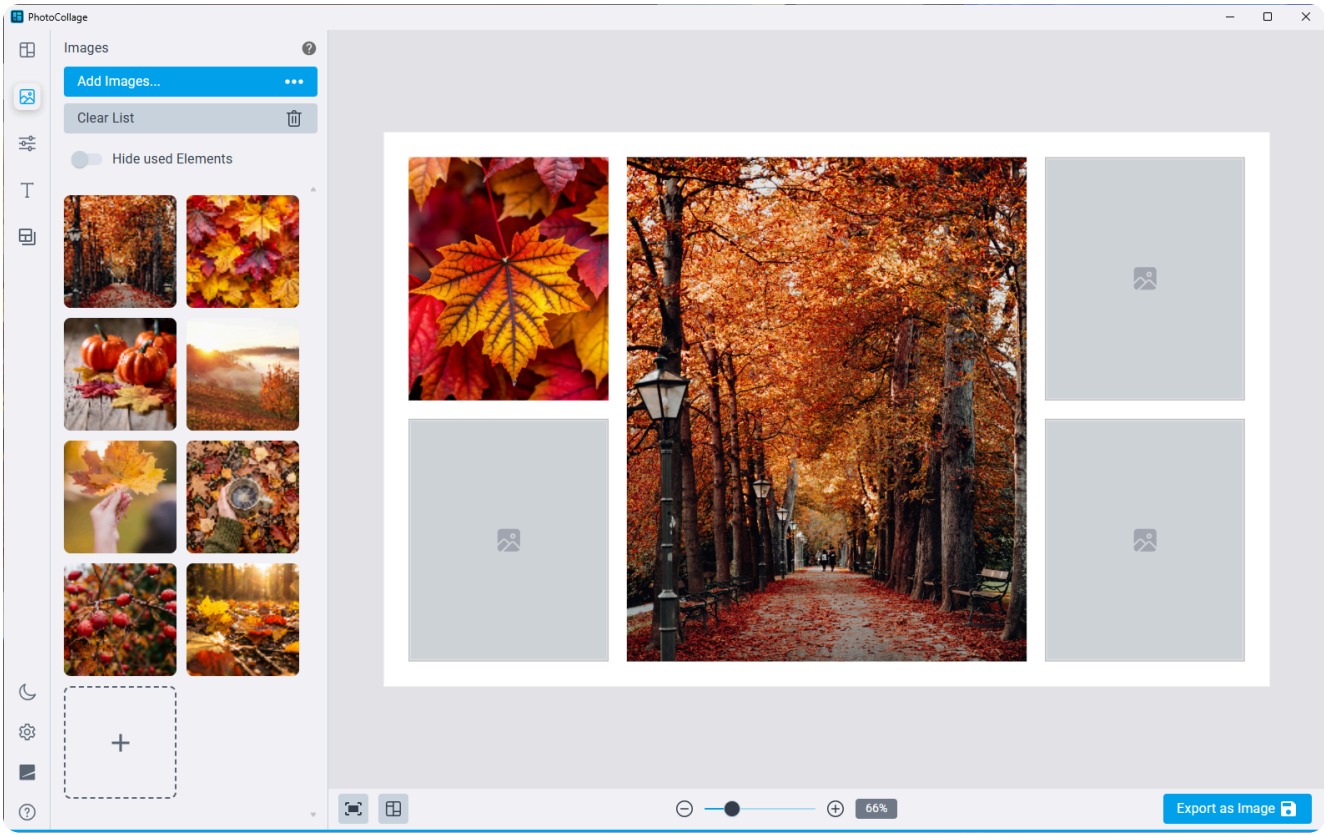
Context menu of an image slot with Change Image, Remove Image, Split Element and Delete

Right-click an image slot to open the context menu:

- **Change Image:** Select a different photo for this slot.
- **Remove Image:** Removes the photo from the slot. The slot itself is kept. If the slot is empty, this entry is grayed out.
- **Split Element:** Splits the image slot into two – either **Horizontal** or **Vertical**.
- **Delete:** Removes the image slot from the collage completely.

1.3 2. Images

In the **Images** area, you add your photos and place them in the collage.



Images area with image list and a filled collage

1.3.1 Adding images

There are several ways to add photos:

- Click **Add Images...** and select the files you want.
- Click the field with the **plus sign** below the image list.
- Drag and drop photos from Windows Explorer into the program.

1.3.2 The image list

All added photos appear as thumbnails in the list. The list serves as a collection point for the current collage. Your original files are not changed.

