The complete guide to launching June Lingerie on Shopify

You can build your entire custom Shopify store for free. By joining the Shopify Partner Program, your developer gets unlimited development stores with no time limits, access to most Advanced plan features ($299/month value), and zero payment until launch. Combined with Shopify's Basic plan at **$29/month** (billed annually) and the free Dawn theme as your custom development foundation, June Lingerie can launch professionally for under $35/month total.

This guide covers everything an experienced web developer new to Shopify needs: the lowest-cost path to launch, custom theme development workflow, lingerie-specific e-commerce optimization, and a step-by-step migration roadmap from your existing site.

The Partner Program unlocks free development with no time pressure

The Shopify Partner Program is the key to cost-effective custom theme development. It's free to join, provides unlimited development stores, and includes most Advanced plan features—allowing your developer to build and test everything without spending a dollar until you're ready to go live.

How to access free development:

1. Join at shopify.com/partners (instant approval, no cost)
2. Create a development store from the Partner Dashboard
3. Build your custom theme with full access to Shopify's developer tools
4. Test with the Bogus Test Gateway and partner-friendly apps
5. Transfer to a paid plan only when ready to launch

Development stores include unlimited products, test orders, custom domains for preview, and can remain active indefinitely. The only limitations: password pages stay active (keeping your current site live during development), no real transaction processing, and only partner-friendly apps can be installed.

After the $1/month promotional period, standard pricing applies. For a limited-SKU startup like June Lingerie, the **Basic plan at $29/month** (annual billing) is optimal—it includes unlimited products, 2 staff accounts, abandoned cart recovery, and 24/7 support. (Fit Small Business) Only upgrade to the Shopify plan ($79/month annual) when revenue exceeds roughly **$16,000/month**, where the lower transaction fees offset the higher subscription. (Skailama)

Hidden costs every lingerie store should anticipate

Beyond subscription fees, watch for these expenses that can add up:

Cost Category	Typical Range	Recommendation
Payment processing	2.9% + 30¢ per transaction	Use Shopify Payments to avoid extra 2% fee
Apps	$0-300/month	Start with free apps; average stores use $30-50/month
Email hosting	$0-18/month	Shopify doesn't host email; use Zoho (free) or Google Workspace ($6/user)
Domain	$11-16/year	Keep current domain, point DNS to Shopify

Using third-party payment gateways like PayPal incurs Shopify's additional **2% transaction fee** on top of the gateway's own fees. (LitCommerce) This makes Shopify Payments essential—it eliminates extra fees and includes Apple Pay, Google Pay, and all major credit cards. (Omnisend) On $10,000/month revenue, this saves **$200/month**.

Custom theme development starts with Dawn and modern tooling

Shopify's **Liquid templating language** is the bridge between your HTML/CSS/JavaScript skills and dynamic store data. The syntax is straightforward: objects like `{{ product.title }}` output data, tags like `{% if product.available %}` control logic, and filters like `{{ price | money }}` format output. Your existing web development skills transfer directly—Liquid simply injects dynamic content into standard HTML.

Essential development environment setup:

```bash
# Install Shopify CLI
npm install -g @shopify/cli @shopify/theme

# Initialize from Dawn theme
shopify theme init --clone-url https://github.com/Shopify/dawn.git

# Start local development with hot reload
shopify theme dev --store your-store.myshopify.com
```

Dawn is Shopify's official reference theme and the recommended starting point—it's 35% faster than previous defaults, built with semantic HTML and minimal JavaScript, and demonstrates Online Store 2.0 best practices. (GemPages) Rather than building from scratch, customize Dawn progressively: its modular section architecture allows you to replace components while maintaining performance optimizations that took Shopify years to refine.

The modern Shopify theme architecture explained

Online Store 2.0 introduced **JSON templates** that separate content configuration from code. Instead of hardcoded Liquid templates, JSON files define which sections appear and their settings—enabling merchants to add, remove, and reorder sections through the theme editor without touching code.

