How can I use the DATE function in excel to input a specific date into a cell?

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The DATE function in Excel is a useful tool for inputting a specific date into a cell. This function allows the user to specify the year, month, and day of the desired date and have it automatically entered into the designated cell. This can be particularly useful for organizing and tracking data that is time-sensitive. By using the DATE function, the user can enter accurate and consistent dates, without the risk of human error. Additionally, the function allows for easy manipulation of dates, such as adding or subtracting days, months, or years. Overall, the DATE function in Excel is an efficient and reliable way to input specific dates into cells for a variety of purposes.

Use Excel's DATE function when you need to take three separate values and combine them to form a date.

The **DATE** function returns the sequential serial number that represents a particular date.

Syntax: DATE(year,month,day)

The DATE function syntax has the following arguments:

Year Required. The value of the **year** argument can include one to four digits. Excel interprets the **year** argument according to the date system your computer is using. By default, Microsoft Excel for Windows uses the 1900 date system, which means the first date is January 1, 1900.

Tip: Use four digits for the **year** argument to prevent unwanted results. For example, "07" could mean "1907" or "2007." Four digit years prevent confusion.

If **year** is between 0 (zero) and 1899 (inclusive), Excel adds that value to 1900 to calculate the year. For example, DATE(108,1,2) returns January 2, 2008 (1900+108).

If **year** is between 1900 and 9999 (inclusive), Excel uses that value as the year. For example, DATE(2008,1,2) returns January 2, 2008.

If **year** is less than 0 or is 10000 or greater, Excel returns the #NUM! error value.

Month Required. A positive or negative integer representing the month of the year from 1 to 12 (January to December).

If **month** is greater than 12, **month** adds that number of months to the first month in the year specified. For example, DATE(2008,14,2) returns the serial number representing February 2, 2009.

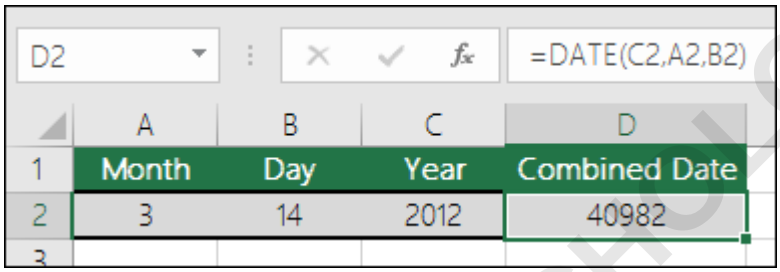
If **month** is less than 1, **month** subtracts the magnitude of that number of months, plus 1, from the first month in the year specified. For example, DATE(2008,-3,2) returns the serial number representing September 2, 2007.

Day Required. A positive or negative integer representing the day of the month from 1 to 31.

If **day** is greater than the number of days in the month specified, **day** adds that number of days to the first day in the month. For example, DATE(2008,1,35) returns the serial number representing February 4, 2008.

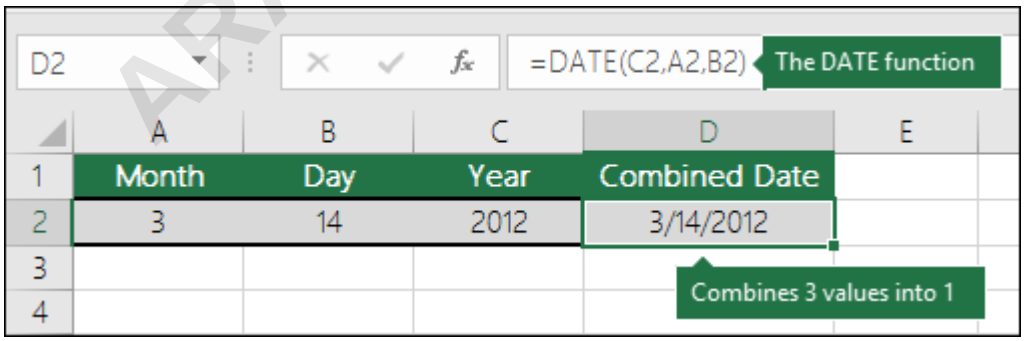
If **day** is less than 1, **day** subtracts the magnitude that number of days, plus one, from the first day of the month specified. For example, DATE(2008,1,-15) returns the serial number representing December 16, 2007.

Note: Excel stores dates as sequential serial numbers so that they can be used in calculations. January 1, 1900 is serial number 1, and January 1, 2008 is serial number 39448 because it is 39,447 days after January 1, 1900. You will need to change the number format (Format Cells) in order to display a proper date.



Syntax: DATE(year,month,day)

For example: **=DATE(C2,A2,B2)** combines the year from cell C2, the month from cell A2, and the day from cell B2 and puts them into one cell as a date. The example below shows the final result in cell D2.



Need to insert dates without a formula? No problem. You can insert the current date and time in a cell, or you can insert a date that gets updated. You can also fill data automatically in worksheet cells.

