



## What is Flare?

Flare is a fast, easy, and beautiful darkroom for your Mac.

With Flare, you can apply photographic effects to your photos, then save them to your Mac, upload them to Flickr, or send them in an email. Flare comes with over twenty presets that create different kinds of effects, but if the preset you're looking for doesn't exist yet, you can tinker with the presets or even build your own from scratch.

## How to use it

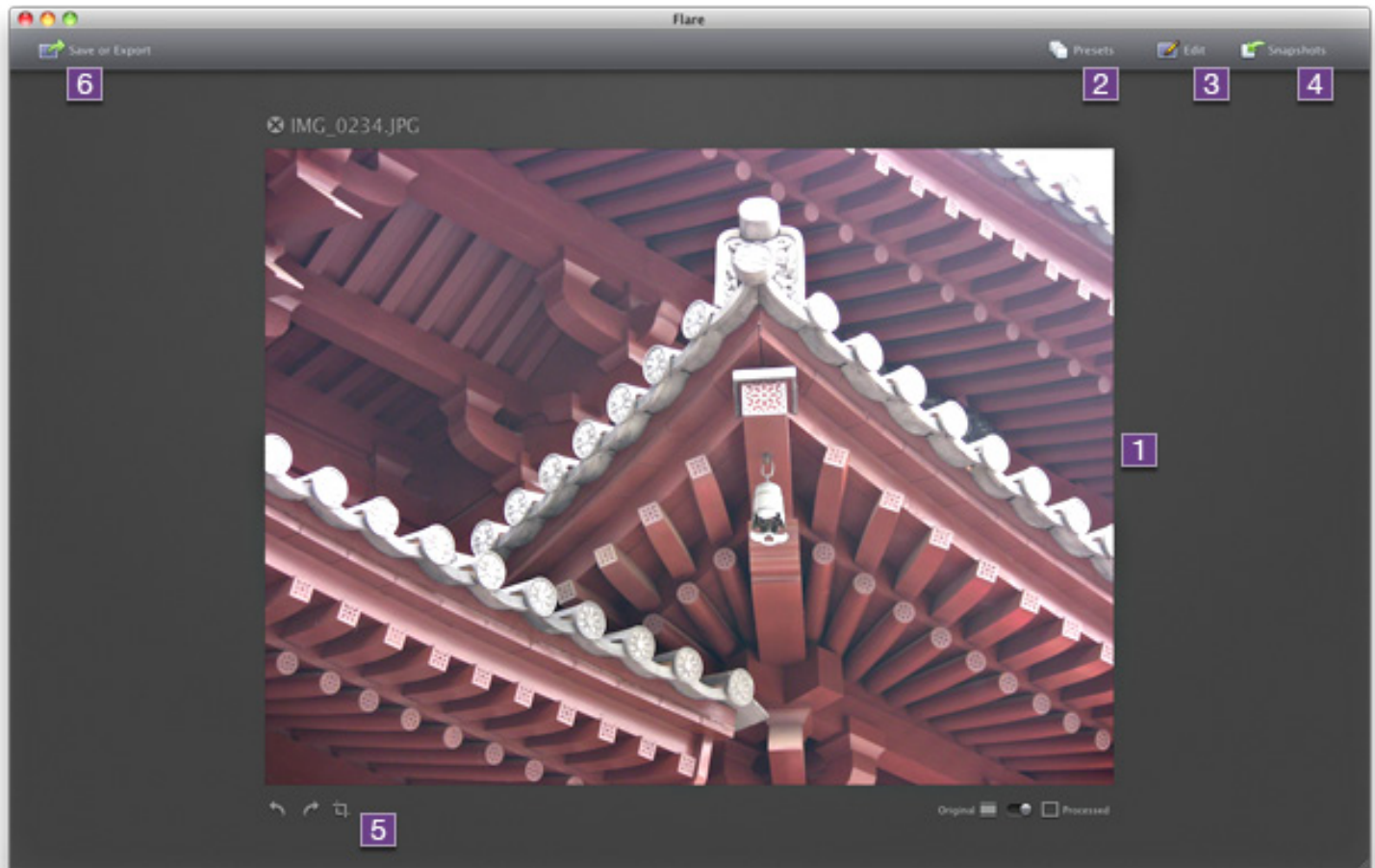
Using Flare is easy.