Theme file structure:

```
├── assets/        # CSS, JS, images, fonts
├── blocks/         # Reusable theme blocks
├── config/         # settings_schema.json for theme settings
├── layout/         # theme.liquid (main wrapper)
├── sections/       # Modular, configurable components
├── snippets/       # Reusable code fragments
└── templates/      # JSON templates for each page type
```

Sections are reusable modules with their own settings defined in `{% schema %}` tags. Blocks are nested elements within sections. This architecture supports up to **25 sections per template** and **50 blocks per section** —plenty of flexibility for a lingerie store's product pages, lookbooks, and size guides.

Integrating modern CSS and JavaScript workflows

Tailwind CSS works excellently with Shopify themes. The recommended setup uses Vite as a build tool:

```javascript
// vite.config.js
import shopify from 'vite-plugin-shopify';

export default {
  plugins: [shopify()],
  build: {
    outDir: 'assets',
    rollupOptions: {
      output: { entryFileNames: '[name].js' }
    }
  }
}
```

Create a `.shopifyignore` file to exclude build artifacts from uploads: `node_modules/`, `vite.config.*`, `tailwind.config.*`, and source directories.

For JavaScript, Shopify themes are server-rendered—heavy frameworks like React add unnecessary bundle size and hurt performance. Use vanilla JavaScript or lightweight alternatives like Alpine.js for interactivity.

Reserve framework-heavy approaches for Hydrogen (Shopify's headless React framework) if you later need more complexity.

Theme Check is Shopify's official linter. Run `shopify theme check` regularly to catch Liquid syntax errors, performance issues, and deprecated patterns. The VS Code "Shopify Liquid" extension provides real-time linting during development.

Lingerie-specific optimizations that reduce returns and build trust

Size charts are non-negotiable for intimate apparel—8 out of 10 women wear the wrong bra size, making clear sizing guidance essential for reducing returns. Install a size chart app like **Kiwi Sizing** (from $6.99/month with ML-powered recommendations) or **ESC Size Charts** (free tier available) immediately.

Your size charts should include:

- **International conversions** (US, UK, EU, AU) in clear visual format
- **Measurement instructions** with images showing bust, underbust, waist, and hip measurement points
- **Model specifications** on product pages ("Model is 5'7", wearing size S, measurements: 34-26-36")
- **Fit descriptions** (runs small, true-to-size, relaxed fit)

Note that band sizes stay consistent between US and UK systems, but cup sizes differ significantly—a UK H cup is three sizes larger than a US H cup. Most full-bust brands use UK sizing with the double-letter system. (Bra Fittings by Court)

Photography standards that drive conversion

On-model photography is essential for lingerie—customers need to see how bands sit, straps position, and cups contain. (Cherrydeck) Flat lays and ghost mannequins work as supplementary shots but cannot replace model images for intimate apparel.

Minimum photo requirements per product:

- **5-7 images**: front, back, side, detail shots, and lifestyle context
- **Technical standards**: ISO 100-200, f/5.6-f/8 for sharp focus, calibrated white balance (FD Photo Studio)
- **Include model measurements** in product descriptions
- **Consistent backgrounds**: 47% of fashion brands use white studio backgrounds for clean catalog appearance (Sizebay)

Video content significantly impacts conversion—**360-degree product views can increase sales by 14% and reduce returns by 51%**. Even short clips showing movement and fit provide value that static images cannot.

Essential apps for a lean lingerie catalog

For a limited-SKU startup, start minimal and add apps only as needs become clear:

Category	Recommended App	Cost	Why
Size charts	Kiwi Sizing or ESC	Free-$6.99/mo	Reduces returns by up to 67%
Reviews	Judge.me	Free (premium $15/mo)	Most installed, includes photo reviews, Google integration (Yotpo)
Email	Shopify Email → Klaviyo	Free to start	10,000 free emails/month built-in; upgrade to Klaviyo when ready for automation
Search/Filter	Shopify Search & Discovery	Free	Native app with up to 25 filters, (Shopify Help Center) color swatches, typo tolerance

Shopify Search & Discovery (free, built by Shopify) handles product filtering for small catalogs well. (Fast Simon Inc.) Configure filters for: Size, Style (thong, bikini, brief), Color (with visual swatches), Material, and Coverage level.

