bat cat with syntax highlighting

START HERE

`bat <file>`
View with syntax colors

`bat -l <lang>`
Force a language

`bat <a> <b>`
Show several files

`bat -r 10:20 <file>`
Show a line range

`bat -n <file>`
Line numbers only

`bat -A <file>`
Show hidden characters

`bat -p <file>`
Plain, no decorations

`bat --list-themes`
Preview all themes

Input files or stdin → `detect syntax` → **Highlight** theme + language → `decorate` → **Decorations** numbers, grid, changes → `if terminal` → **Pager** less, only if long

CONCEPTS

bat is cat with syntax highlighting, line numbers, git change marks and automatic paging. Output to a pipe or file is plain, so it is a safe drop-in for cat.

On Debian and Ubuntu the binary may be called batcat. Link it: ln -s /usr/bin/batcat ~/.local/bin/bat

VIEWING

`bat <file>`
View a file with highlighting

`bat <a> <b>`
Show several files in one stream

`<cmd> | bat -l <lang>`
Highlight piped input as a language

`bat -r <start>:<end> <file>`
Show only these lines

`bat -r :<n> <file>`
Show the first n lines

`bat -r <n>: <file>`
Show from line n to the end

`bat -r <n>:+<m> <file>`
Show m lines starting at n

`bat -r <n>::<c> <file>`
Show line n with c lines of context

`bat -A <file>`
Show tabs, spaces and line endings

`bat -l <lang> <file>`
Override the detected language

`bat --list-languages`
List supported languages

`bat --map-syntax '<glob>:<lang>'`
Map a file pattern to a language

`bat --tabs <n>`
Set tab width (0: leave to pager)

`bat --wrap never`
Do not wrap long lines

OUTPUT STYLE

`bat -p <file>`
Plain: no numbers, grid or header

`bat -pp <file>`
Plain and no paging

`bat -n <file>`
Line numbers only

`bat --style numbers,changes <file>`
Pick decoration components

`bat --style=-grid,+snip <file>`
Add or remove single components

`bat --style full <file>`
Every component including filesize

`bat --color always`
Keep colors when piping

`bat --force-colorization`
Same as decorations and color always

--style components

Name	Draws
`numbers`	line numbers
`changes`	git add/modify marks
`header`	file name header
`grid`	borders
`rule`	line between files
`snip`	cut marks for ranges

PAGING

`bat --paging never <file>`
Print directly, no pager

`bat -P <file>`
Short form of paging never

`bat --paging always <file>`
Page even short output

`bat --pager "less -RFK"`
Use a specific pager command

`bat --pager builtin`
Use the built-in pager

`export BAT_PAGER="less -RFK"`
Set the pager permanently

`alias cat='bat --paging=never'`
Replace cat in the shell

`tail -f <log> | bat --paging=never -l log`
Colorize a live log

PAGING (cont.)

With less as pager, bat passes -R, -F and -K itself: output shorter than the screen is printed without paging.

THEMES

`bat --list-themes`
List themes with a preview

`bat --theme <name> <file>`
Use a theme for one run

`export BAT_THEME="<name>"`
Set the default theme

`bat --theme auto:system`
Follow the terminal light/dark mode

`bat --theme-dark <name> --theme-light <name>`
Pick themes for dark and light

`bat --list-themes | fzf --preview="bat --theme={} --color=always <file>"`
Browse themes with a live preview

CONFIG AND CACHE

`bat --generate-config-file`
Create a starter config file

`bat --config-file`
Print the config file path

`bat --config-dir`
Print the config directory

`export BAT_CONFIG_PATH="<file>"`
Use a different config file

`export BAT_STYLE="numbers,changes"`
Set the default style

`bat cache --build`
Rebuild cache after adding syntaxes or themes

`bat cache --clear`
Delete the cache

The config file holds one option per line, written as on the command line (--theme="TwoDark", --style="numbers,changes"). Command-line flags override it.

WITH OTHER TOOLS

`git diff --name-only --relative --diff-filter=d -z | xargs -0 bat --diff`
Show changed files with their diff

`git show <rev>:<path> | bat -l <lang>`
View a file from another revision

`export MANPAGER="bat -plman"`
Colorize man pages

`fzf --preview "bat --color=always --style=numbers --line-range=:500 {}"`
Preview files in fzf

`fd <pattern> -X bat`
Open all matches with bat

`find <path> -name '<glob>' -exec bat {} +`
Open all matches with bat via find

`<cmd> --help | bat -plhelp`
Colorize help output

`bat --diff <file>`
Show only changed lines of a file

RECIPES

Fuzzy file picker with preview

```
fzf --preview 'bat --color=always --style=numbers --line-range=:500 {}' \
    --bind 'enter:become(${EDITOR:-vi} {})'
```

Colored man pages and help

```
export MANPAGER="bat -plman"
man 2 select
git --help | bat -plhelp
```

Convert a pipeline result to readable JSON

```
curl -s <url> | jq . | bat -l json
kubectl get pod <name> -o yaml | bat -l yaml -p
```

Review uncommitted changes

```
git diff --name-only --relative --diff-filter=d -z \
  | xargs -0 bat --diff
```