1. Drop the photo you want to edit on the Flare window or dock icon.
2. Rotate or crop it as desired.
3. Apply a preset to get the look you want.
4. Save the photo to your Mac, export it to Flickr, or email it to a friend.

Flare has more tricks up its sleeve, but if you never need them, you'll never see them. If you want to know everything Flare can do, keep reading.

## Basic principles

The basic principles of Flare fall under six headings:



1. Photos: You can call them images, photos, or pictures, but Flare exists to make 'em more awesome. 'Nuff said.
2. Presets: Presets are bundles of effects that you can apply to your photos. If one of the included presets don't quite do what you need it to do, you can edit it or make your own. You can even share customized presets with your friends, so they can use them too.
3. Effects: Effects are individual changes that can be applied to your photos. You can use them as part of the built-in presets, add or subtract them to edit the built-in presets, or use them as building blocks for your own custom presets.
4. Snapshots: If you're working on a preset but it's not quite ready to save yet, you can save it temporarily as a snapshot. Beware, though—if you save more than 24 snapshots, you'll start to lose your earliest ones. Make sure to save your presets as soon as you're happy with them.
5. Image Controls: Flare doesn't just do presets and effects. If you need to rotate or crop a photo, Flare is right there with the goods.
6. Save and Export: Flare lets you save your now-even-more-awesome photo as a file on your Mac, send it to flickr, or send it in an email.

# Presets

Presets are the easiest way to use Flare. If you want to make an photo look like a scene from a comic book or a photo you kept in a shoebox for years (just to name two examples), Flare has you covered. Just click Presets, choose the preset you want, and click Apply. Boom—you're done! You can skip ahead to Image Controls and Save & Export.

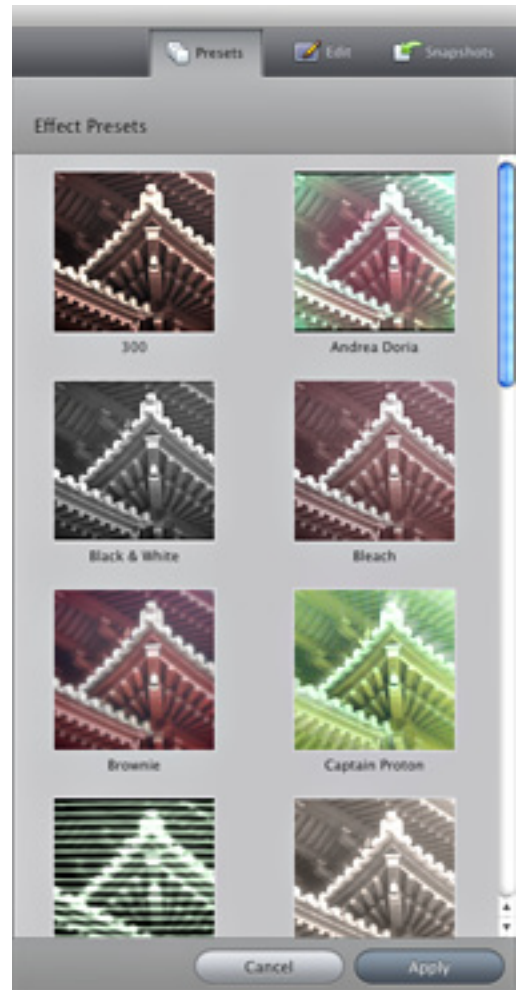
If you want to get into the gritty details and build your own presets, though, read on.

## Adding and editing an effect

To change a preset, add or edit the effects that make it up:

1. Select the preset you want to work from—say, Mr. Blue Sky.
2. Click the Edit tab next to Presets.
3. Click the arrow next to any of the applied effects to see more details.

From this point, you can either edit the existing effects—for example, by changing Mr. Blue Sky's default Lightroom border to a bigger one like Charcoal—or add additional ones by clicking the icons next to ADD EFFECT.