Return policies that protect margins without losing customers

Intimate apparel requires bucketed return policies by product type:

- **Bras**: Offer free exchanges (two measurements mean higher error rates)
- **Underwear**: Often final sale, or first-purchase exchange guarantee only
- **Loungewear**: Standard return policy (Loop Returns) (loopreturns)

Essential policy language: "Only items with original tags and hygienic liners intact will be accepted." (Loop Returns) (loopreturns) Display this prominently—it protects you legally while setting clear customer expectations.

Consider a **first-purchase size guarantee**: if a customer's first item doesn't fit, offer free exchange shipping. View this as customer acquisition cost—it builds trust for future purchases and reduces hesitation on initial orders. (Loop Returns) (loopreturns)

From development store to live site: the migration roadmap

Phase 1: Setup (Week 1)

Developer tasks:

- Join Shopify Partner Program
- Create development store
- Install Shopify CLI and clone Dawn theme
- Connect GitHub for version control

Business tasks:

- Export current site data (products, images, customer list)
- Document current URL structure for redirect mapping
- Gather tax registration numbers and shipping carrier accounts

Phase 2: Theme development (Weeks 2-8)

This is where your developer's existing skills shine. A custom lingerie theme typically requires 4-8 weeks depending on complexity. Development milestones:

- **Weeks 2-3**: Homepage and core layout components
- **Weeks 3-4**: Product pages with size charts, variant selectors, and image galleries
- **Weeks 4-5**: Collection pages with filtering and cart functionality
- **Weeks 5-6**: Content pages, navigation, footer, mobile optimization
- **Weeks 7-8**: Performance optimization and bug fixes

Run `shopify theme dev` **continuously**—hot reloading makes iteration fast. CSS and section changes apply instantly; other files trigger automatic page refresh.

Phase 3: Store configuration (Weeks 7-8, parallel with development)

Import products via CSV or migration apps. Configure:

- Tax settings (Settings → Taxes and duties)
- Shipping zones with rate tables (Settings → Shipping and delivery)
- Payment gateway (activate Shopify Payments for lowest fees)
- Legal pages using Shopify's generators (Settings → Legal)

Test orders are critical before launch. Enable the Bogus Gateway (Settings → Payments) and place test orders using card number "1" (success), "2" (failure), and "3" (exception). Verify the complete flow: checkout, payment, email notifications, and inventory updates.

Phase 4: DNS and launch (Week 10)

Point junelingerie.com to Shopify by updating DNS records at your current registrar:

- A Record → 23.227.38.65 (First Pier)
- AAAA Record → 2620:0127:f00f:5::
- CNAME (www) → shops.myshopify.com

Reduce DNS TTL to 300 seconds one week before launch to speed propagation. (Porkbun) Shopify automatically provisions SSL certificates.

SEO preservation is critical. Shopify enforces fixed URL structures ((/products/[handle]), (/collections/[handle])), so create 301 redirects for all old URLs. Export current URLs with Screaming Frog, map them to new Shopify URLs, and import via Settings → Navigation → URL redirects (CSV upload supported).

Post-launch, submit your new sitemap to Google Search Console and monitor for 404 errors daily for the first week.

Cost summary and first-year projections

Expense	Monthly	Annual
Basic Shopify plan (annual billing)	$29	$348
Domain (keep existing, point DNS)	~$1	~$15
Email hosting (Zoho free or Google Workspace)	$0-6	$0-72
Essential apps (size charts, reviews)	$0-15	$0-180
Theme	$0 (custom built)	$0
Total fixed costs	**$30-51**	**$363-615**

Transaction fees are separate: expect roughly **2.9% + 30¢ per online transaction** with Shopify Payments. (Skailama) On $5,000/month revenue, that's approximately $150-160 in processing fees.

Development phase costs: $0 (Partner Program development stores are free with no time limit)

Time to launch: 8-10 weeks for a custom theme, running entirely on free development infrastructure until you're ready to go live.

The path is clear: join the Partner Program today, initialize from Dawn, and start building. Your web development skills transfer directly — Liquid is just templating, and Shopify's CLI provides a modern

development skills transfer directly—Liquid is just templating, and Shopify's CLI provides a modern

development experience. By the time you're ready to launch, you'll have a professional, custom-themed lingerie store optimized for conversion and trust, running on one of the world's most reliable e-commerce platforms.