Leave the meter

Flat-rate vs metered — the one-page decision worksheet.

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know what to move — and what to keep

1 THE 3-QUESTION TEST

- **Is it steady & long-lived?** Runs most of the day, most of the year, and will for >1 year. **No → keep it on the meter.**
- **Does its bill scale with your success?** Egress, per-request, always-on compute. **No → the saving is small; don't bother.**
- **Who runs it?** **Yes to both above** and the only question left is operations — a priced, solvable decision, not a reason to overpay.

2 SPOT THE METER ON YOUR BILL

- **Data Transfer Out / egress** — per-GB, grows with traffic not features. Usually the biggest surprise (~$0.09/GB on AWS = ~$53k/yr at 50 TB/mo).
- **NAT Gateway** & **cross-AZ / cross-region** transfer — per-GB just to move data around inside the cloud.
- **Per-request** fees (API calls, Lambda invocations) and **always-on** compute you never scale down.
- Rule of thumb: circle every line that's **per-GB** or **per-request**. That's your meter.

3 SCORE YOUR WORKLOADS

WORKLOAD	STEADY?	METER-HEAVY?	MOVE?
____________	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
____________	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
____________	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
____________	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N

- **Two Yes → move it.** Any No → leave it.

4 WHEN FLAT-RATE WINS

- Steady + meter-heavy + long-lived → a **flat-rate box** (rented dedicated at Hetzner / OVH, bandwidth included) costs the same at 1 TB or 50.
- Typical cut on those workloads: **40–70%**, and it **compounds as you grow** instead of the meter spinning faster.
- You're leaving the **meter**, not the datacenter — flat-rate managed Postgres and zero-egress storage (R2, B2) count.

5 WHEN TO STAY ON THE METER

- **Spiky / seasonal** load — you'd pay for the peak all year on fixed hardware.
- **Scale-to-zero** — busy some days, dark others: per-second billing is good at that.
- **Brand-new product** still finding its shape — flexibility beats the last 30% of savings.
- **Tiny** workloads — a $5 VPS is already cheaper than an hour spent optimizing.

6 THE REAL OBJECTION: WHO RUNS IT

- "On-prem needs staff time and loses redundancy." True — but that's an **operations** question, not a **location** one.
- The false choice is **cheap-but-you-run-it** vs **expensive-but-managed**. The fourth option: **flat-rate hardware someone else runs** — the cheaper bill without hiring an ops team.
- Don't trust anyone who says move **all** of it or **none** of it. The answer is a short "move these, keep those" list with the math shown.

Start here: pull last month's invoice → circle every **per-GB** and **per-request** line → that's the meter worth moving off.