WORKFLOWVAULT

Free template | n8n | ~15 min setup

n8n Backup + Error Alerts

Every workflow is saved to a private GitHub repo each night, with full history. And whenever any workflow fails, you get an email with the error and a link.

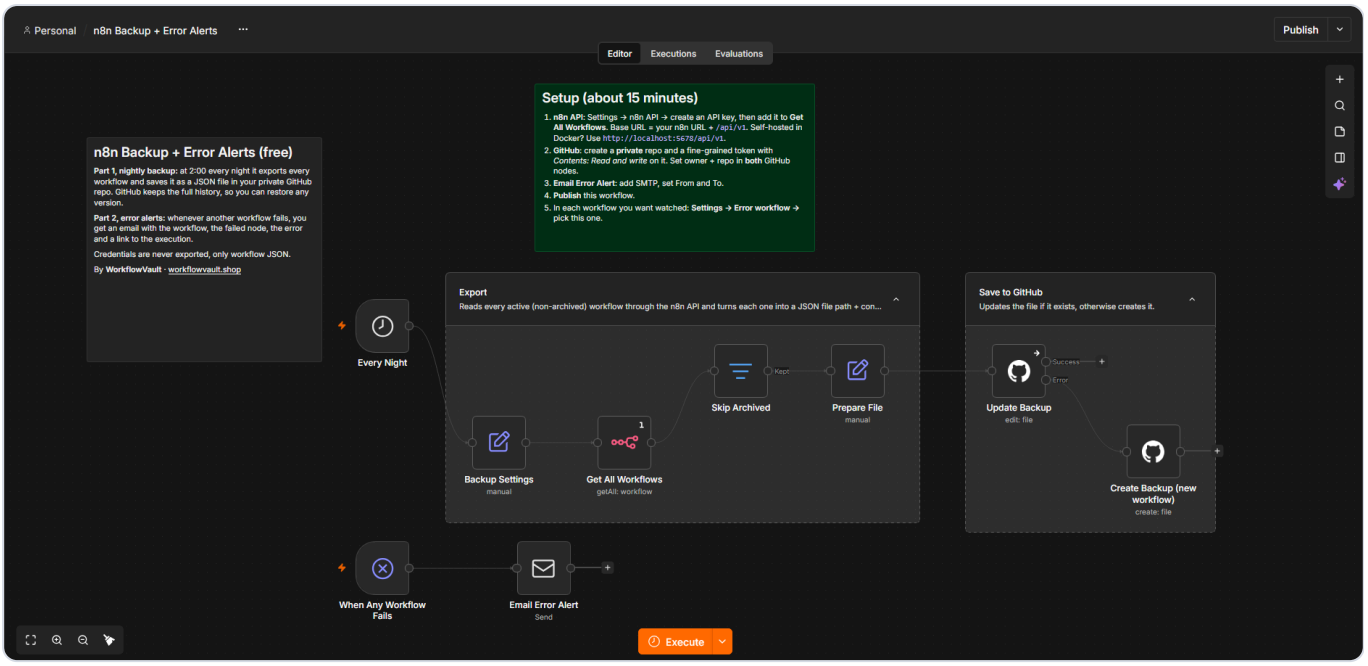
WHAT IT DOES

- Nightly backup of every workflow (JSON)
- Updates existing files, creates new ones
- Skips archived workflows
- Emails you when any workflow fails

YOU NEED

- n8n with the public API (API key)
- A GitHub account (free)
- Any SMTP email account
- About 15 minutes