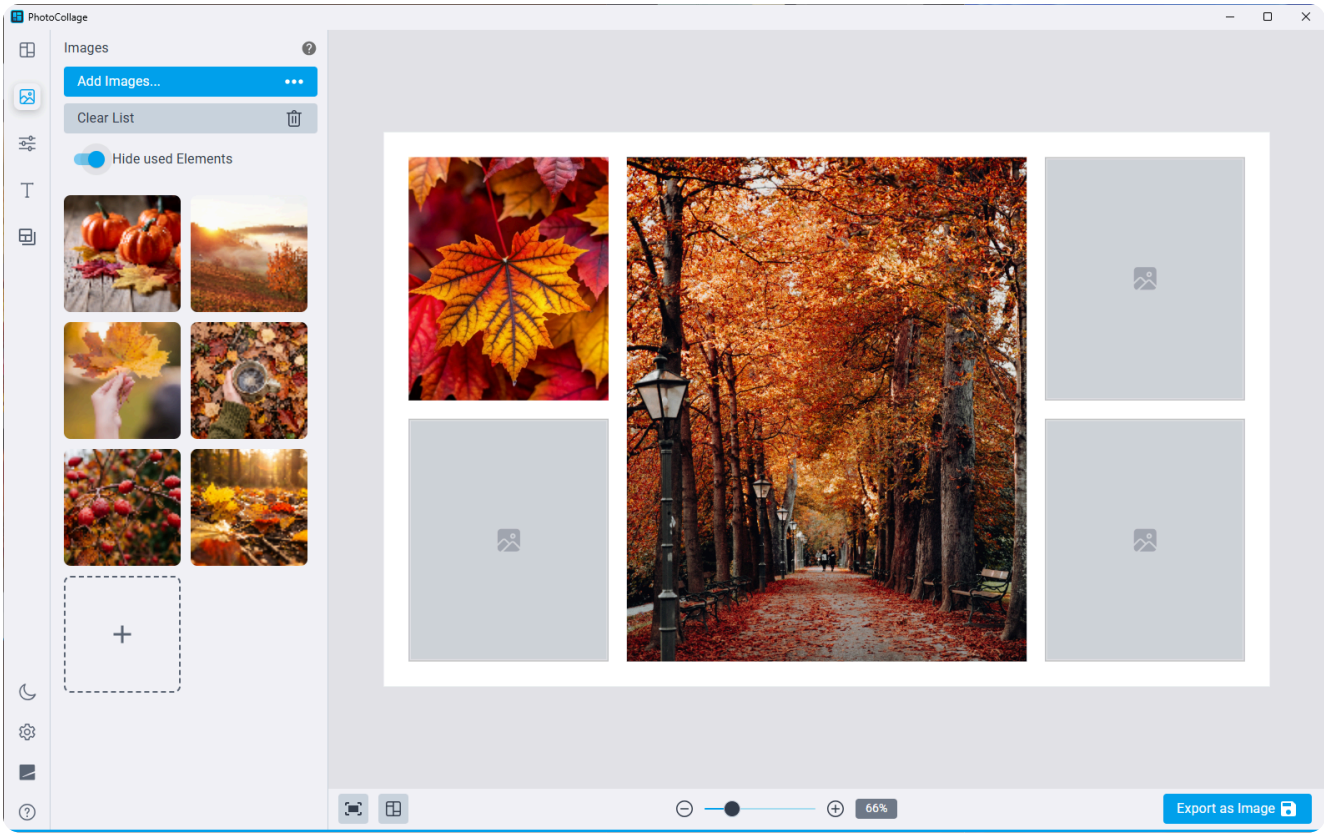
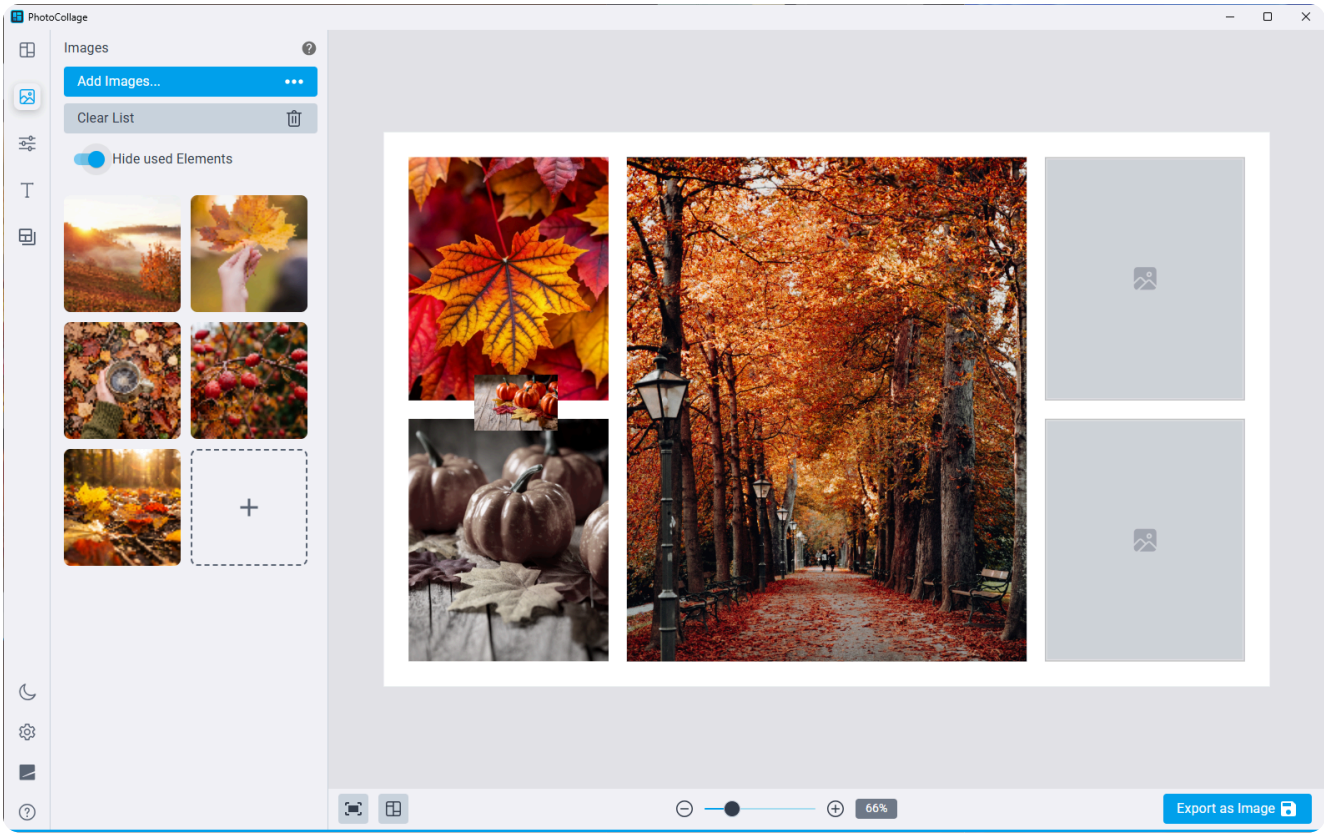


Image list with the Hide used Elements switch turned on

- **Hide used Elements:** Turn on this switch to hide photos that are already used in the collage. This helps you keep track of which photos are left when working with many images.
- **Clear List:** Removes all photos from the list. Images you have already placed in the collage remain there.

1.3.3 Placing and swapping images

Drag a photo from the image list onto an image slot in the collage while holding down the mouse button. The photo automatically fills the slot.



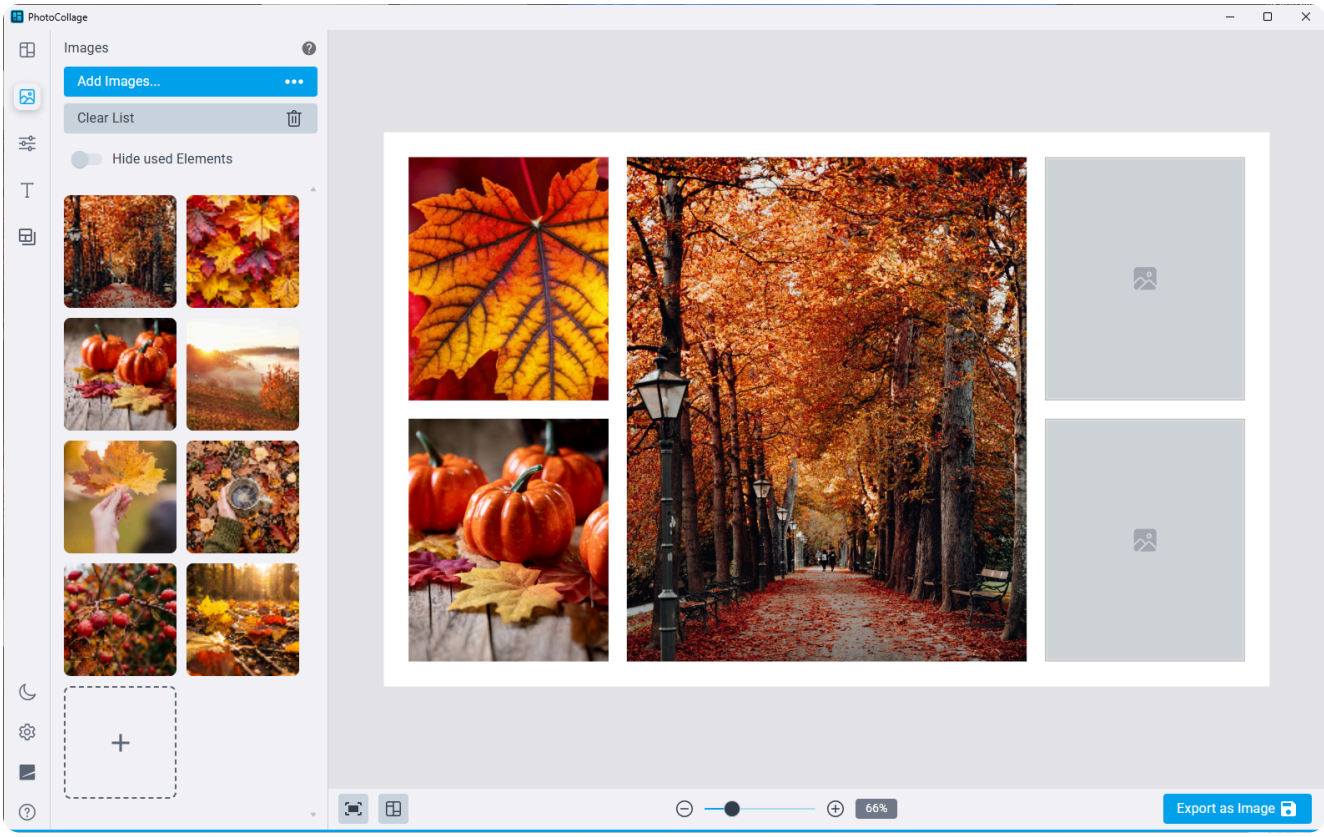
A photo being dragged onto another image slot to swap both

