

How to Filter Dates by Month in Google Sheets

Authored by
stats writer

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Filtering data effectively is a cornerstone of powerful data analysis, especially when dealing with large datasets containing time-sensitive information. In environments like [Google Sheets](#), users often encounter the requirement to isolate records based on specific time periods, such as filtering dates strictly by month. While [Google Sheets](#) provides robust filtering tools, a date field itself cannot be directly filtered solely by the month number without some preliminary preparation. This guide provides a detailed, step-by-step methodology using a helper column and the built-in [MONTH function](#) to achieve precise monthly filtering.

The standard filter options in [Google Sheets](#) are typically geared towards filtering specific date ranges (e.g., "Date is before 1/1/2024") or relative dates ("Next month"). However, if your goal is to view all sales that occurred in every January, regardless of the year, a simple condition filter becomes insufficient. The fundamental challenge lies in the nature of date storage: a date is stored as a serial number, and direct filtering attempts will look for the exact date value, not just the month component. Therefore, we must extract the numerical month value (1 for January, 12 for December) into its own column, making it a filterable criteria.

While basic filtering based on predefined conditions is possible, achieving granularity--such as showing only data from March and October across multiple years--requires a more structured approach. This methodology, leveraging a separate column dedicated entirely to month extraction, is not only simple to implement but also significantly improves the flexibility and speed of your subsequent data analysis. By converting the complex date object into a simple integer, we unlock powerful filtering capabilities that are essential for accurate financial reporting, trend analysis, and operational reviews.

The Challenge of Date Filtering in Google Sheets

Working with temporal data demands specific tools to manage and segment records efficiently. In [Google Sheets](#), date columns are crucial but present unique filtering challenges compared to simple text or numerical fields. Because dates are comprehensive data points encompassing the year, month, and day--often including time as well--standard filtering methods often fail to isolate just the month component, which is what analysts frequently need for comparative analysis or seasonal trend identification.

Consider a typical dataset tracking sales or transactions. If you want to compare performance between Q1 months (January, February, March) across all years included in the data, manually selecting every date in January can be tedious and prone to error. This is where the concept of data extraction and the use of helper columns become indispensable. We must programmatically instruct the spreadsheet environment to isolate the specific numerical representation of the month from the full date value. This separation allows the application of the highly reliable built-in filtering tools designed for integer values.

The method we will detail below uses the [MONTH function](#), a powerful tool designed specifically for this extraction process. This function strips away the day and year information, returning only the month number. Once this dedicated month column is established, the subsequent steps for filtering become straightforward, enabling fast and accurate analysis of month-over-month performance or seasonal patterns within your dataset, regardless of how many years the data spans.

Prerequisites for Month-Based Filtering

Before initiating the filtering process, it is essential to ensure your dataset is correctly prepared. The foundation of this technique relies on the assumption that your date column is using a recognized [date format](#). If the data is stored as plain text that merely resembles a date (e.g., "1/15/2024" but formatted as text), the [MONTH function](#) will fail to correctly process the cell value. Always verify that your date column is formatted as Date under the Format menu in [Google Sheets](#).

The necessary prerequisite for this specific filtering technique is the creation of a [helper column](#). This auxiliary column serves as the destination for the extracted month numbers. It should be placed immediately adjacent to your primary dataset, typically to the right of the date column, to maintain data integrity and association during the filtering process. Naming this column clearly, such as "Month Number" or simply "Month," will ensure clarity when applying filters later. This preparation step ensures that the subsequent formula application and filtering actions are targeted and effective.

Let's establish a sample dataset for demonstration purposes. We assume a scenario where a company records sales transactions, and we wish to analyze sales activity during specific months, such as January (1) and March (3). This example clearly illustrates the benefit of isolating the month value: it allows us to analyze seasonal trends or specific campaign performances across these targeted time periods.

Step 1: Implementing the Helper Column using the MONTH Function

The critical first step in filtering by month involves using the specialized [MONTH function](#). This function takes a date value as its sole argument and returns an integer between 1 (January) and 12 (December). This numerical output is the foundation upon which our precise filtering will be built. This is significantly more reliable and scalable than trying to use text-based formulas like `TEXT(A2, "mmmm")` for filtering, as numerical filtering is generally faster and less error-prone.