How it works

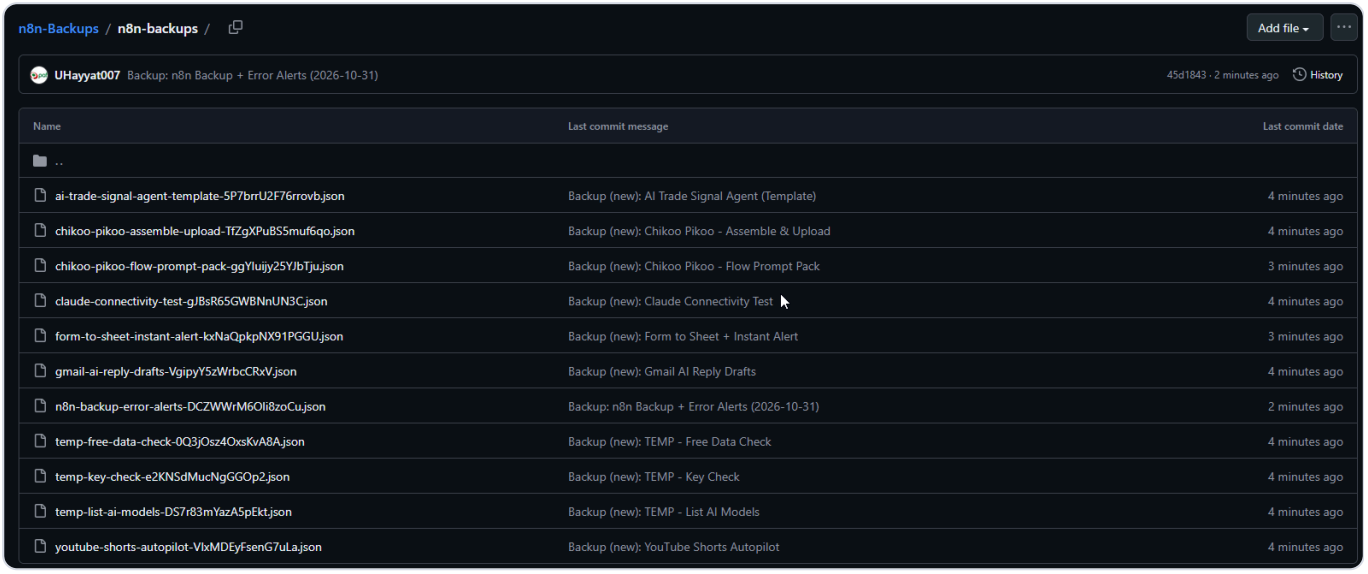


Part 1 (top): nightly backup. Part 2 (bottom): error alerts.

Every Night 2:00 → n8n API: all workflows → Skip Archived → Prepare File → GitHub: update or create

Any workflow fails → Email Error Alert

Each workflow is saved as `n8n-backups/<name>-<id>.json`. GitHub keeps every version, so you can restore any workflow from any night. Credentials are never exported, only workflow JSON.



The private repo after the first run.

Setup

1 Import the workflow

In n8n, open **Overview → Create Workflow**, then the ⋯ menu (top right) → **Import from File** and pick the `.json` file you downloaded. The workflow opens with sticky notes that repeat the key setup steps.

2 Create an n8n API key

In n8n: **Settings → n8n API → Create an API key**. Then open **Get All Workflows** → **Create new** credential and paste the key.

Where n8n runs	Base URL
n8n Cloud or a normal server	`https://YOUR-N8N-URL/api/v1`
Self-hosted in Docker (connection refused with the URL above)	`http://localhost:5678/api/v1`