## Rearranging effects

Each effect has a grab-bar at the top of its box. Clicking and dragging on these grab-bars lets you reorder your effects. Effects are cumulative, so depending what effects you've decided to use the order in which they're applied may make a big difference. For example, if you apply an exposure effect over other effects, that exposure effect will be applied to all the other effects as well as the original photo. If you move the exposure effect to the bottom of the effects stack, it will only be applied to the original photo.

## Using opacity and master opacity

There are two ways to change the opacity of your effects. The first is the Opacity slider on each individual effect. This slider works exactly as you expect—it changes the opacity of that particular effect without changing any other effects.

The Master Opacity slider lets you change the overall opacity of the effects applied to the photo. In other words, it doesn't touch the opacity of each individual effect; instead, it makes the whole combination of effects more or less opaque.

This is a little hard to get across in words; the best way to see what we mean is to try it!

## Managing Presets

If you want to share a preset you've edited or created with someone, there's an easy way to export it from Flare:

1. Open the presets view.
2. Click the preset you want to export or share.
3. Click the gear that appears at the preset's lower right corner.
4. Click "Save As..."

You can also rename or delete presets using this method, changing the last step as appropriate.

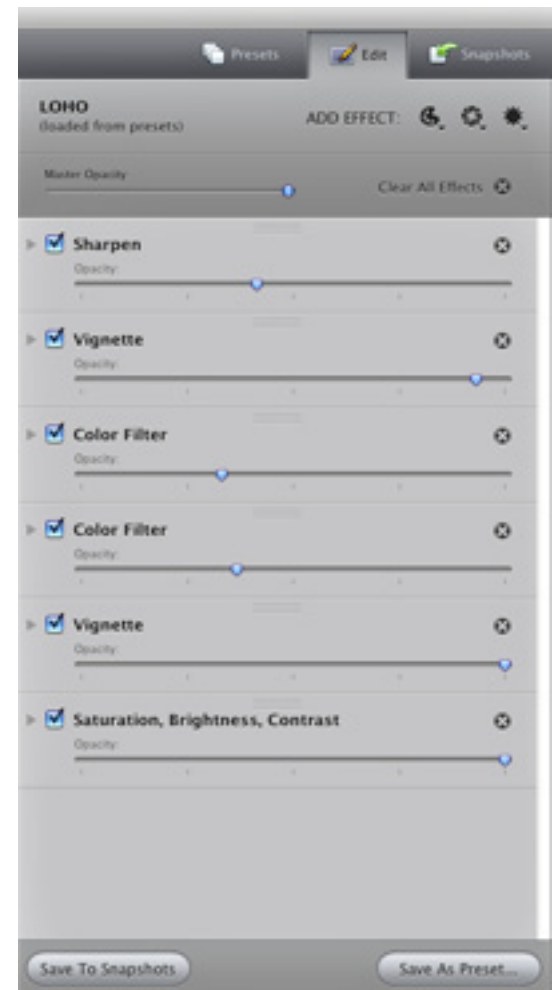
## Effects

Effects are the basic building blocks of Flare. If you want to make any changes to your photo other than rotating or cropping it, effects are the way to do it. The effects included in Flare make up three groups—color effects, lens effects, and creative effects—and range from turning your photo black and white or blurring and sharpening it to adding a frame or simulating a specific type of paper. For more information on specific effects, skip ahead to the description of the effects groups.

### How to edit, add, and remove effects

If you want to add, edit, or remove individual effects instead of presets, click Edit while working on a photo. You will see a list of effects applied to that photo. From the list you can:

- Add an effect by clicking on one of the icons next to ADD EFFECT
- Temporarily remove an effect by unchecking the checkbox next to its name
- Remove an effect entirely by clicking the X in the upper right corner of its box
- Change the master opacity of your effects using the Master Opacity slider
- Clear all effects using the Clear All Effects
- Change three common settings, plus the settings specific to each effect



## The common settings

Most settings only appear for certain effects, but there are three that appear for every effect: opacity, blending mode, and blending mask. Understanding these settings is key to making great presets.

### Opacity

Opacity is the simplest of the common settings. It just means how strongly your effect is applied to the photo. Low opacity means your effect will be weakly applied, while high opacity means that your effect will be more strongly applied (and depending on the effect, may cover up parts of the original photo).