To swap two photos that are already placed, hold down the left mouse button on one photo and drag it onto the photo it should trade places with. When you release the mouse button, the two images swap positions.

1.3.4 Adjusting the image crop

Not every photo fits its image slot exactly. You can therefore decide directly in the collage which part of the photo is visible:

- **Zoom:** Move the mouse pointer over the photo and turn the mouse wheel to zoom in or out smoothly.
- **Reposition:** Drag the photo within its image slot while holding down the mouse button to move the visible area.

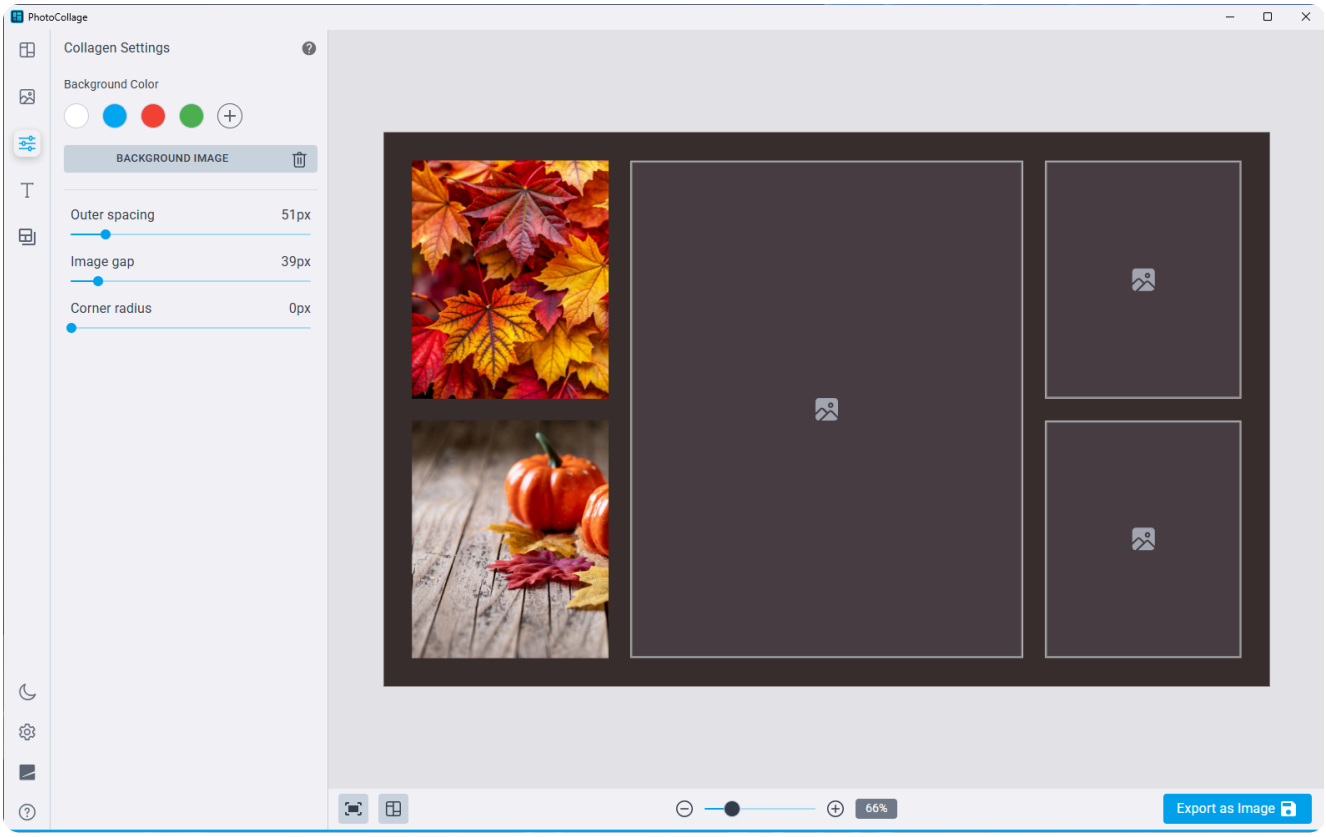


Zoomed and repositioned photo in an image slot

Tip: If you drag a photo beyond the edge of its slot onto another photo, the two images are swapped. Stay within the slot when repositioning.

