



Taking Your PC on Vacation (or recover from a long shutdown)

Taking a laptop on vacation? There are some extra steps to take to make sure that you don't end up with a "Do Not Shut Down" message on airport WiFi during the boarding announcement. Here's how to make sure everything is up to date.

Or for systems not recently used, the same steps will apply. Windows does not like being shut down for months at a time, and will be sluggish when it wakes up. Some programs you have added to Windows like it even less. All of them together can turn a good computer into a doorstop once you turn a computer

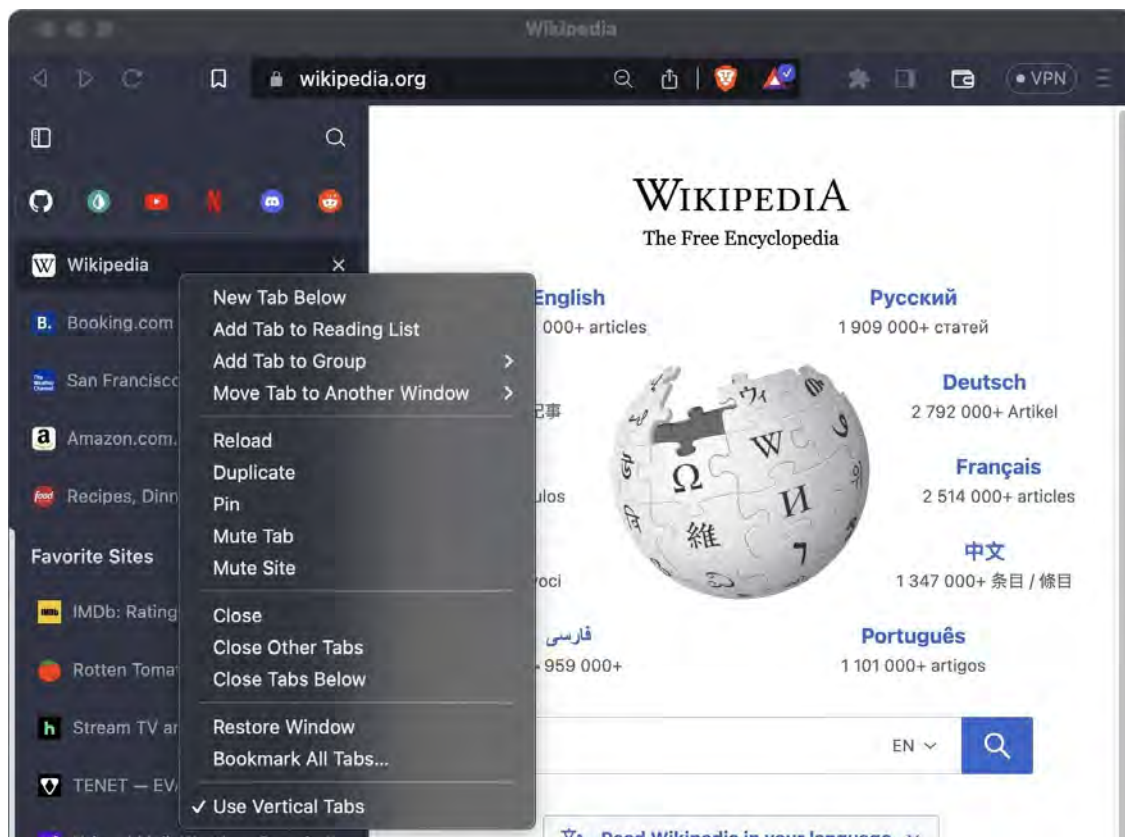
that was offline back on.

Here's what to do:

1. If it's a laptop/notebook, plug it in. Charge the battery.
2. Check for updates manually: Click the Windows logo, search for 'Windows Updates', and install all current items. Do NOT install any item with 'Preview' in the title—those are experiments for guinea pigs. Wait for the updates to all say 'Completed' or 'Waiting for Restart.'
3. Log out, and restart. That's two steps. Don't skip logging out.
4. Check the larger programs for updates. Adobe products and Carbonite, in particular, need time and a few restarts to get current.
5. If you will travel over Patch Tuesday (second Tuesday every month), pause updates. Go back to Windows Updates, and choose 'Pause for 1 week' or for up to 5 weeks.
6. While still in Windows Updates, choose 'Advanced options' and check that 'Download updates over metered connections' is Off. That's especially important if you will use cruise ship WiFi or cellular connections: when you add those WiFi networks, check the box for a metered connection.

And When You Return

As above, in Windows Updates, click Resume Updates. Install any pending updates, log out, and restart. Don't skip the logout.



Firefox has Vertical Tabs Now Also in Brave and Edge

Newer monitors are wide. Web page designs tend to be narrow so that they work on phones and tablets. So moving the tabs at the top of the browser to the left edge of the screen makes sense, but until recently, browser users needed to add an extension to make that happen. If you leave a lot of tabs open, the vertical layout keeps the titles of the tabs wider and easier to read.

The newest version of Firefox can do vertical tabs now. You can turn it on by right-clicking up at the top of the screen, in the tabs area, and choosing 'Turn on Vertical Tabs.' The option to turn on the feature does not show if Firefox decides your window is too small, so set Firefox to full-screen first. Turning it off is done from the tabs menu as well.

Using Microsoft Edge as a browser? Or Brave? Both of these already have vertical tabs, and they're turned on or off in the same way. Chrome does not have the feature, so far. The sample above is from Brave, but Firefox and Edge have similar layouts and options. The buttons shown at the top of the tabs column are web sites that were 'pinned' from the menu.



The End of 23H2 is Near

There's yet another deadline approaching, and this is not the big Windows 10 end of patching on October 14th. It's Windows 11 end of patching. Basically, modern Windows has a two-year service life, and a one-year feature update cycle. The current feature version is 24H2, for 'second half of 2024.' The new '25H2' feature version will be out this October. Each one of these annual feature versions receives security patches for two years, so after November 11, 2025, the 23H2 feature update will stop receiving monthly security updates.



it's easy to check the feature version of Windows. Click Start (that Windows logo key), type 'winver' and click the search result that shows up. The second line shows what feature version is installed. If it's 23H2, go to Windows Update, and check if there is an option there to upgrade to 24H2. Allow that. Make sure that notebooks are plugged into power, and not using cellular internet. The download is typically 20 minutes, and the reboot after that is longer than usual, maybe 5 minutes on newer systems.

Some of you will be thinking here, "I'll wait until October and skip ahead to the 25H2 update." Do not jump ahead; that's just volunteering to be a lab rat for Microsoft. Microsoft tests on early adopters, and then they issue fixes to problems in the monthly quality updates. Wait on the annual updates until they're at least three months old.

For machines on 23H2 that do not have the 24H2 upgrade option, call me. I can start the upgrade even if it does not show up in Windows updates.



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