### Blending mode

Flare effects offer eight blending modes: normal, multiply, screen, overlay, darken, lighten, hard light, and color dodge. Depending on which blending mode you choose for an effect, it will be combined with your photo in different ways. To really get the hang of blending modes, we recommend spending some time playing with them. If you're curious about the theory, though, Wikipedia has a useful explanation. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blend\\_modes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blend_modes)>

### Blending mask

The blending mask for an effect shows you where and how strongly that effect will be applied on your photo. If you choose full, it will be applied at full opacity across your photo. If you choose vignette, it will be applied more strongly toward the edges and more weakly toward the center; if you choose linear left, it will be applied most strongly at the left edge and least strongly at the right edge. This is another place where a little exploration goes a long way.

## The three effects groups

Flare uses three different types of effects: color effects, lens effects, and creative effects. Color effects focus on changing colors in your photo, lens effects focus on blurring and other effects that could be caused by a camera's lens, and creative effects focus on results of camera quality (like grain and light leaks) and things you might add later as an artist (like frames and special kinds of paper).



### Color effects

- Exposure
- Midtone brightness
- Saturation, Brightness, Contrast
- Tint
- Duotone
- Color filter
- Color gradient
- Black & white
- Crossprocessing

### Lens effects

- Gaussian blur
- Motion blur
- Zoom blur
- Sharpen
- Glow
- Vignette

### Creative effects

- Grain
- Texture
- Lightleak
- Frame
- Border
- Rounded edges
- Barrel distortion
- Rotation
- Scaling
- Halftone
- Pixellate
- Scanlines