We begin by setting up our initial dataset. Assume our sales data, including the date of sale, resides in Columns A and B. We will insert the helper column, named "Month," into Column C. The goal is to populate Column C with the corresponding month number for every date listed in Column

A. This process is initiated by entering the formula into the second row of the new column, assuming the first row contains headers.

First, let's create the following dataset that contains information about sales made by some company on specific dates:

	A	B	C	D
1	Date	Sales		
2	1/1/2023	15		
3	1/4/2023	10		
4	1/5/2023	13		
5	2/15/2023	8		
6	2/17/2023	12		
7	3/1/2023	14		
8	3/12/2023	20		
9	4/19/2023	22		
10	5/1/2023	14		
11	5/14/2023	7		
12	5/22/2023	23		
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				

Now suppose that we would like to filter the dataset to only show the rows where the date is in January or March. To do so, we must first create a helper column that contains the month number of each date. Type the following formula into cell **C2** to do so:

=MONTH(A2)

This formula instructs Google Sheets to look at the date in cell A2 and return the corresponding month number. Once entered, confirm the result: if A2 contains a date in January, C2 should display the number 1. The next crucial step is propagation. Click and drag this formula down from cell C2 to the last row of your dataset. This auto-fills the formula, dynamically adjusting the cell reference (A2 changes to A3, A4, and so on) for every subsequent date entry, ensuring that every row has its correct numerical month equivalent.

Then click and drag this formula down to each remaining cell in column C:

C2 ▾ **fx** =MONTH(A2)

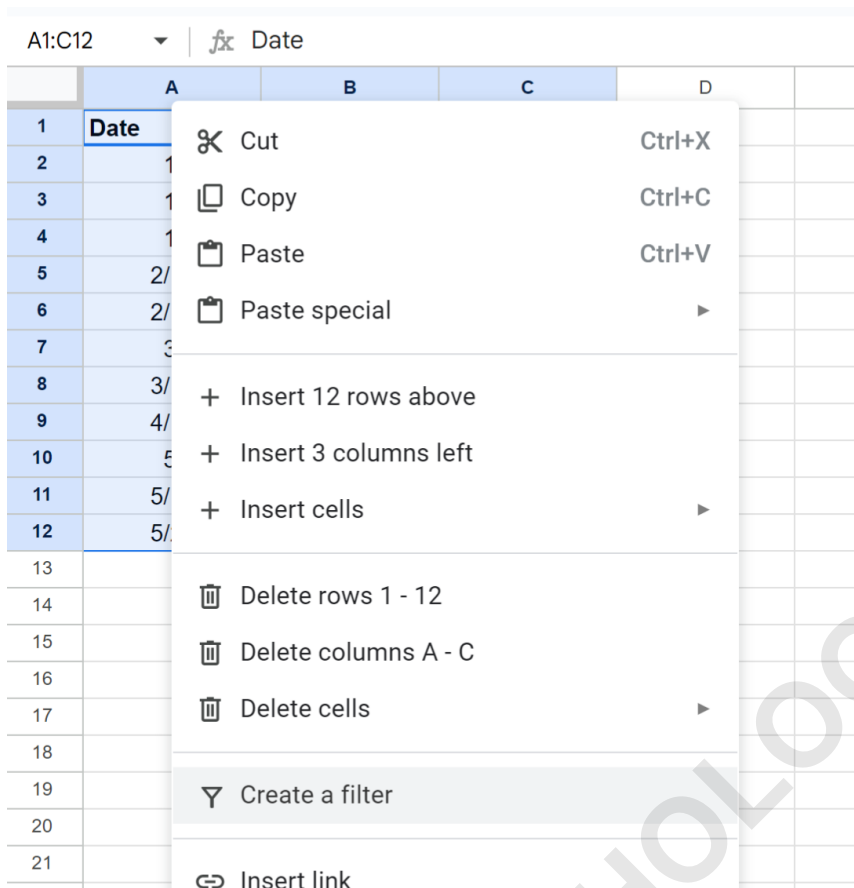
	A	B	C	D
1	Date	Sales	Month	
2	1/1/2023	15	1	
3	1/4/2023	10	1	
4	1/5/2023	13	1	
5	2/15/2023	8	2	
6	2/17/2023	12	2	
7	3/1/2023	14	3	
8	3/12/2023	20	3	
9	4/19/2023	22	4	
10	5/1/2023	14	5	
11	5/14/2023	7	5	
12	5/22/2023	23	5	
13				
14				
--				

Step 4: Applying the Filter to the Dataset

With the helper column successfully populated, the dataset is now ready for the application of the primary filter function. Applying a filter across the entire range is crucial because we want the filtering action on Column C (Month) to simultaneously hide or show the corresponding data in Columns A and B (Date and Sales). If the filter were applied only to Column C, the rows would become misaligned, leading to inaccurate analysis.

