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Looking inside an old backup without restoring over the live site

Restoring Data

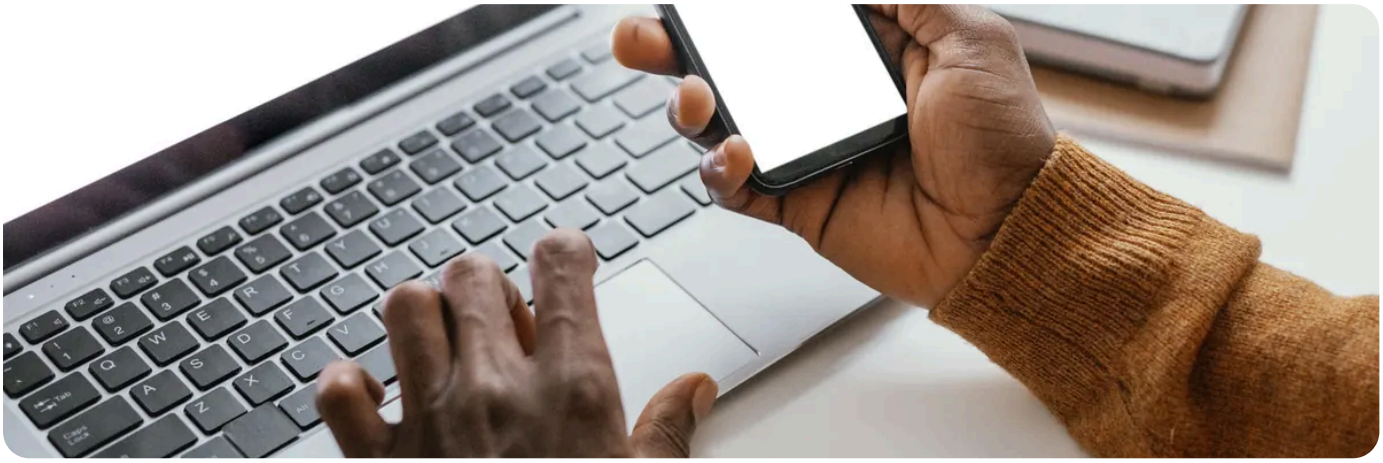
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MozOut International
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Looking inside an old backup without restoring over the live site

Restoring Data Created on **October 10, 2026** 3 min read



To look at an old copy **without touching the live site**, use JetBackup's **Download** instead of **Restore**: the copy is prepared for you to download, you open it on your own computer, and only then do you decide what is worth putting back. Nothing live is replaced while you look.

When this makes sense

You know a page, an image or a piece of text existed a few weeks ago, but not the day it disappeared. Or you want to compare today's site with the one before an update. Restoring "just to see" is the worst way to do it: a restore **replaces**, and whatever was written since is lost.

Step by step

1. **Pick the day.** In cPanel open **JetBackup 5** (**Files** section) and look at the list of dates. Think about what you are after: the right copy is the **last one in which the thing still existed**, not the newest.

2. **Ask for Download, not Restore.** Choose what you want to see (the files folder, one database) and use the download option. The copy is prepared and you are told when it is ready. See **how to restore your data with JetBackup**.

3. **If you are only after one file**, you do not need to download everything: inside the copy you can browse the folders and download just that file.

4. **Open it on your computer.** A compressed file opens like any other. A database comes as `.sql`, which is plain text: open it in a text editor and search for a sentence from the article or the name of the missing product. You do not need to import it just to look.

5 **If you want to see the site running** as it was, build it on the side: a new subdomain, a new database with a **different name**, import the `.sql` there and point the configuration file at that database. It is the method in **a test site before touching what is live**.

6 **Compare, then pick the smallest piece.** Once you have found the difference, restore only that piece (one file, one table), never the whole account. See **restoring a backup yourself, without opening a ticket**.

You want to see…	Do this
One file or one image	Browse inside the copy and download just that file.
Whether a text or an order was in the database	Download the database, open the `.sql` in a text editor and search.
The whole site, running, as it was	New subdomain + new database with another name + import the `.sql`.
Just one mailbox	See **restoring a single e-mail account or folder**.

Do not leave the copy open to the public.
A copy carries configuration files with passwords. Never put it in `public_html`, and delete it from the subdomain and from any shared computer when you finish. If you built a test site, block it from search engines and connect it to **its own new database**, never the real site's.

Picked the wrong date?
Downloading costs nothing and changes nothing. You can download two or three dates in a row and see in which one the thing still existed, before restoring anything at all. To rehearse a full restore, see **testing a backup: a restore drill on a test subdomain**.

NEED A HAND?

Not sure which date to choose, or the copy is not in the list? Tell us what you were looking for and when you last saw it.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- How to restore your data with JetBackup
- Restoring a backup yourself, without opening a ticket
- I deleted a file or folder by mistake: how to get it back from a backup
- A test site before touching what is live

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