3 Create a private GitHub repo and token

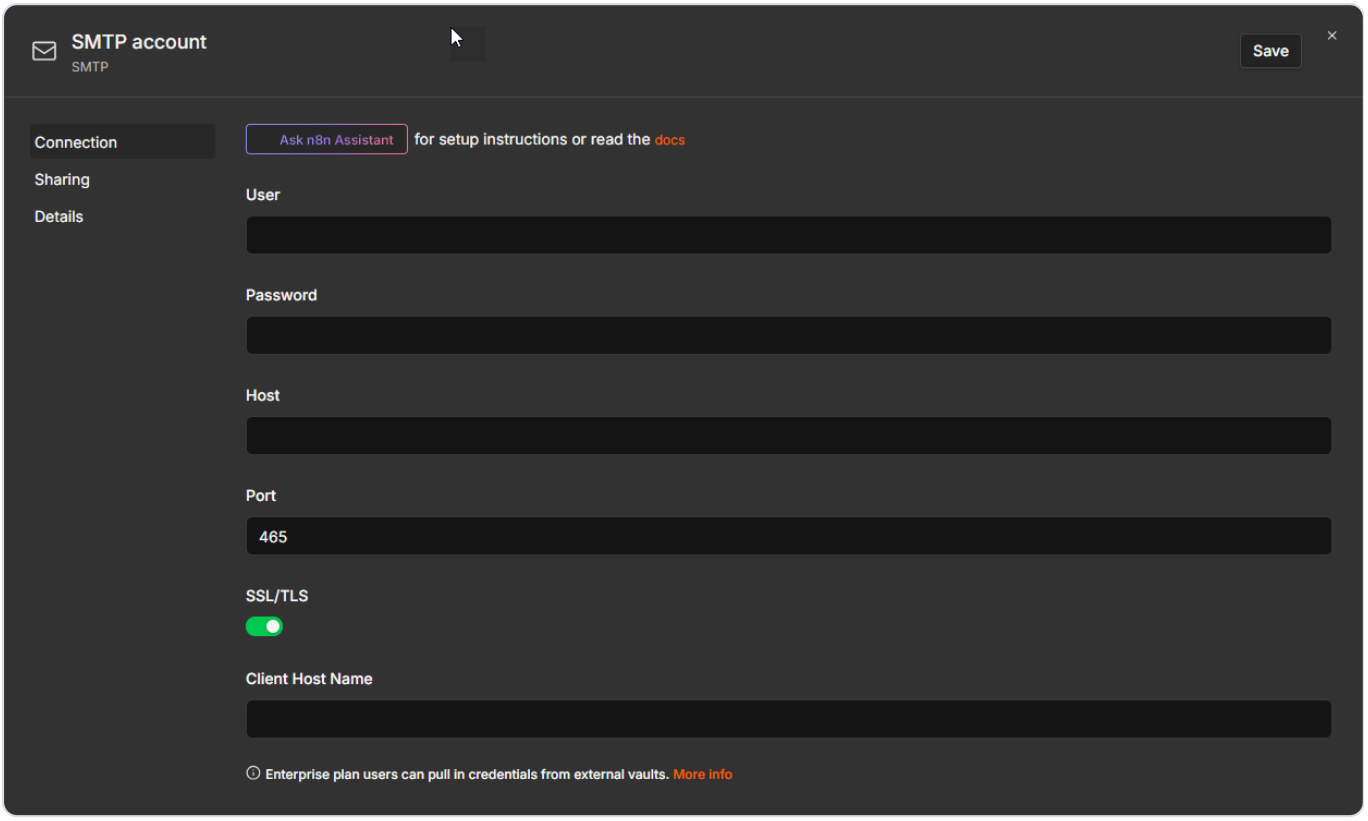
1. GitHub → **New repository** → name it e.g. `n8n-backups` → **Private** → tick **Add a README** → Create.
2. Profile picture → **Settings → Developer settings → Personal access tokens → Fine-grained tokens → Generate new token**.
3. Repository access: **Only select repositories** → your backup repo. Permissions → **Contents: Read and write**. Generate and copy the token.
4. In n8n, open **Update Backup** → create a **GitHub API** credential (your GitHub username + the token). Set **Owner** and **Repository** in **both** GitHub nodes.

4 Set up the error email

Open **Email Error Alert**, add an SMTP credential and set **From** and **To**.