The standard procedure for activating filtering in Google Sheets involves selecting the entire range, including the header row. This selection informs the software which data boundaries to respect during the filtering process. In our example, the range spans from A1 (the header of the Date column) through C12 (the last entry in the Month helper column). Highlighting this specific range is the most reliable way to ensure that the filter encompasses all necessary data points.

Next, highlight the cell range **A1:C12**, then right click and then click **Create a filter**. Alternatively, you can use the dedicated Filter icon on the toolbar. Upon activation, small inverted pyramid icons will appear next to each column header (Date, Sales, and Month). These icons signify that the filter function is active and ready to be customized. We will focus our attention solely on the filter icon located in the header of the newly created "Month" column.



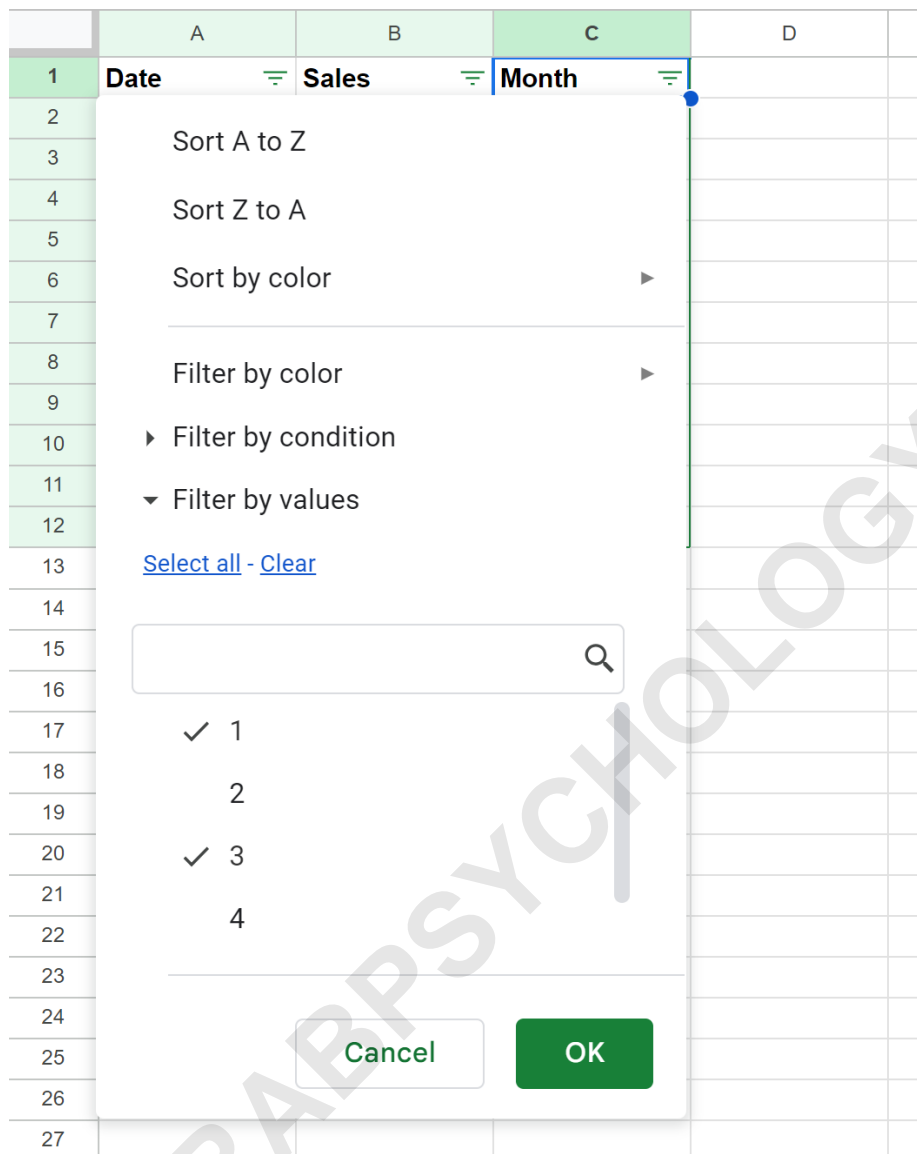
Step 5: Selecting Specific Months for Analysis

Once the filter is applied, engaging with the filter icon in the "Month" column (Column C) brings up the filtering dialogue box. This menu offers various options, but for targeting specific months, we utilize the "Filter by values" section. Since the helper column contains only integer values (1 through 12), the filtering interface presents a clean list of these numbers, making the selection process extremely intuitive and highly accurate, bypassing the complexities of date string matching.

