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Exporting a database with phpMyAdmin

Export, Import & Backup

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Exporting a database with phpMyAdmin

Export, Import & Backup Created on **October 10, 2026** 3 min read



In cPanel open **phpMyAdmin**, click the database name in the left column, go to the **Export** tab, leave the method on **Quick** and the format on **SQL**, and click **Export** (or **Go**). The browser downloads a `.sql` file holding the whole structure and all the data.

It is the simplest copy you can make of a database, and the one you will need to change hosts, reinstall an application or roll back after a mistake. The only rule is to make it **before** you need it.

Step by step

1. Open **phpMyAdmin** in cPanel. In the left column click **your database name**. Do not export from the start page, which gives the wrong options.
2. Click the **Export** tab.
3. Choose the method. **Quick** suits most cases. **Custom** lets you pick tables and compression.
4. Leave the format on **SQL**. With the custom method pick **gzip** compression so the file is smaller. If you will restore into a database that already has tables, tick **Add DROP TABLE**.
5. Click **Export** and save the file somewhere safe.
6. **Check it.** Open the file in a text editor. It should have many `CREATE TABLE` and `INSERT INTO` lines. A file of a few kilobytes for a big database has been cut short.

Which method to use

Method	When it fits	Limit
Quick	Small and medium databases, when you want everything as it is.	Depends on the browser and how long the page holds on.
Custom	When you want only some tables, compression or DROP TABLE.	The same.
`mysqldump` over SSH	Large databases, or automatic copies. See **backing up with mysqldump and pg_dump**.	Needs an account with shell access.

Never leave the `.sql` file inside `public_html`.
Anyone who guesses the address downloads the entire database, customers and password hashes included. Keep it on your computer or in a folder outside the public one. And with a very large database the browser can stop halfway without an error: always check the end of the file.

What an export leaves out

The export carries the **tables and the rows**. It does not carry the site files, nor the database user and its privileges (those are created again at the destination). If the database has views, routines or events, check in the custom method that those options are ticked, because if they are not they stay out. And give the file a name with the date, for example `shop-2026-10-10.sql.gz`: months from now you will want to know which is the latest, and the browser adds numbers to the name when another one already exists.

For a WordPress site the database is only half the backup.
The other half is the files (themes, plugins and the uploads folder). See **making and keeping your own backup**.

NEED A HAND?

Export stops halfway or the file comes out short? Tell us the database name and its rough size and we will point you to the right route.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **Importing a database with phpMyAdmin, and the size limit that stops you** →

- **Backing up with mysqldump and pg_dump, and restoring the copy**
- **How to restore your data with JetBackup**

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