

ZIP/UNZIP Cheatsheet

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Quick reference for creating, listing, testing, and extracting ZIP archives in Linux

ZIP archives are widely used for sharing files across Linux, macOS, and Windows. This cheatsheet covers the most common `zip` and `unzip` command patterns for creating archives, updating them, and extracting files safely.

Basic Syntax

Common command forms for ZIP operations.

<code>zip [OPTIONS] archive.zip files</code>	Create or update ZIP archive
<code>unzip [OPTIONS] archive.zip</code>	Extract ZIP archive
<code>zip -r archive.zip directory/</code>	Recursively archive a directory
<code>unzip archive.zip -d /path/</code>	Extract to a specific directory
<code>unzip -t archive.zip</code>	Test archive integrity

Create ZIP Archives

Create archives from files and directories.

<code>zip archive.zip file1 file2</code>	Archive multiple files
<code>zip -r project.zip project/</code>	Archive directory recursively
<code>zip -j archive.zip path/to/file</code>	Archive files without directory paths (flat)
<code>zip -9 -r backup.zip /etc/</code>	Maximum compression
<code>zip -0 -r store.zip media/</code>	No compression (faster)
<code>zip -r logs.zip /var/log -x "*.gz"</code>	Exclude matching files
<code>zip -q -r archive.zip dir/</code>	Create archive silently (no output)

Update Existing Archives

Add, refresh, or remove archive entries.

<code>zip archive.zip newfile.txt</code>	Add file to existing archive
<code>zip -r archive.zip newdir/</code>	Add directory to existing archive
<code>zip -u archive.zip file.txt</code>	Update only changed files
<code>zip -d archive.zip "*.tmp"</code>	Delete matching entries
<code>zip -FS archive.zip</code>	Sync archive with filesystem state

List and Inspect

Check archive contents before extraction.

<code>unzip -l archive.zip</code>	List archived files
<code>unzip -Z -v archive.zip</code>	Detailed listing (sizes, ratio, methods)
<code>zipinfo archive.zip</code>	Display archive metadata
<code>zipinfo -l archive.zip</code>	List filenames only
<code>unzip -t archive.zip</code>	Test archive integrity

Extract Archives

Extract all files or selected paths.

<code>unzip archive.zip</code>	Extract into current directory
<code>unzip archive.zip -d /tmp/extract</code>	Extract to target directory
<code>unzip archive.zip file.txt</code>	Extract one file
<code>unzip archive.zip "dir/*"</code>	Extract matching path pattern
<code>unzip -n archive.zip</code>	Never overwrite existing files
<code>unzip -o archive.zip</code>	Overwrite existing files without prompt
<code>unzip -q archive.zip</code>	Extract silently (no output)

Password-Protected Archives

Create and extract encrypted ZIP files.

<code>zip -e secure.zip file.txt</code>	Create encrypted archive (interactive password)
<code>zip -er secure-dir.zip secrets/</code>	Encrypt directory archive
<code>unzip secure.zip</code>	Extract encrypted ZIP (prompts for password)
<code>zipcloak archive.zip</code>	Add encryption to an existing archive
<code>zipcloak -d archive.zip</code>	Remove encryption from archive

Split Archives

Split large ZIP files into smaller chunks.

<code>zip -r -s 100m backup.zip bigdir/</code>	Create split archive with 100 MB parts
<code>zip -s 0 split.zip --out merged.zip</code>	Recombine split ZIP into one file
<code>unzip split.zip</code>	Extract split archive (all parts required)
<code>zip -s 2g -r media.zip media/</code>	Create split archive with 2 GB parts

Troubleshooting

Common ZIP/UNZIP problems and checks.

unzip: cannot find or open	Verify path and filename, then run <code>ls -lh archive.zip</code>
CRC error during extraction	Run <code>unzip -t archive.zip</code> to test integrity
Files overwritten without warning	Use <code>unzip -n archive.zip</code> to skip existing files
Wrong file permissions after extract	Check with <code>ls -l</code> , then adjust using <code>chmod/chown</code>
Password prompt fails	Re-enter password carefully; verify archive is encrypted with <code>zipinfo</code>

Related Guides

Use these guides for full walkthroughs.

How to Zip Files and Directories in Linux	Detailed ZIP creation examples
How to Unzip Files in Linux	Detailed extraction methods
Tar Cheatsheet	Tar and compressed archive reference