Custom Domain Setup Guide for nmreggaecalendar.com

This comprehensive guide will walk you through setting up a custom domain for your New Mexico Reggae Calendar NextJS application. Follow these steps to get your site live at nmreggaecalendar.com.

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1. Domain Purchase

Step 1.1: Choose a Domain Registrar

Popular and reliable domain registrars include:
- **Namecheap** (recommended for beginners)
- **GoDaddy**
- **Google Domains** (now part of Squarespace)
- **Cloudflare Registrar**
- **Porkbun**

Step 1.2: Purchase nmreggaecalendar.com

1. Visit your chosen registrar's website

2. Search for "nmreggaecalendar.com"

3. Add to cart and proceed to checkout

4. **Important**: During checkout, consider these options:
   - **Domain Privacy Protection**: Recommended to hide your personal information
   - **Auto-renewal**: Recommended to prevent accidental expiration
   - **DNS Management**: Usually included for free

Step 1.3: Domain Registration Tips

- Register for at least 2 years for better SEO
- Keep your registrar login credentials secure
- Set up account notifications for renewal reminders

2. Hosting Platform Selection

For NextJS applications, here are the best hosting options:

Option A: Vercel (Recommended for NextJS)

Pros:
- Built specifically for NextJS
- Automatic deployments from Git
- Free tier available
- Excellent performance
- Built-in CDN

Cons:
- Can be expensive for high traffic
- Limited backend capabilities on free tier

Option B: Netlify

Pros:
- Great free tier
- Easy to use interface
- Good for static sites
- Built-in form handling

Cons:
- Less optimized for NextJS than Vercel
- Function limitations on free tier

Option C: Railway

Pros:
- Good for full-stack applications
- Reasonable pricing
- Easy database integration

Cons:
- Smaller community
- Less documentation

Option D: DigitalOcean App Platform

Pros:
- Predictable pricing
- Good performance
- Full control over infrastructure

Cons:
- More technical setup required
- No free tier

Recommendation: Use Vercel for the best NextJS experience.

3. Deploying Your NextJS App

Option A: Deploying to Vercel

Step 3.1: Create Vercel Account

1. Go to vercel.com (https://vercel.com)
2. Sign up using GitHub, GitLab, or Bitbucket (recommended)
3. Verify your email address

Step 3.2: Prepare Your Code Repository

1. **Create a GitHub repository:**
   ```bash
   # Navigate to your project directory
   cd /home/ubuntu/nm-reggae-calendar
   ```

Initialize git (if not already done)
git init

Add all files
git add .

Commit your code
git commit -m "Initial commit - NM Reggae Calendar"

Add your GitHub repository as remote
git remote add origin https://github.com/yourusername/nm-reggae-calendar.git

Push to GitHub
git push -u origin main
```

### Step 3.3: Deploy to Vercel

1. In your Vercel dashboard, click "New Project"
2. Import your GitHub repository
3. Configure project settings:
   - **Framework Preset**: Next.js
   - **Root Directory**: `./app` (since your NextJS app is in the app folder)
   - **Build Command**: `yarn build`
   - **Output Directory**: `.next`
4. Click "Deploy"
5. Wait for deployment to complete (usually 2-3 minutes)

## Option B: Deploying to Netlify

### Step 3.1: Create Netlify Account

1. Go to netlify.com (https://netlify.com)
2. Sign up using GitHub, GitLab, or Bitbucket
3. Verify your email address

### Step 3.2: Deploy Your Site

1. In Netlify dashboard, click "New site from Git"
2. Choose your Git provider and repository

3. Configure build settings:
   - **Base directory**: `app`
   - **Build command**: `yarn build`
   - **Publish directory**: `app/.next`
4. Click "Deploy site"

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# 4. Custom Domain Configuration

## Step 4.1: Add Domain to Hosting Platform

**For Vercel:**

1. Go to your project dashboard
2. Click on "Settings" tab
3. Click "Domains" in the sidebar
4. Click "Add Domain"
5. Enter `nmreggaecalendar.com`
6. Click "Add"
7. Also add `www.nmreggaecalendar.com` and set it to redirect to the main domain

**For Netlify:**

1. Go to your site dashboard
2. Click "Domain settings"
3. Click "Add custom domain"
4. Enter `nmreggaecalendar.com`
5. Click "Verify"
6. Add `www.nmreggaecalendar.com` as an alias

## Step 4.2: Note the DNS Records

Your hosting platform will provide DNS records that you need to configure. Common records include:
- **A Record**: Points to an IP address
- **CNAME Record**: Points to another domain
- **AAAA Record**: Points to an IPv6 address

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# 5. DNS Configuration

## Step 5.1: Access Your Domain's DNS Settings

1. Log into your domain registrar account
2. Find "DNS Management" or "DNS Settings"
3. Look for options to add/edit DNS records

## Step 5.2: Configure DNS Records

**For Vercel:**

Add these records to your DNS:

```
Type: A
Name: @
Value: 76.76.19.61

Type: CNAME
Name: www
Value: cname.vercel-dns.com
```

For Netlify:

Add these records to your DNS:

