

# Data URIs

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Did you know that you don't have to link to an external image file when using an `<img>` element in HTML, or declaring a `background-image` in CSS? You can embed the image data directly into the document with **data URIs**.

With CSS, it looks like this:

```
li {  
  background:  
    url(  
    no-repeat  
    left center;  
  padding: 5px 0 5px 25px;  
}
```

With HTML, it looks like this:

```

```

- You should only use this in documents that are heavily cached, like your CSS should be. Having a CSS file that is 300k instead of 50k is fine if it saves 6 HTTP requests, but only if that CSS file is cached just as well as those images would be. Setting [long expires](#) on CSS files should help.
- Data URIs are not limited to images, they could literally be anything.

- <canvas> may obsolete the coolness of all this, when it gets more supported and people build cool tools for it.
- Compass [has a helper](#).

## # On Performance

[Some relevant research](#) by Peter McLachlan:

...when measuring the performance of hundreds of thousands of mobile page views, that loading images using a data URI is on average 6x slower than using a binary source link such as an img tag with an src attribute!