

A Look at the New Edge Browser

Just like the old Internet Explorer, Microsoft Edge offers a Favorites option in which you can store your favorite websites. To add to your Favorites, open the page you want to add in Edge. Then click on the star icon in the Edge toolbar to open a menu.

The menu will automatically appear with the Favorites tab open. You have the option to rename the page and can add it to a specific Favorites folder, if you have created one. Click Add to put it on your Favorites list.

Add extensions

In the new version of Edge, you can install extensions from the Microsoft Store and Chrome Web Store. Click the Settings icon (the three dots in the upper right corner) and select Extensions. The screen shows you all installed extensions. Click the "Get extensions" link to view add-ons in the Microsoft Store. Here, you can search for and browse available extensions. Install an extension by clicking the Get button, then hitting the Add extension button.

As a Chromium-based application, Edge can also grab extensions from the Chrome Web Store. To do this, first go to the Extensions pane, turn on the switch next to "Allow extensions from other stores," and click the Allow button to confirm. You can then go to the Chrome Web Store, select an extension, and click the Add to Chrome button.

Turn websites into Apps

You can more easily manage a website by turning it into an app with Microsoft Edge. By doing this, the site can be pinned to your desktop or Start menu. In some cases, it will also allow you to use the site when you're offline.

Set this up by first browsing to the target site. Click the Settings icon and select Apps. Select the "Install this site as an app" option, name the app, then click Install. The site opens in a separate window. To manage sites installed as apps, go back to the setting for Apps and select the Manage apps option. Right-click on the site you wish to manage. You can then open it in Edge, view site permissions, pin it to the Desktop or Start Menu, or uninstall it as an app.

Send a webpage to the taskbar

Let's say there's a web page you frequently visit. Instead of going through the hassle of opening Edge each time you want to access the page, you can save it to the Windows Taskbar instead. Now the website is available to you as soon as you log into Windows.

To do this, open the target website, click the Settings icon and move to More Tools > Pin to Taskbar, then name the site and click the Pin button. The site should now appear on your Taskbar like it was an application.

Mute a tab

Do you want to silence web pages that automatically start playing audio or video as soon as you open them? This can be especially tricky if you've opened several tabs and aren't sure where the sound is coming from. Firefox and Chrome have long offered ways to mute such audio. You can perform the same feat in Edge.

The tab that's sounding off should display a speaker icon. Right-click on that tab and select the Mute tab. More easily, just click on the speaker icon. To restore the sound, right-click on the tab and select Unmute tab or click on the speaker icon again.

Reading view

Have you ever found an article or story on the web that you'd like to read, but the layout isn't particularly inviting? You can change that by turning on Reading View, which reformats the page so the content looks like a virtual book or magazine article. Some pages on the web support the Reading View option, and some don't.

For pages that do support it, a book icon appears at the top right of the Address bar. If you see that icon, click it. The layout then changes to one more comfortable for reading. To turn off Reading View, click the same icon again.

Read PDFs and Books full screen

If you often read PDFs and ebooks on your Windows PC or tablet, here's a trick you'll like. Open a PDF or ebook in Edge and Press F11. The page jumps into full-screen mode so you can read without the distraction of the top toolbars and browser menu. When you're done, press F11 again to exit full-screen mode.

Edge reads PDFs and regular web pages to you

If you don't feel like reading the PDF or ebook, you can listen to it. Open the PDF file, then right-click anywhere on the screen and select the option for Read Aloud. Edge starts reading the book. Click the Voice Options button on the toolbar and you can change the voice and control the speed. The Read Aloud option also works for regular web pages.

Edge gets darker

Edge's Dark theme is now darker than in older versions of the browser. Click the Settings icon and select Settings > Appearance, then click the drop-down box for Theme and change it to Dark. You may notice that the theme appears darker and offers better contrast so you can now more easily see icons and menus.

Change the Start page

By default, Edge opens to display a Start page that serves up a news feed of the top stories at the moment, but you can change the page. Click the Settings icon and select Settings > On Startup for three options. You can open a new tab, continue where you left off, or open a specific page.

If you want a specific page to open, type the URL you want to open each time you launch Edge. More than one page can be added this way, each one opening in a separate tab. You can also opt to see all currently open tabs upon startup.

Change the default search engine

Microsoft uses its own Bing search engine as the default way to search on Edge. No big surprise there, but if you prefer Google, DuckDuckGo, or another search engine, you can set a new default.

In Edge, click the Settings icon and select Settings > Privacy and services > Address bar. Click the drop-down box for "Search engine used in the address bar," and change it to the search engine of your choice.

If you don't see your favorite site listed, click "Manage search engines." Here, you can add a search engine by typing the name and URL, or remove any you don't want.

Download a webpage to read it later

The easiest way to save a web page is to download it to your computer. With the web page open, open the three-dot menu and choose More tools > Save page as.

You can also right-click anywhere on the page and select "Save as" or use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl + S in Windows.

Edge can save the complete web page, including text and media assets, or just the HTML text and will allow you to download multiple files, all in one file, or HTML only.

Password Monitor

Web browsers like Google Chrome and Firefox include features that warn users of compromised passwords. These include lists of potential third-party breaches and prompts to change passwords that are being reused across multiple websites or services.

Microsoft Edge is now rolling out a similar feature. First announced in March 2020, Password Monitor in Edge will offer the same kind of safeguards as Chrome and Firefox, with a few added niceties.

Password Monitor will inform Edge users of data breaches and other security issues. It will also suggest password changes and implement a new form of encryption. It will also scan the dark web to offer protection beyond the first line of defense.

Edge's Password Monitor has a special type of encryption. It uses homomorphic encryption to keep even Microsoft from learning passwords. That includes during its monitoring phase or when users update their information.

New toolbar experience

Microsoft is updating its Edge browser with a new toolbar experience that will allow users to access their favorites, history and collections instantly while browsing the web.

While the new UI is already available for both favorites and history pages, it will soon be coming to collections in a new update.

In 2020, Microsoft began testing an improved favorites menu that uses a new tree or flyout layout that makes it possible to edit, manage and search your bookmarks without having to navigate to Edge's dedicated bookmark page.

Revamped toolbar

As part of Microsoft Edge's new toolbar experience, collections now appear in a flyout menu. In that menu though, you can still save links, web page titles, organize content into folders and web pages will continue to show cover images.

Collections can also be used as a research tool since you can add notes about the pages you've saved. Switching back to the old UI is easy too as you just need to tap on the pin icon to do so.

Essentially the upcoming toolbar experience will save users a few clicks as they will be able to access their history, favorites and collections right after opening Edge without having to go to each page individually.

Security and Privacy

Security and privacy were top priorities for Edge's development. The browser has tracking protection enabled by default, and includes protections against phishing, malicious software, and new types of malware like crypto jacking.

The Privacy settings page offers three general options: Basic, Balanced, and Strict. The first, as you expect, is the most permissive. It also causes few site incompatibilities, as the stricter options may prevent functionality deemed to possibly present security risks. The levels are clearly explained in the settings page, and you can whitelist sites to allow third-party content.