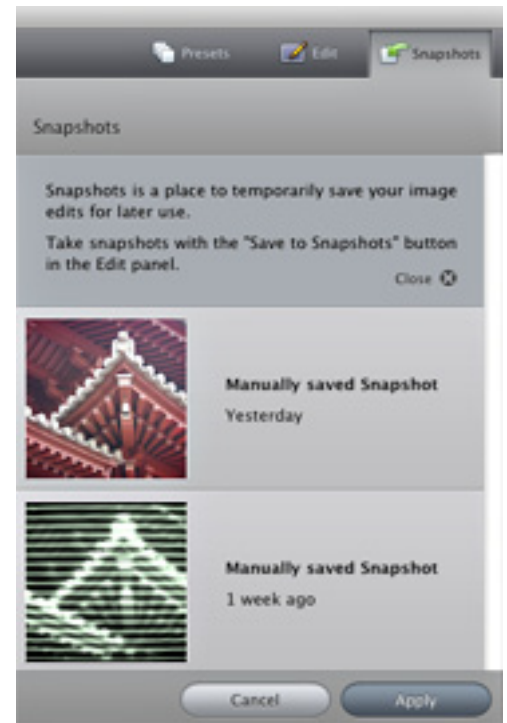


# Snapshots

## What are snapshots?

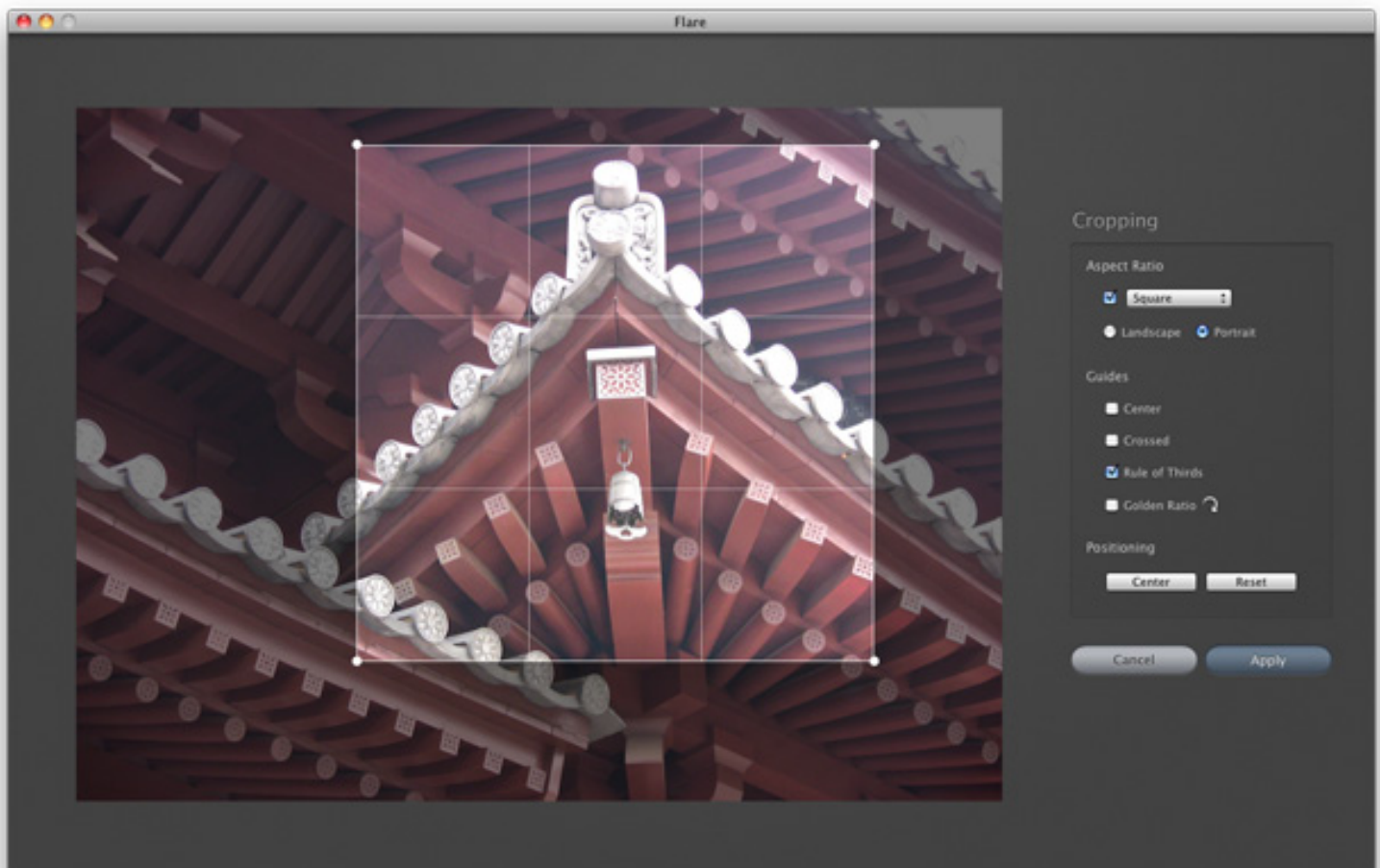
Snapshots are temporary collections of effects. They're most useful for saving a set of effects while you're working on a preset, but they can also come in handy if there is a set of effects you want to apply to several photos but expect to never use again.

Flare saves your last 24 snapshots; if you add more than that, you will lose your oldest snapshot. Be sure to save snapshots you want to keep as presets before you add more than 24 snapshots.



## Image Controls

Flare doesn't just handle tricky stuff like effects and presets; it also covers basic image editing features like cropping and rotation. These image controls are available in the main view and the Edit view, but not the Preset view or the Snapshots view.



## Cropping

Click the Crop button near the bottom left corner of the photo. You'll see a crop view for the original photo—any presets or effects you've already applied won't be visible.

Once you choose an aspect ratio and orientation for the crop selection (or decide not to use them), you can resize your selection by dragging the dots at the corners and move it by clicking and dragging anywhere within it.

Flare offers center (crosshair), crossed (x), rule of thirds, and golden ratio guides to help make sure the composition of your photo is as perfect as it can get. When you resize or move the crop selection, the guides move along with it.

Once you're content with your crop selection, click Apply and your cropped photo will reappear with any effects or presets you had already applied.

## Rotation

Click one of the rotate buttons at the bottom left corner of the photo to rotate it. If you need to rotate it more than 90 degrees, be patient; each rotation takes a moment because Flare needs to rotate all of the presets or effects you've applied as well as the original photo.