1.4 3. Collage Settings

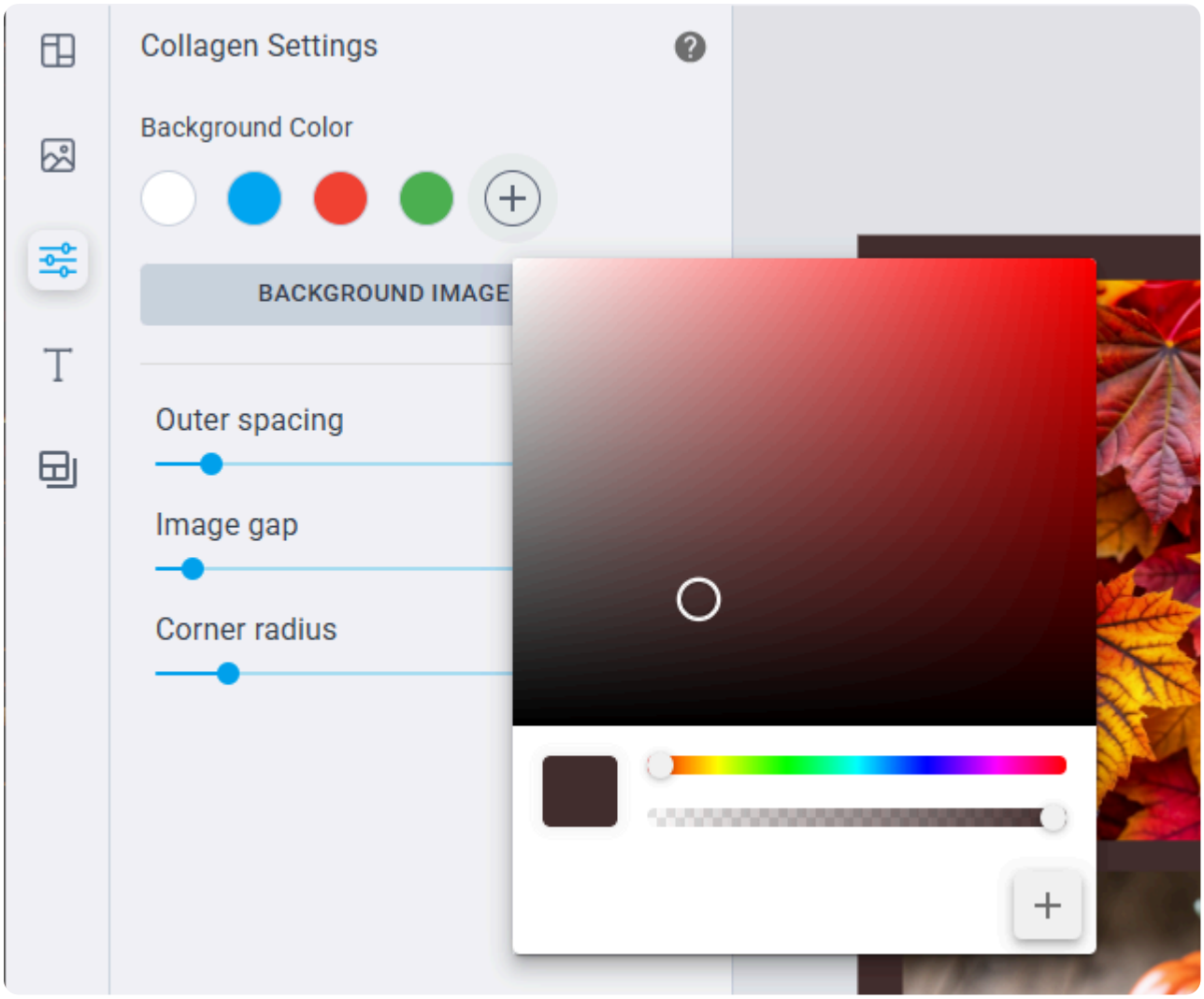
In the **Collage Settings** area, you define the look of your collage.



Collage Settings area

1.4.1 Background color

The background is visible in the margins and gaps between the images.

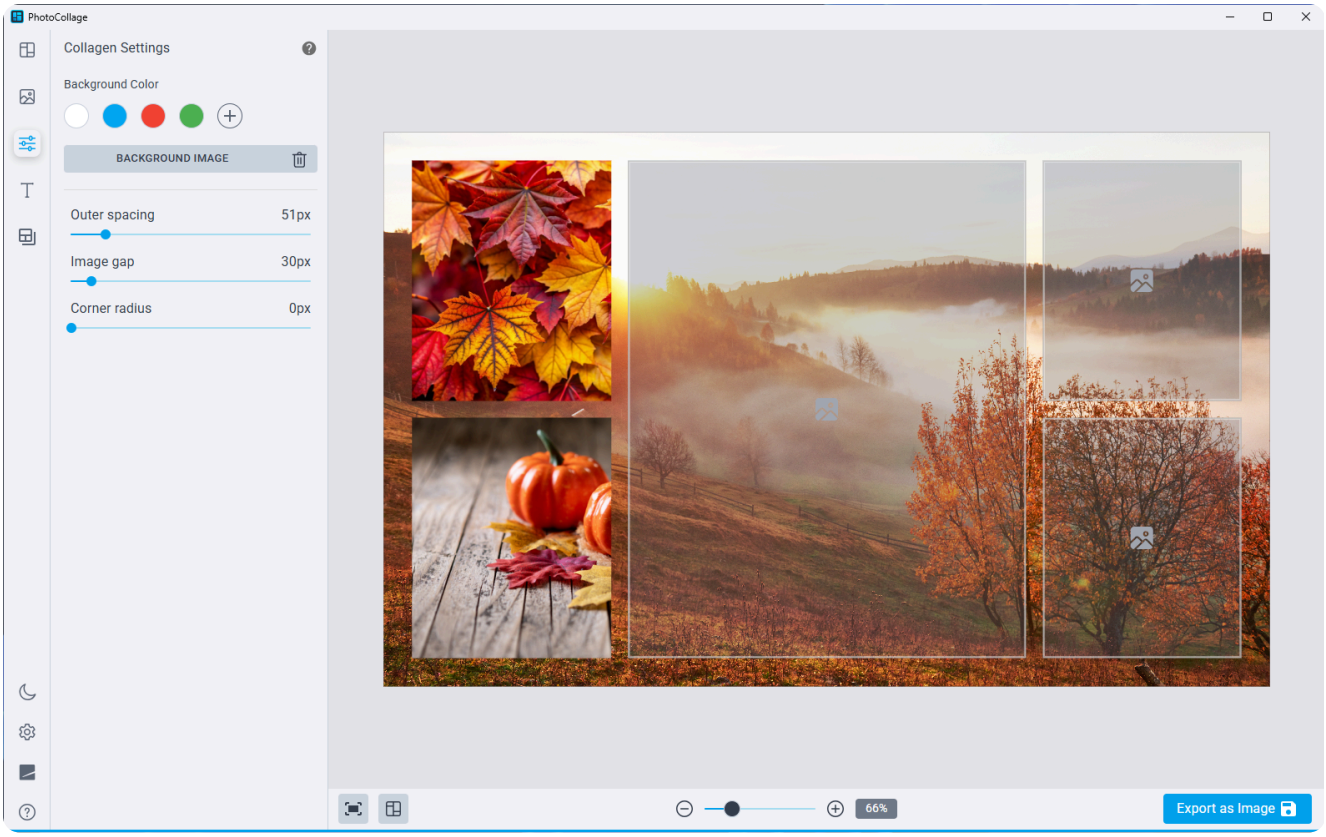


Color picker for the background color with color field, hue bar and opacity slider

- Under **Background Color**, click one of the preset colors.
- For a custom color, click the **plus icon**. Choose the shade in the color field and the hue with the bar below it. Use the lower slider to set the opacity. Click the **plus** in the color window to add the color to your quick colors.

