BorgBackup Deduplicating backups

START HERE

`borg init -e repokey` *`<repo>`*
Create an encrypted repo

`borg extract` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`*
Restore into current dir

`borg create --stats` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`* *`<path>`*
Back up a path

`borg prune --keep-daily 7` *`<repo>`*
Apply retention

`borg list` *`<repo>`*
List archives

`borg compact` *`<repo>`*
Free the disk space

`borg list` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`*
List files in one archive

`borg key export` *`<repo>`*
Back up the key

Files your data → `create` → **Archive** deduplicated, encrypted → `prune` → **Deleted archive** space still used → `compact` → **Space freed** repo shrinks

CONCEPTS

Set BORG_REPO and BORG_PASSCOMMAND once; then use :: instead of the repo path (borg create ::<archive> <path>).

Every archive looks like a full backup, but identical chunks are stored once, so later runs are small and fast.

Lose the key or passphrase and the data is gone. Keep a key export and the passphrase outside the repo and the backed-up machine.

REPOSITORY

`borg init -e` *`<mode>`* *`<repo>`*
Create a repository
The mode cannot be changed later. repokey is the usual default; keyfile keeps the key only in ~/.config/borg/keys.

`borg init -e repokey-blake2` *`<repo>`*
Encrypted, BLAKE2 auth (no SHA hardware)

`borg init --append-only -e repokey` *`<repo>`*
Repo that clients cannot shrink

`export BORG_REPO=`*`<repo>`*
Default repository

`export BORG_PASSCOMMAND="`*`<cmd>`***`"`**
Get the passphrase from a command

`export BORG_PASSPHRASE=`*`<passphrase>`*
Passphrase from the environment
Wins over BORG_PASSCOMMAND; visible to the process environment.

`ssh://`*`<user>`***`@`***`<host>`***`:`***`<port>`***`/`***`<path>`*
Remote repository URL

`export BORG_RSH="ssh -i` *`<key>`***`"`**
Custom ssh command

`borg info` *`<repo>`*
Repository size and encryption

`borg key export` *`<repo>`* *`<file>`*
Back up the key

`borg key import` *`<repo>`* *`<file>`*
Restore a key

`borg key change-passphrase` *`<repo>`*
Change the passphrase

CREATE

`borg create` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`* *`<path>`***`...`**
Back up paths into a new archive

`borg create --stats --progress` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`* *`<path>`*
Show statistics and progress

`borg create --list --dry-run` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`* *`<path>`*
Preview what would be stored

`borg create ...` *`<repo>`*`::`**`{hostname}-{now:%Y-%m-%d}`** *`<path>`*
Name archives by host and date

`borg create -e '`*`<pattern>`***`' ...`**
Exclude matching paths
Not like tar: use '/dir' to match a nested dir anywhere.*

`borg create --exclude-from` *`<file>`* **`...`**
Read excludes from a file

`borg create --exclude-caches ...`
Skip dirs with CACHEDIR.TAG

`borg create --exclude-if-present` *`<name>`* **`...`**
Skip dirs holding a marker file

`borg create -x ...`
Stay on one filesystem

`borg create -C zstd,6 ...`
Choose compression

`borg create --patterns-from` *`<file>`* **`...`**
Include/exclude rules from a file

`<cmd>` **`|`** **`borg create`** *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`* **`-`**
Back up data from stdin

`borg create --content-from-command` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`* **`--`** *`<cmd>`*
Back up a command's output

`<cmd>` **`|`** **`borg create --paths-from-stdin`** *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`*
Read the path list from stdin

Pattern styles

Prefix	Meaning
`fm:`	shell-like, default for --exclude
`sh:`	like fm, ** crosses dirs, * does not
`re:`	regular expression, substring match
`pp:`	path prefix, dir and contents
`pf:`	exact full path

`-` *`<pattern>`*
Patterns file: exclude

CREATE (cont.)

`+` *`<pattern>`*
Patterns file: include

BROWSE AND RESTORE

`borg list` *`<repo>`*
List archives

`borg list` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`*
List files of an archive

`borg list --short` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`*
Only paths

`borg list --last` *`<n>`* *`<repo>`*
Only the newest archives

`borg list -a '`*`<glob>`***`'`** *`<repo>`*
Filter archives by name

`borg info` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`*
Archive details and size

`borg extract` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`*
Restore everything into current dir
Always writes below the current directory: cd first.

`borg extract` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`* *`<path>`*
Restore only one path
Paths have no leading slash, as listed.

`borg extract --dry-run --list` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`*
Check a restore without writing

`borg extract --strip-components` *`<n>`* **`...`**
Drop leading path elements

`borg mount` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`* *`<dir>`*
Mount an archive via FUSE

`borg mount` *`<repo>`* *`<dir>`*
Mount all archives

`borg umount` *`<dir>`*
Unmount

`borg diff` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive1>`* *`<archive2>`*
Compare two archives

RETENTION AND UPKEEP

`borg prune -v --list --dry-run` *`<keep-options>`* *`<repo>`*
Preview pruning

`borg prune --keep-daily 7 --keep-weekly 4 --keep-monthly 6` *`<repo>`*
Apply a retention policy

RETENTION AND UPKEEP (cont.)

`borg prune --keep-within 10d` *`<repo>`*
Keep everything from the last 10 days

`borg prune --keep-yearly` *`<n>`* *`<repo>`*
Keep yearly archives

`borg prune -a '{hostname}-*' ...` *`<repo>`*
Only touch one host's archives
Without -a every archive in the repo is a candidate.

`borg compact` *`<repo>`*
Free space after prune/delete

`borg delete` *`<repo>`*`::`*`<archive>`*
Delete one archive

`borg check` *`<repo>`*
Verify repo and archive consistency

`borg check --verify-data` *`<repo>`*
Full cryptographic check, slow

COMMON OPTIONS

`-v / --info`
More output

`--progress`
Show progress

`--show-rc`
Print the exit code

Exit codes

Code	Meaning
0	success
1	warning, check the log
2	error
128+N	killed by signal N

Exit code 1 is a warning (for example a file vanished during backup); the archive is still created.

RECIPES

Daily backup script

```
export BORG_REPO=ssh://
<user>@<host>/<path>
export BORG_PASSCOMMAND="cat
<passfile>"
borg create --stats -C zstd -x
\
  ::'{hostname}-{now:%Y-%m-%d}'
~ --exclude '*/.cache'
borg prune --keep-daily 7 --
keep-weekly 4 --keep-monthly 6
\
  -a '{hostname}-*'
borg compact
```

Restore one directory

```
mkdir /tmp/restore && cd /tmp/
restore
borg list ::<archive> | head
borg extract ::<archive> home/
<user>/Documents
```