Click **Create credential** in the node, search **SMTP**, and fill in your email provider's details:

Field	Gmail	Outlook / Microsoft 365	Your own domain
Host	`smtp.gmail.com`	`smtp.office365.com`	from your email host
Port / SSL	465, SSL on	587, SSL off (STARTTLS)	usually 465 + SSL
Password	an **App password**	your password or app password	mailbox password



The SMTP credential form. Save it and look for the green “Connection tested successfully”.

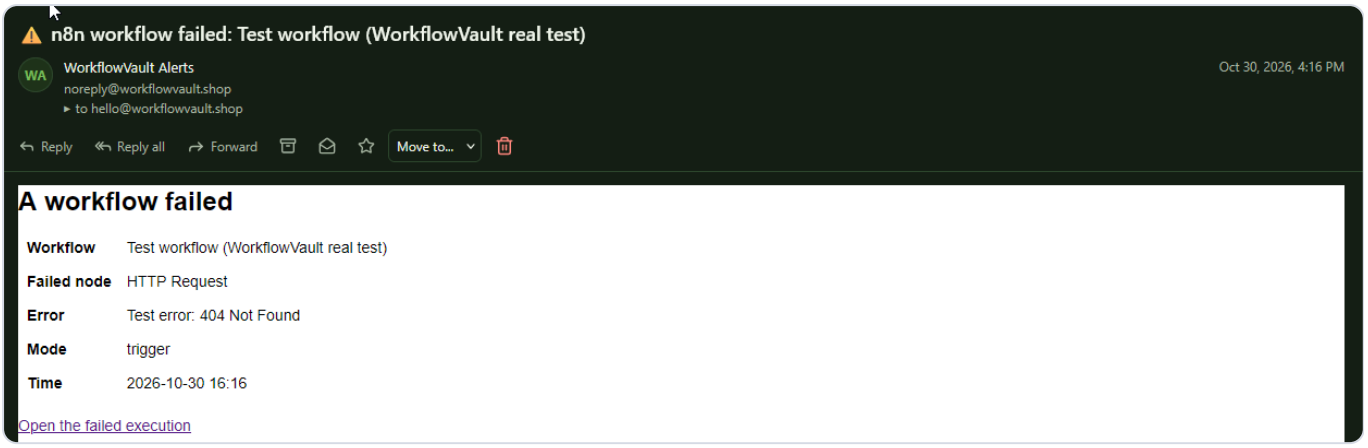
5 Publish and watch your workflows

Click **Publish**. Then, in every workflow you want watched, open **Settings → Error workflow** and pick **n8n Backup + Error Alerts**. Error alerts fire for live (production) runs, not manual test runs.

Test it

Backup: open the workflow, select **Every Night** and click **Execute**. Refresh your GitHub repo: a `n8n-backups` folder with one file per workflow appears. Run it again and the files are updated, not duplicated.

Error alert: make a small test workflow with a node that fails (e.g. an HTTP Request to a wrong URL), set its Error workflow to this one, publish it and let it run once. You get an email like this:



Error alert with the workflow, failed node, error and a link to the execution.

Troubleshooting

Get All Workflows: connection refused

n8n can't reach its own public URL from inside Docker. Use `http://localhost:5678/api/v1` as the Base URL.

GitHub: 404 / resource not found

Check Owner and Repository in both GitHub nodes, and that the token has **Contents: Read and write** on that repo. The first run uses “Create” for every file; that's expected.

No error emails

Set this workflow as the **Error workflow** in the other workflows' settings, and note that manual test runs don't trigger it.

How do I restore a workflow?

Download the JSON file from GitHub (pick any version from the file's History), then in n8n use **Import from File**.

Need help?

Stuck on a step? Email **hello@workflowvault.shop** with a screenshot of the node and the error message. We usually reply within one business day.

Want it installed for you, or changed for your business? Ask about a **Template install** or a **Custom workflow** at **workflowvault.shop**.

> Your credentials (passwords, API keys) stay inside your own n8n. This template never sends them anywhere else, and they are not included when a workflow is exported.