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Generated on 15/11/2026 01:41

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# Importing a database with phpMyAdmin, and the size limit that stops you

Export, Import & Backup

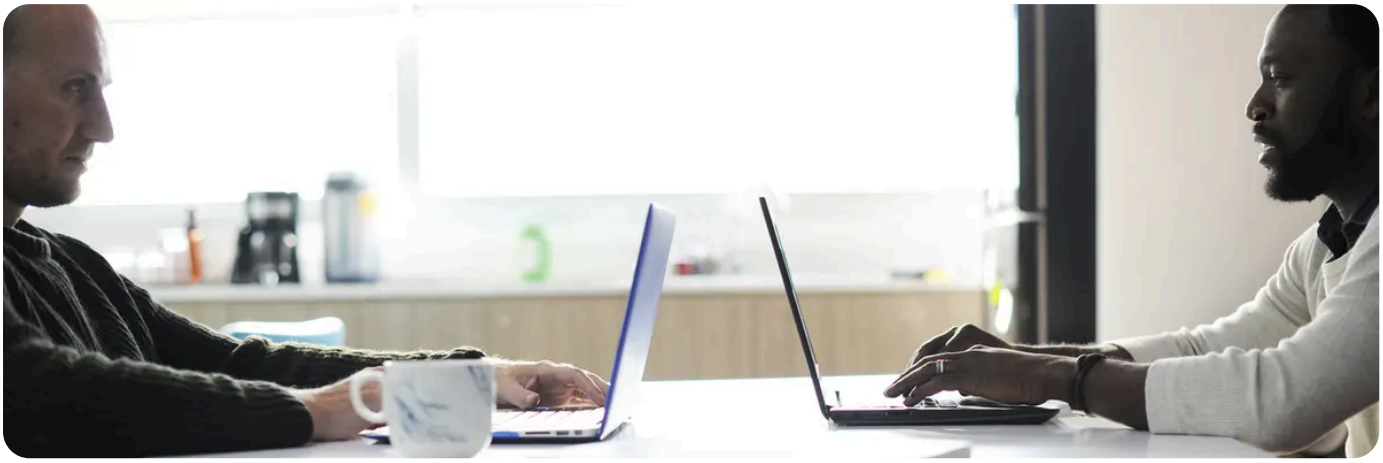
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| RLX-MZ-KB-756 | v2026.10.10 | Mozambique · English |

**Interweb Mozambique**
RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings
Tax ID (NUIT) 401 191 607 · Legal entity no. (NUEL) 105 045 974 · Economic activity code (CAE) 62022

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# Importing a database with phpMyAdmin, and the size limit that stops you

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



Create an empty database, open it in **phpMyAdmin**, go to the **Import** tab, choose the file ( `.sql` , `.zip` or `.gz` ) and click **Import** (or **Go**). If the file is bigger than the **maximum size** shown above the file field, the import will not start. That limit stops almost everybody at least once.

## Step by step

1. If you do not have the database yet, create it with its user. See **creating a user and giving it the right privileges**.
2. In cPanel open **phpMyAdmin** and click the name of the **empty** database in the left column.
3. Click **Import**. Note the **maximum size** written near the file field.
4. Choose the file. phpMyAdmin reads compressed files ( `.gz` and `.zip` ) without you unpacking them first. Leave the character set on **utf-8**.
5. Click **Import** and wait for the green success message. Then check that the tables appear in the left column.

## When it fails, and what to do

| Symptom | Cause | Fix |
|---|---|---|
| **The file is refused because of its size** | It is bigger than the phpMyAdmin limit. | Compress it to `.gz` or `.zip` (SQL compresses very well) or split it. As a last resort, import over SSH. |

| Symptom | Cause | Fix |
|---|---|---|
| **The page stops or times out halfway** | The import took longer than the server lets a page run. | Split the file into parts or use SSH. Do not just reload blindly: first look at how many tables made it in. |
| **#1273 Unknown collation** | The copy comes from MySQL 8. | Replace `utf8mb4_0900_ai_ci` with `utf8mb4_unicode_ci` in the file. |
| **#1227 Access denied, mentioning DEFINER** | The file creates views or routines as the old user. | Delete the `DEFINER=...` clauses from the file. |
| **#1062 Duplicate entry** | The database was not empty. | Empty it first. See **emptying without deleting**. |

**The limit belongs to the panel's phpMyAdmin,**
and as a rule it does not move when you change the PHP version or the limits of *your* site. Do not waste time editing `.user.ini` to raise it. If the file is large, change the method instead of trying to change the limit.

## Before you press Import

Three checks save a lot of trouble. **First,** confirm you are inside the right database: the import goes into the database that is open, and from the start page phpMyAdmin tries to create whatever databases the file mentions. **Second,** open the file and look for `CREATE DATABASE` and `USE` lines: the database name in your cPanel carries the account prefix, so delete those lines. **Third,** if you are importing into a database that already holds data, export what is there first, so you can go back.

**The safe route for big files is SSH:**
`Mysql -u user -p database_name < copy.sql`. See **importing a large database over SSH**.

NEED A HAND?

Import never finishes, or the error is not one of these? Tell us the exact error and the file size and we will look.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **Importing a large database over SSH** →
- **Exporting a database with phpMyAdmin** →

**Character sets: utf8mb4, collation, and the question marks in your text**

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## Interweb Mozambique

**RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings**

| | |
|---|---|
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