1.4.2 Background image

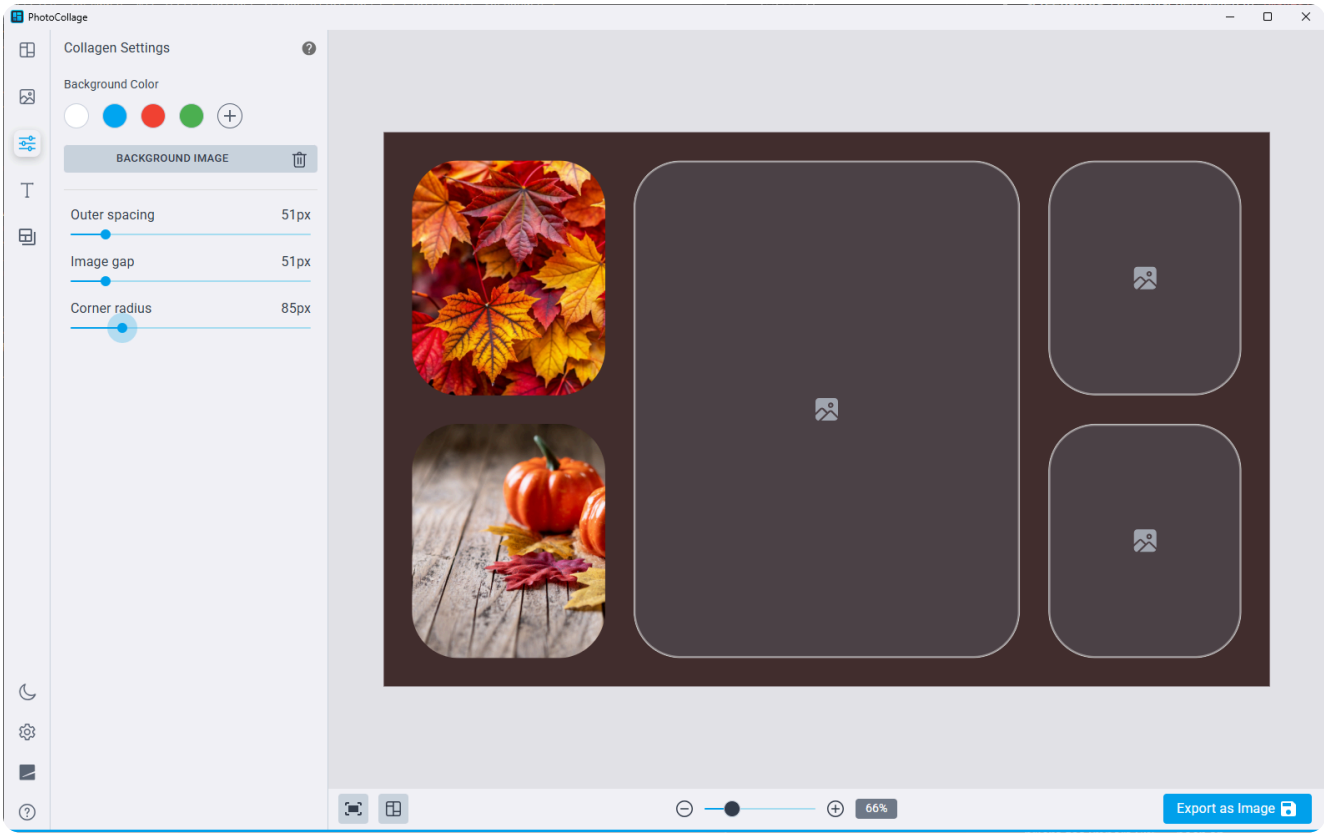
Instead of a color, you can also use a photo as the background. Click **Background Image**. Windows Explorer opens, where you select the image you want.



Collage with background image

To remove the background image again, click the **trash icon** on the right of the **Background Image** button.

1.4.3 Outer spacing, image gap and corner radius



Outer spacing, Image gap and Corner radius sliders with visible effect on the collage

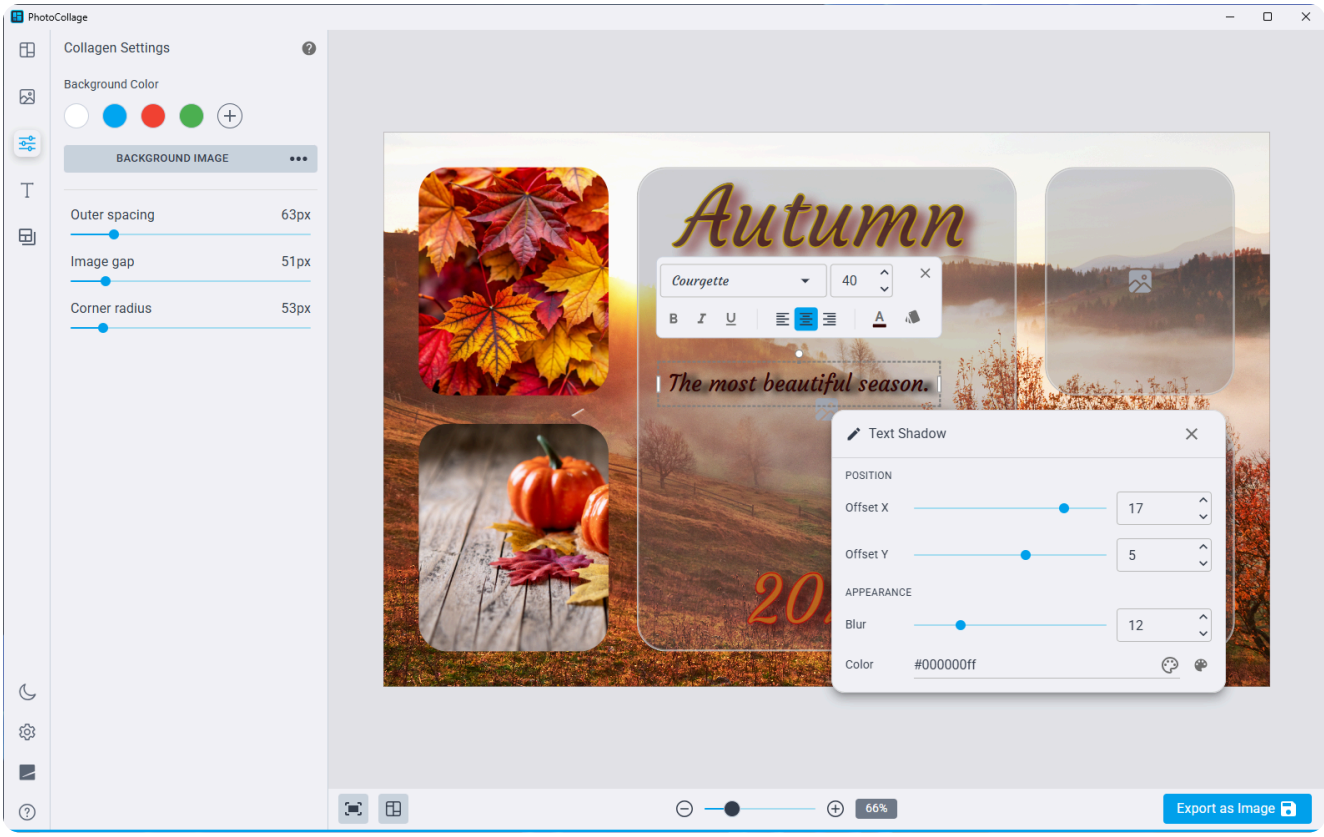
Use the three sliders to fine-tune the layout:

- **Outer spacing:** Width of the margin between the images and the edge of the collage.
- **Image gap:** Space between the individual images.
- **Corner radius:** Rounds the corners of the image slots. With the slider all the way to the left, the corners are square.

Tip: If you set outer spacing and image gap to zero, the images sit directly next to each other without a border.