```
Type: A
Name: @
Value: 75.2.60.5

Type: CNAME
Name: www
Value: your-site-name.netlify.app
```

Step 5.3: DNS Propagation

- DNS changes can take 24-48 hours to propagate globally
- You can check propagation status at whatsmydns.net (https://whatsmydns.net)
- Most changes are visible within 1-2 hours

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6. SSL Certificate Setup

Automatic SSL (Recommended)

Most modern hosting platforms provide automatic SSL certificates:

Vercel:

- SSL certificates are automatically provisioned
- No additional configuration needed
- Certificates auto-renew

Netlify:

- Go to "Domain settings"
- Click "HTTPS"
- Click "Verify DNS configuration"
- Certificate will be automatically provisioned

Manual SSL Setup (Advanced)

If you need manual SSL setup:

1. Obtain an SSL certificate from:
- Let's Encrypt (free)
- Cloudflare (free with their service)
- Commercial providers (Comodo, DigiCert, etc.)

2. Upload certificate files to your hosting platform

3. Configure HTTPS redirects

7. Testing and Verification

Step 7.1: Basic Functionality Test

1. Visit `https://nmreggaecalendar.com`

2. Verify the site loads correctly

3. Test navigation between pages

4. Check that all images and assets load

Step 7.2: SSL Certificate Verification

1. Look for the padlock icon in your browser

2. Click on the padlock to view certificate details

3. Verify the certificate is valid and trusted

Step 7.3: Performance Testing

Use these tools to test your site:
- **Google PageSpeed Insights**: pagespeed.web.dev (https://pagespeed.web.dev)
- **GTmetrix**: gtmetrix.com (https://gtmetrix.com)
- **WebPageTest**: webpagetest.org (https://webpagetest.org)

Step 7.4: Mobile Responsiveness

• Test on various devices and screen sizes

• Use browser developer tools to simulate mobile devices

• Check that all functionality works on mobile

8. Troubleshooting

Common Issues and Solutions

Issue: "Domain not found" or DNS errors

Solutions:
- Wait for DNS propagation (up to 48 hours)
- Double-check DNS record configuration
- Clear your browser cache and DNS cache
- Try accessing from a different network

Issue: SSL certificate errors

Solutions:
- Wait for certificate provisioning (can take up to 24 hours)
- Verify DNS records are correct
- Contact hosting platform support
- Try accessing via HTTPS explicitly

Issue: Site loads but assets are missing

Solutions:
- Check build configuration
- Verify all files were uploaded correctly
- Check for case-sensitive file path issues
- Review browser console for error messages

Issue: Slow loading times

Solutions:
- Optimize images (use WebP format, compress files)
- Enable CDN if not already active
- Minimize JavaScript and CSS files
- Consider upgrading hosting plan

Getting Help

- **Vercel Support**: vercel.com/support (https://vercel.com/support)
- **Netlify Support**: netlify.com/support (https://netlify.com/support)
- **Domain Registrar Support**: Contact your registrar's customer service
- **Community Forums**: Stack Overflow, Reddit r/webdev

Additional Considerations

SEO Optimization

1. **Google Search Console**: Add your domain to track search performance
2. **Sitemap**: Ensure your NextJS app generates a sitemap
3. **Meta Tags**: Verify all pages have proper meta descriptions and titles
4. **Analytics**: Set up Google Analytics or similar tracking

Security Best Practices

1. **Regular Updates**: Keep your NextJS app and dependencies updated
2. **Environment Variables**: Never commit sensitive data to your repository
3. **HTTPS Only**: Ensure all traffic is redirected to HTTPS
4. **Content Security Policy**: Consider implementing CSP headers

Backup and Monitoring

1. **Regular Backups**: Set up automated backups of your code and data
2. **Uptime Monitoring**: Use services like UptimeRobot or Pingdom
3. **Error Tracking**: Consider tools like Sentry for error monitoring
4. **Performance Monitoring**: Set up alerts for performance degradation

Cost Considerations

- **Domain Renewal**: Budget for annual domain renewal costs
- **Hosting Costs**: Monitor usage to avoid unexpected charges
- **CDN Costs**: Understand bandwidth pricing for your hosting platform
- **SSL Certificate**: Most platforms include free SSL, but verify this

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Quick Reference Checklist

- [ ] Domain purchased and registered
- [ ] Hosting platform account created
- [ ] Code repository set up on GitHub/GitLab
- [ ] Application deployed to hosting platform
- [ ] Custom domain added to hosting platform
- [ ] DNS records configured at domain registrar
- [ ] SSL certificate provisioned and active
- [ ] Site tested and verified working
- [ ] Performance optimized
- [ ] Analytics and monitoring set up

Congratulations! Once you've completed all these steps, your New Mexico Reggae Calendar will be live at nmreggaecalendar.com, bringing irie vibes to the high desert for all to enjoy!

For any technical issues or questions, don't hesitate to reach out to your hosting platform's support team or consult the extensive documentation they provide.