Then click the Filter icon next to **Month**. Within the filtering menu, you will see a list of all unique month numbers present in your data. By default, all values are checked. To isolate specific months, you must first click the "Clear" button to deselect all options, providing a clean slate for your selection. Then, proceed to check only the month numbers relevant to your analysis.

For our running example, where we aim to analyze sales data only from January and March, we specifically check the boxes next to the values **1** (representing January) and **3** (representing March). This action creates a compound filter condition: it will display only the rows where the value in the "Month" column is either 1 OR 3. This Boolean logic allows for highly flexible and targeted data views, essential for comparative analysis.

Then click **Filter by values** and then only check the values next to **1** and **3**, which represent the months of January and March:



Once you click **OK**, the dataset will instantly update. Only the rows corresponding to dates in January and March will remain visible, effectively achieving the goal of filtering by month, regardless of the year component of the original date formats. The hidden rows are not deleted; they are simply suppressed from the view until the filter is removed or modified. This resulting filtered view provides a clean, actionable dataset for immediate analysis.

	A	B	C	D
1	Date	Sales	Month	
2	1/1/2023	15	1	
3	1/4/2023	10	1	
4	1/5/2023	13	1	
7	3/1/2023	14	3	
8	3/12/2023	20	3	
13				
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Advanced Filtering Techniques and Alternatives

While the helper column method is robust and user-friendly, [Google Sheets](#) offers alternative, more advanced methods for filtering dates by month, particularly suitable for users who prefer formula-based solutions or wish to avoid adding extra columns to their sheet structure. One popular alternative is using the "Filter by condition" feature in conjunction with a [Custom formula](#).

The "Filter by condition" approach allows you to specify complex logical criteria directly within the filter menu. Instead of relying on a helper column, you can define a [Custom formula](#) that evaluates the date column and returns TRUE only for the desired months. For instance, to filter for January and March (1 and 3), the formula would involve the `OR` logic combined with the [MONTH function](#): `=OR(MONTH(A2)=1, MONTH(A2)=3)`. This method is cleaner from a visual standpoint but requires a deeper understanding of spreadsheet formula logic and Boolean operations.

Another powerful option for dynamic reporting is the use of the [QUERY](#) function or the [FILTER](#) array function. These functions extract the filtered data into a new range entirely, leaving the original data untouched. Using the [FILTER](#) function, you could achieve the same result with a formula like: `=FILTER(A:B, MONTH(A:A)=1, MONTH(A:A)=3)`. These advanced methods are invaluable for automated dashboards and situations where the filter criteria need to be linked to a cell reference, enabling dynamic filtering without manual interaction with the filter icon. However, for quick, one-off filtering tasks, the helper column remains the most accessible and easiest method to understand and implement.

Conclusion: Streamlining Data Analysis with Time-Based Filters

Mastering date filtering, particularly the ability to isolate data by month, is a critical skill for anyone managing datasets in [Google Sheets](#). The method detailed here--utilizing the [MONTH function](#) to create a numerical helper column--provides a straightforward and highly reliable way to segment your temporal data. This technique transforms complex date objects into simple, filterable integers, allowing for rapid identification of seasonal trends, performance fluctuations, and specific period comparisons.

The efficiency gained by employing this simple two-step process (extraction and numerical filtering) far outweighs the minimal effort of adding the helper column. It ensures that your data analysis is both accurate and repeatable, saving significant time compared to manual selection or complex, multi-layered conditional filtering. Remember that to remove the filtering effect, you can simply right-click any cell within the filtered range and select **Remove filter**.

By integrating the [filter function](#) with simple formula extraction, you gain powerful control over your data visualization and analysis capabilities, making it easier to derive meaningful insights from your time-stamped records. This approach solidifies the fundamental principle in spreadsheet management: sometimes, transforming the data structure slightly is the key to unlocking advanced analytical functions.