1.5 4. Text

In the **Text Objects** area, you add headings, dates or captions to your collage.

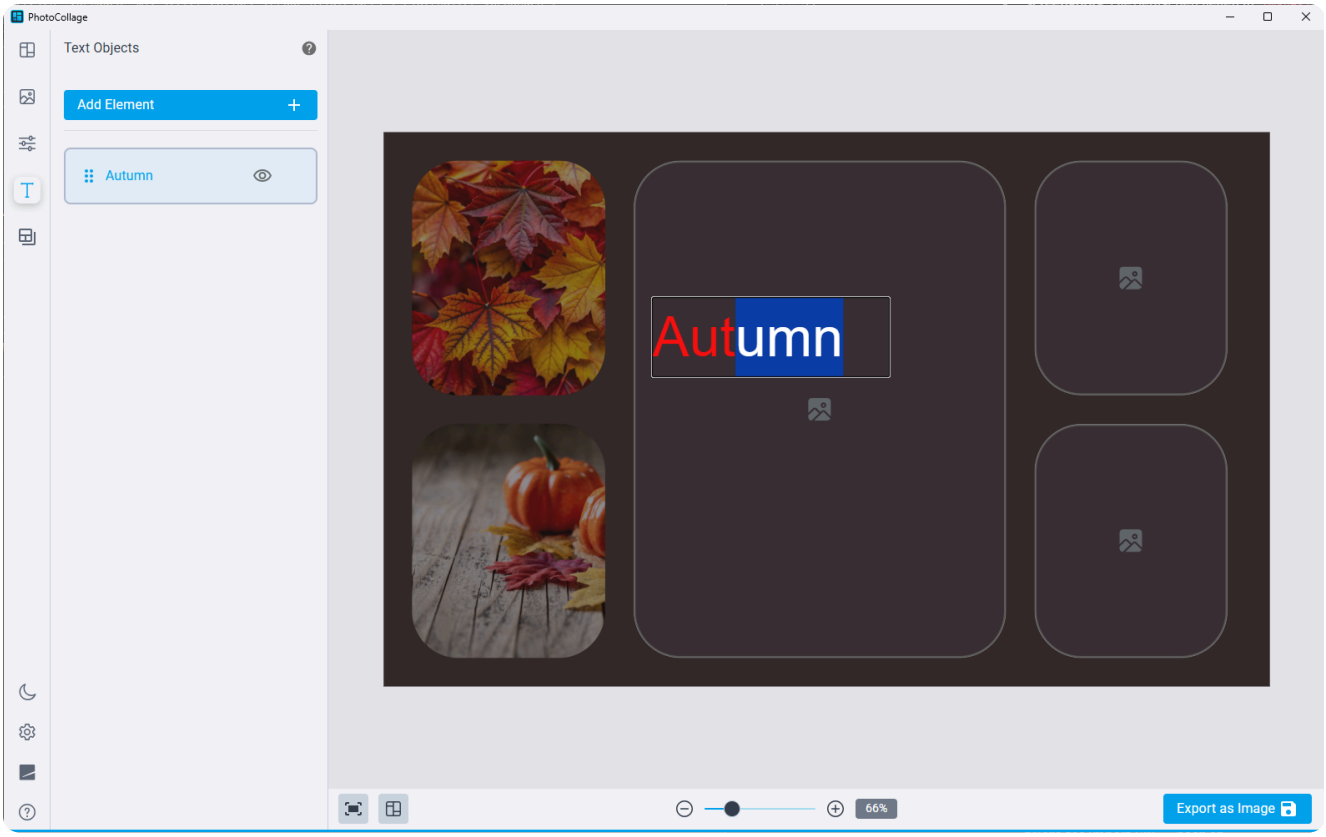


Text Objects area with text list, formatting toolbar and effects

1.5.1 Adding and editing a text box

Click **Add Element**. A new text box appears on the collage.

- **Edit text:** Double-click the text box to change the text. Press **Enter** to start a new line, so you can also write text on several lines.
- **Finish editing:** Click once outside the text box.



Text box in edit mode with partly selected text

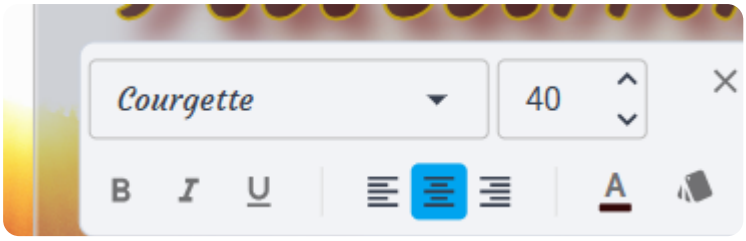
Text boxes float freely above the collage and are not tied to the image slots. Drag a text box to the desired position with the mouse. Use the handles on the frame to change the size of the box.

1.5.2 Managing text boxes

All text boxes are shown in the list in the settings panel:

- Click an entry to select the corresponding text box.
- Use the **eye icon** to hide or show a text box.
- Drag the **handle** on the left of an entry to change the order. The order determines which text is on top when text boxes overlap.
- To delete a text box, click the **trash icon** on its entry. Alternatively, select the text box and press the **Del** key.

1.5.3 Formatting text



Formatting toolbar with font, font size, style, alignment, color and effects

As soon as you select a text box, the formatting toolbar appears. Here you can set:

- **Font** and **font size**
- **Bold**, *italic* and underline
- **Alignment:** left, centered or right
- **Font color**
- **Effects** (right icon, see below)

Click the **X** to close the formatting toolbar.

1.5.4 Text shadow and outline

To keep text legible even on busy photos, you can add effects. Click the effects icon on the far right of the formatting toolbar and choose between **Text Shadow** and **Text Outline**.



Text Shadow window with Offset X, Offset Y, Blur and Color settings

A separate window opens for the text shadow. You can see all changes immediately on the collage:

- **Position (Offset X / Offset Y):** Defines how far the shadow is offset to the right and downward. You can use the sliders or enter the values directly.
- **Blur:** Defines how soft the shadow is. The higher the value, the more blurred the shadow.
- **Color:** Sets the color of the shadow. Use the color icons on the right to pick a color.

Click the **X** to close the window. To remove the shadow, open the effects menu again and delete the effect there.

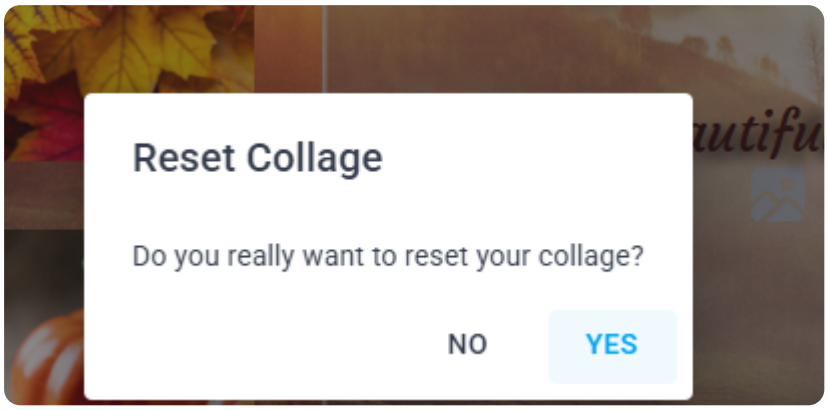
1.6 5. Projects

In the **Projects** area, you save your work so you can continue editing it later.



