Format External Drive as ExFAT

IMPORTANT: This article applies to the following macOS version:

- macOS 14 (Sonoma)
- macOS 13 (Ventura)
- macOS 12 (Monterey)
- macOS 11 (Big Sur)

Need Help?

- Not sure which version you are using? Click here to determine your version of macOS
- Not seeing your version of macOS? Click here to see other versions of macOS and different formatting options

It is important to keep the following in mind when formatting to ExFAT:

- ExFAT is not compatible with Time Machine. If you are wanting to use Time Machine, format your drive APFS.
- ExFAT drives must be safely ejected to prevent corruption because ExFAT is not a journaled file system
- When using between macOS and Windows, drives should always be formatted on macOS because not all Windows allocation unit sizes (cluster sizes) are supported by macOS which will prevent the drive from mounting

Looking for a different formatting option?

- Click here to see other formatting options for your operating system

Steps:

IMPORTANT: Reformatting the drive will erase all data on the drive, so you should copy any data you want off the drive prior to formatting.

Note: If you would prefer a video tutorial of these steps instead, please click the thumbnail below.

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1. Open Disk Utility
   To open Disk Utility - Open Finder > Applications > Utilities > Disk Utility

2. Click **View** in the upper left and select **Show All Devices**
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3. Select the non-indented entry, you will see Media in the name
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4. Click the button labeled Erase in the menu which will bring up this window.
   NOTE: If you don't see scheme, then make sure that all devices are showing and the non-indented entry is selected. Check step 2 to confirm Disk Utility is Showing All Devices
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5. Provide a **Name** for the volume
6. Set **Scheme** to **GUID Partition Map**

7. Set **Format** to **ExFAT**

   WARNING: Formatting the drive will erase all data on the drive, so you should copy any data you want off the drive prior to formatting.

8. Click Erase, Disk Utility will start formatting the drive

9. Once complete, click Done

10. The drive should now be formatted ExFAT, this can be confirmed by selecting the indented entry which will now show ExFAT Volume under the name you provided

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