## Zooming in and out

To get a closer look at your photo, just click on the part of it you want to zoom in on. Once you're satisfied, click on the photo again to zoom back out.

## Checking your work

To quickly compare your processed photo with the original, toggle the switch labeled Original and Processed at the bottom right of your photo.

## Save & Export

Saving and exporting photos from Flare is easy. You can either save them as files on your Mac or export them directly to flickr or send them with Mail.

To save or export, start by clicking "Save or Export".

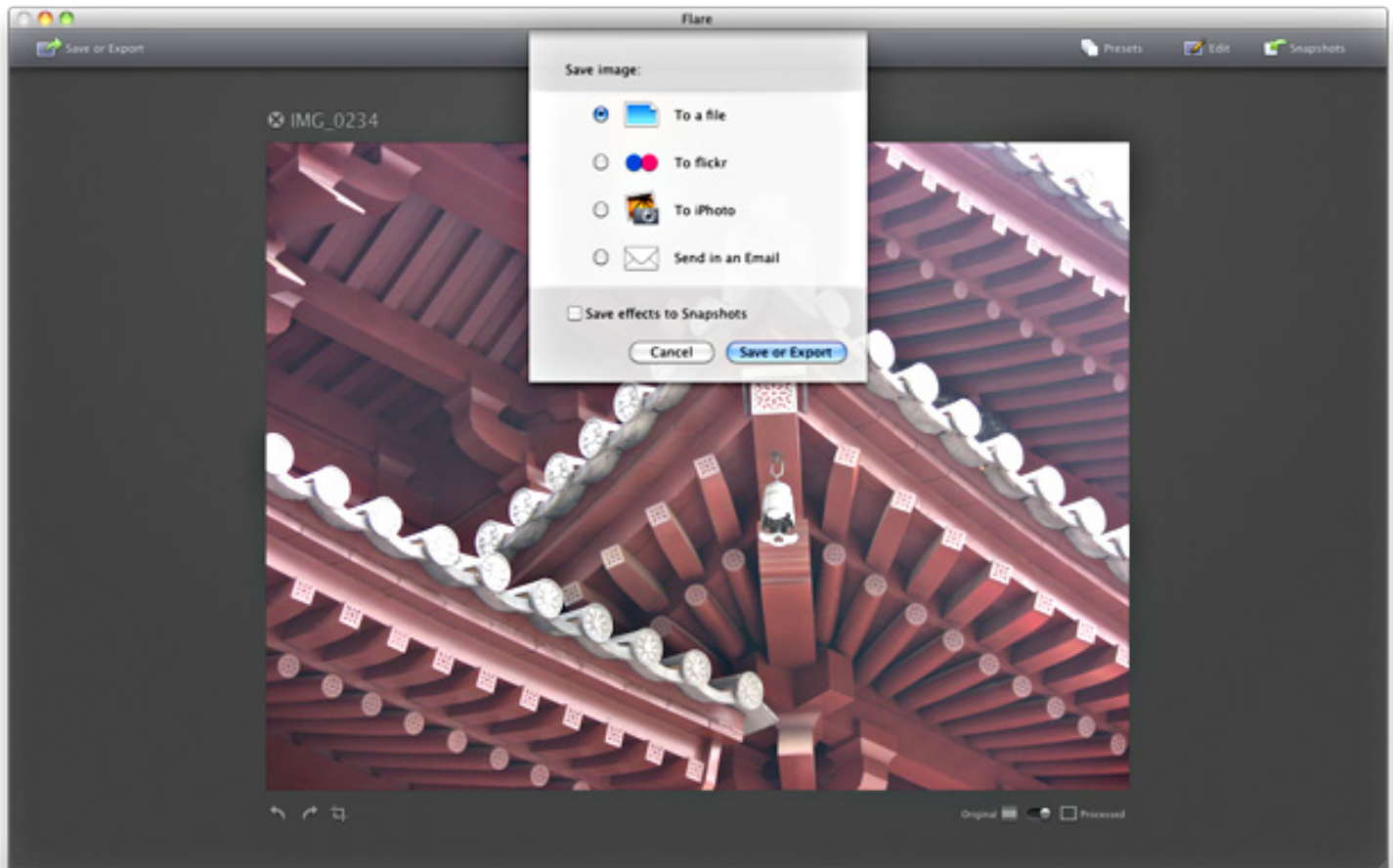
## Saving your photo to your Mac

To save your photo as a file on your Mac, click "To a file" and click "Save or Export". If you want to save the effects you used on this photo to your Snapshots, make sure "Save effects to Snapshots" is checked.