Projects area with buttons and recent projects

A project contains everything that belongs to your collage: format, layout, placed images including their crop, background, spacing and text.



Reset Collage dialog with No and Yes buttons

- **New Project:** Starts a new, empty collage. The program first asks whether you really want to reset the current collage.
- **Save:** Saves the current project. The first time you save, you choose a location and name.
- **Save as...:** Saves the project under a new name or in a different location, e.g. to create a variant.
- **Open:** Loads a saved project.

Under **Recent Projects** you will find your most recent projects with thumbnail, name and location. Click a project to open it.

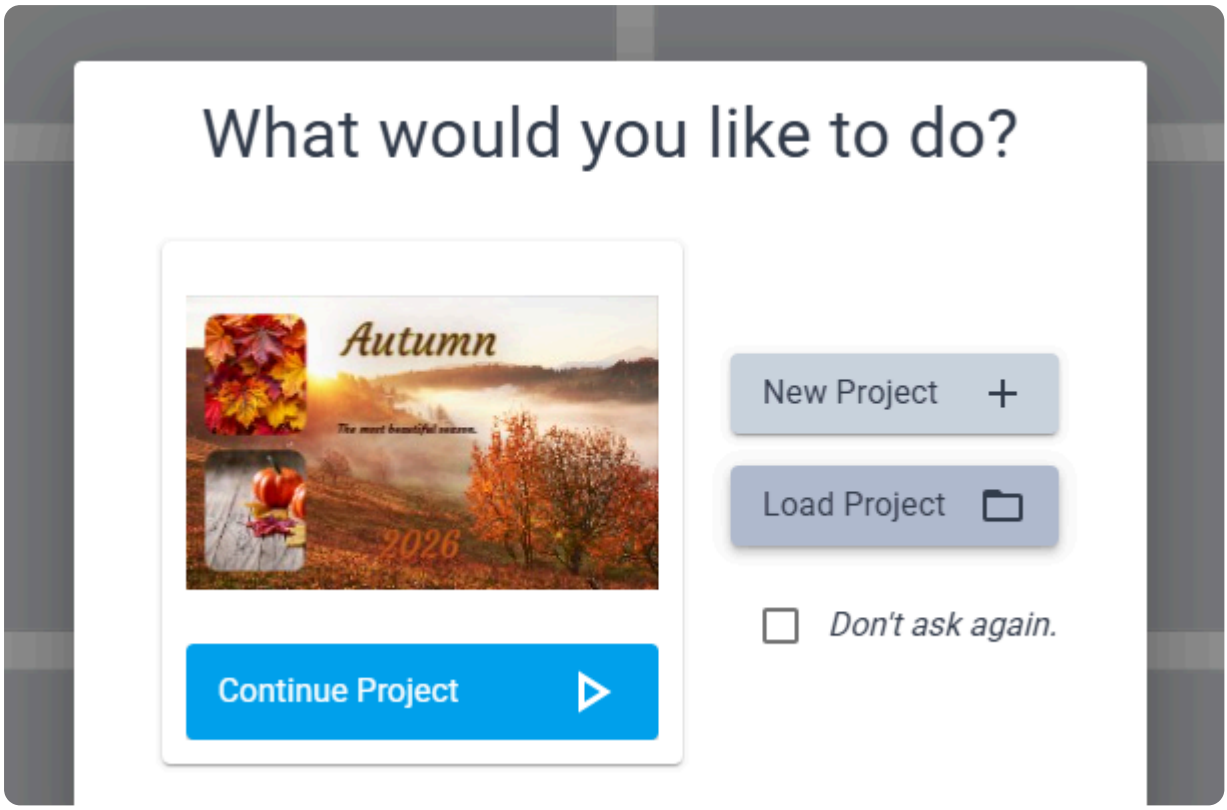
Note: To keep project files small, Photo Collage does not store your photos inside the project – it only remembers where they are located. If you move, rename or delete the original photos, the project can no longer find them. In that case, you need to add the affected images again.

Note: A project is not a finished image file. To share or print your collage, save it using Export as Image as described below.

1.6.1 Autosave and start dialog

Photo Collage automatically and continuously saves your current work in the

background. Even if you close the program by accident, your work is not lost.



Start dialog What would you like to do? with a preview of the last project

The next time you start the program, the dialog **What would you like to do?** appears. On the left you see a preview of your last work.

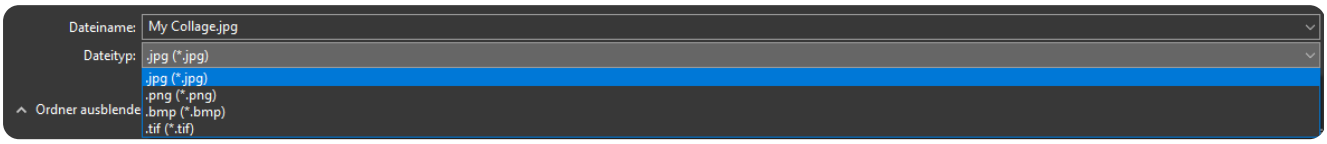
- **Continue Project:** Continues working on the collage you edited last.
- **New Project:** Starts with an empty collage.
- **Load Project:** Opens a saved project.
- **Don't ask again:** Select this option if you no longer want the dialog to appear. You can show it again via the settings.

Note: Autosave does not replace saving a project. Always also save important collages using **Save**.

1.7 Exporting the collage as an image

When your collage is finished, click the blue **Export as Image** button at the bottom right. In the Windows dialog, choose a location and file name, and select one of the following formats as the file type:

- **JPG:** small files, ideal for sharing by email or on social networks
- **PNG:** lossless quality, ideal for printing or further editing
- **BMP** and **TIF:** for programs that require these formats, e.g. in prepress



Save dialog with the file type list JPG, PNG, BMP and TIF opened

The collage is saved in the size you set under Size & Format – regardless of the zoom level of the view.

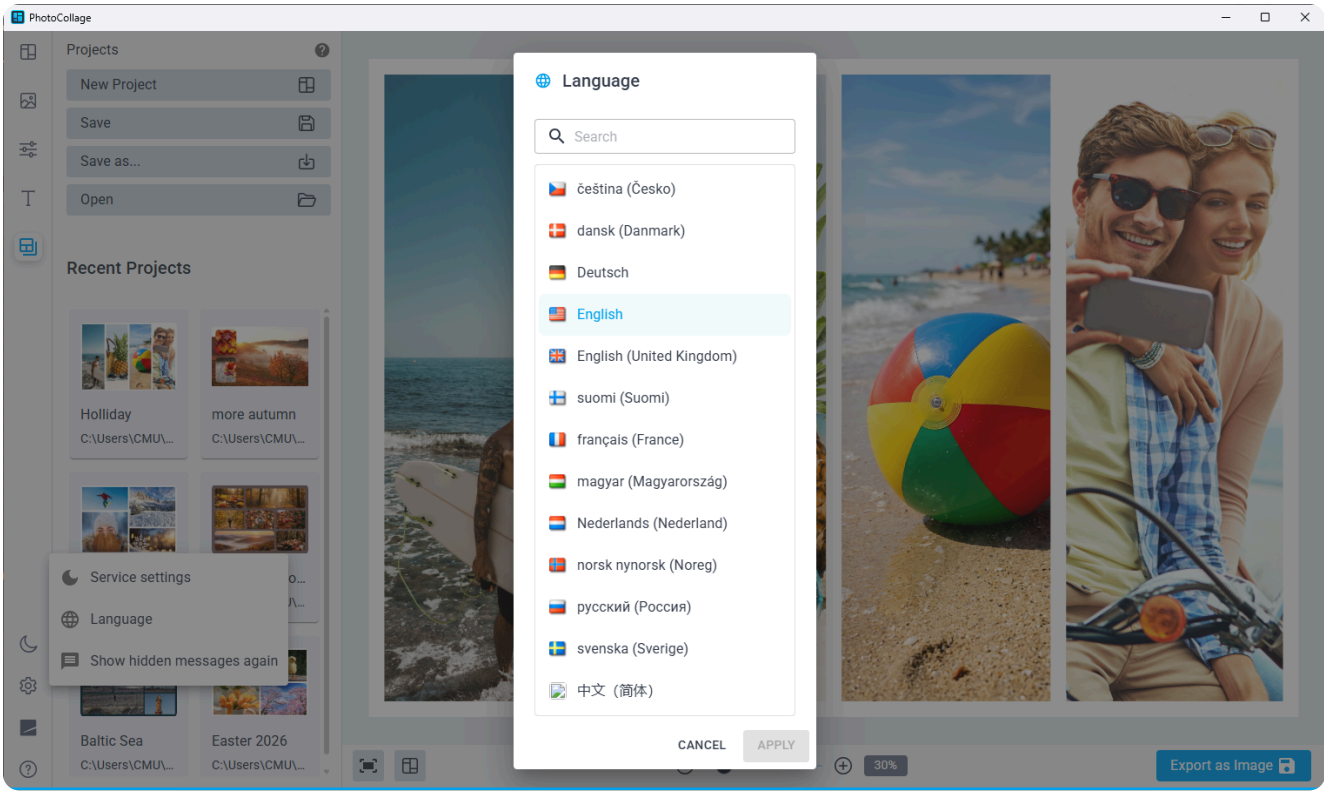
1.8 Other program features

You will find more features at the bottom of the navigation bar.

1.8.1 Dark mode

Click the **moon icon** to switch between the light and dark design.

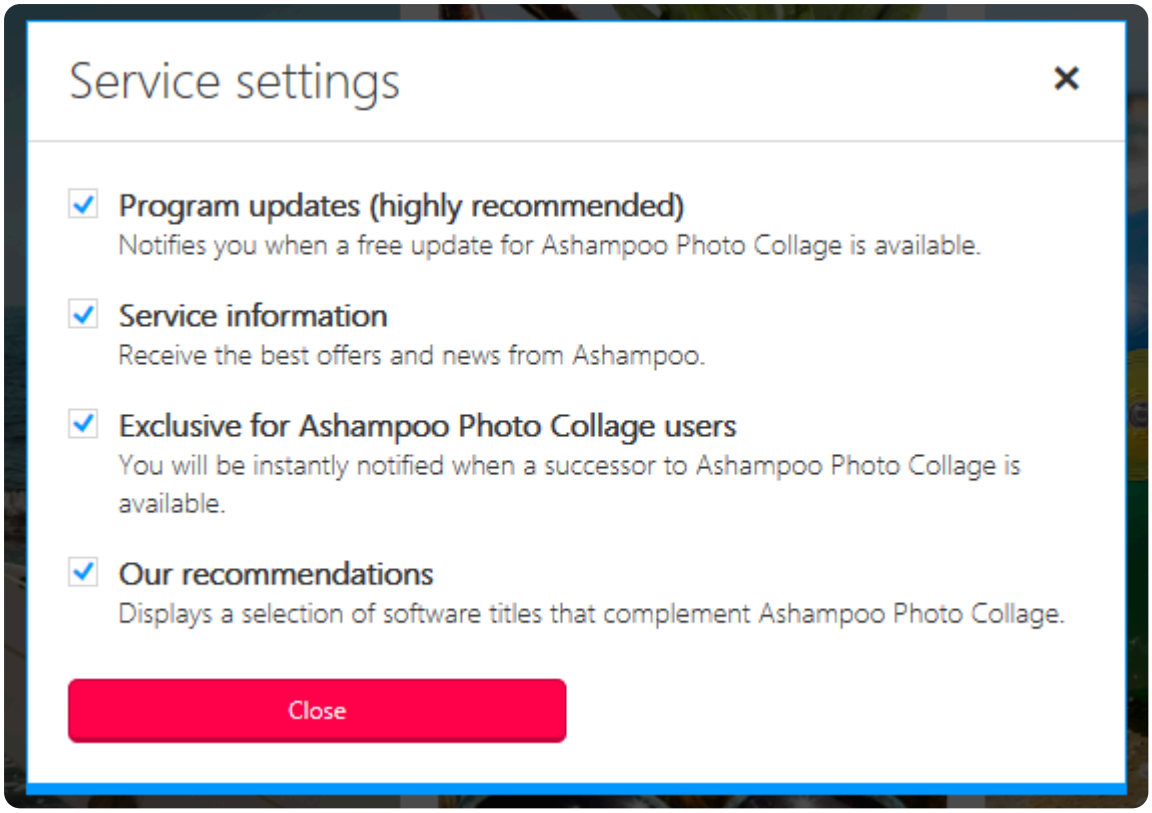
1.8.2 Settings



Settings menu with Service settings, Language and Show hidden messages again, and the language selection

Clicking the **gear icon** opens a menu with the following entries:

- **Service settings:** Choose which topics Ashampoo may inform you about (see below).
- **Language:** Changes the language of the program interface.
- **Show hidden messages again:** Shows all dialogs again for which you selected **Don't ask again**, such as the start dialog.



Service settings window with four options

In the **Service settings**, you turn the following notifications on or off:

- **Program updates:** Notifies you when a free update for Photo Collage is available. We recommend keeping this option turned on.
- **Service information:** Offers and news from Ashampoo
- **Exclusive for Ashampoo Photo Collage users:** Notification as soon as a successor to Photo Collage is released
- **Our recommendations:** A selection of programs that complement Photo Collage

Click **Close** to apply your selection.

1.8.3 Ashampoo menu



Ashampoo menu with License status, Service, Software Deals, Support and Check for updates

The third icon opens the Ashampoo menu:

- **License status:** Shows your license status and license key.
- **Service:** Opens further service settings.
- **Ashampoo Software Deals** and **Discover more products:** Take you to current offers and other Ashampoo programs.
- **Support & FAQ:** Contact Ashampoo Support and read frequently asked questions.
- **Check for updates...:** Searches for a new version of Photo Collage.

1.8.4 Help

Click the **question mark icon** to open the help.

Back to top