You should see a normal save dialogue with a couple of extra features. Name your photo, decide whether you want to resize it and what format you want it in, then click save.

Tip: if you're not sure what format to use, bear in mind that JPEG files use lossy compression, meaning that the quality of your image may be affected, especially if you select low values on the Quality slider. PNG files are also compressed, but without loss of image quality; this tends to produce somewhat larger file sizes. TIFF files are not compressed, which means you'll never lose quality, but file sizes can be very large.



## Uploading your photo to flickr

To upload your photo to flickr, click “To flickr” and click “Save or Export”. Then choose your title, description, tags (separated by commas), and viewing permissions. Once you're satisfied with these settings, click the Upload button.

Once the upload is complete, Flare will open flickr in your browser. Check to make sure that the title, description, tags, and permissions look right, then switch back to Flare and click Close to get rid of the flickr upload sheet.

If you haven't authorized Flare to export to flickr yet, keep reading to learn how to set up flickr export.

## Setting up flickr export

The first time you export a photo to flickr, you'll receive a message that Flare isn't authorized to upload to your account. The good news is that getting Flare authorized is simple:

1. Click the Authorize button.
2. In the browser window that opens, sign into flickr (if you're not signed in already).
3. When you see a message that says "Flare wants to link to your flickr account", click the button that says "OK, I'LL AUTHORIZE IT".
4. Switch back to Flare if it doesn't jump to the front. You should now be authorized.

## Saving your photo to iPhoto

To save your photo to iPhoto, click "To iPhoto" and click "Save or Export". If you want to save the effects you used on this photo to your Snapshots, make sure "Save effects to Snapshots" is checked.

## Sending your photo in an email

To send your photo in an email, click "Send in an Email", then click "Save or Export". Flare will open a new message in Mail.app with your photo as an attachment.

Tip: if your default email app isn't Mail, Flare will ask whether you want to send your photo with Mail anyway. If Mail isn't set up to work with your email account, it's probably a better idea to cancel, save your photo to a file, and attach that file to an email using your normal email client.

## External Editor Setup

Version 1.2 of Flare has introduced the ability to use Flare as an external editor in iPhoto, Aperture, and Lightroom. Designate Flare as your external editor in one of those apps and you can jump into Flare to edit your photo, then return right to that app when you're finished. Here's how to set it up:

### For iPhoto:

Go to iPhoto > Preferences in the menu bar. Under the Advanced tab (or the General tab, if you're using iPhoto 09), change the "Edit photo" setting to "In application..." and choose Flare from your Applications folder in the sheet that appears. Close the Preferences window, and you're all set.

To edit a photo with Flare, control-click on the photo in iPhoto and choose "Edit in External Editor". Once you're done editing in Flare, click the "Save to iPhoto and Quit" button in the upper left corner of the Flare window.

## For Aperture:

Go to Aperture > Preferences in the menu bar. Under the Export tab, Click the “Choose” button to the right of the External Photo Editor field and choose Flare from your Applications folder in the sheet that appears. Close the Preferences window, and you’re ready to go.

To edit a photo with Flare, control-click on the photo in Aperture and choose “Edit with Flare”. Once you’re done editing in Flare, click the “Save to Aperture and Quit” button in the upper left corner of the Flare window.

## For Lightroom:

Go to Lightroom > Preferences in the menu bar. Under the External Editing tab, Click the “Choose” button next to Application and choose Flare from your Applications folder in the sheet that appears. Close the Preferences window, and you’re ready to go.

To edit a photo with Flare, choose a photo in Lightroom and go to Photo > Edit In > Edit in Flare... in the menu bar. Once you’re done editing in Flare, click the “Save to Lightroom and Quit” button in the upper left corner of the Flare window.