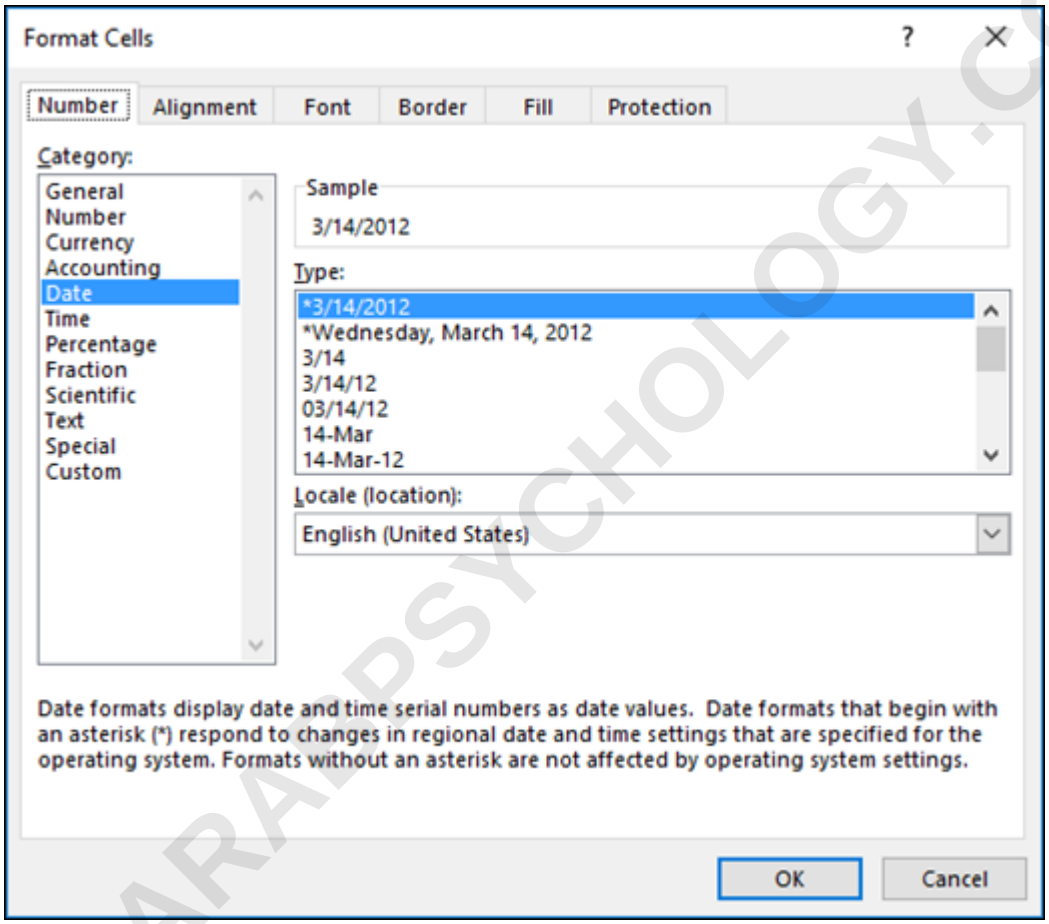
On the **Home** tab in the **Number** section select ether **Long Date** or **Short Date**.

Alternatively, right-click the cell(s) you want to change and select **Format cells** or press **Ctrl+1.** On a Mac, Ctrl-click the cells (Command+1 on a Mac).

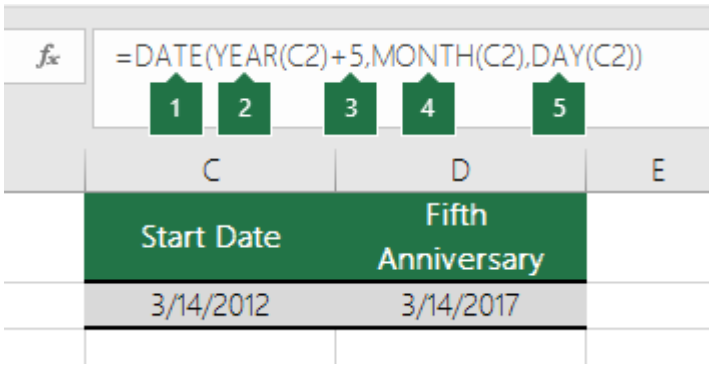
Select **Date** from the **Category** menu.

3. Choose the **Locale (location)** and Date format you want.

For more information on formatting dates, see Format a date the way you want.



You can use the DATE function to create a date that is based on another cell's date. For example, you can use the YEAR, MONTH, and DAY functions to create an anniversary date that's based on another cell. Let's say an employee's first day at work is 10/1/2016; the DATE function can be used to establish his fifth year anniversary date:



The DATE function creates a date.

=DATE(YEAR(C2)+5,MONTH(C2),DAY(C2))

The YEAR function looks at cell C2 and extracts "2012".

Then, "+5" adds 5 years, and establishes "2017" as the anniversary year in cell D2.

The MONTH function extracts the "3" from C2. This establishes "3" as the month in cell D2.

The DAY function extracts "14" from C2. This establishes "14" as the day in cell D2.

To increase or decrease a date by a certain number of days, simply add or subtract the number of days to the value or cell reference containing the date.

In the example below, cell A5 contains the date that we want to increase and decrease by 7 days (the value in C5).

	A	B	C
1	Month	Day	Year
2	3	14	2012
3			
4	Sequential Dates	Formula	Increment
5	3/14/2012	=DATE(C2,A2,B2)	7
6	3/21/2012	=A5+$C$5	
7	3/28/2012	=A6+$C$5	
8	4/4/2012	=A7+$C$5	
9	4/11/2012	=A8+$C$5	
10	4/18/2012	=A9+$C$5	
11	4/25/2012	=A10+$C$5	
12	5/2/2012	=A11+$C$5	

See Also

Add or subtract dates

Insert the current date and time in a cell

Fill data automatically in worksheet cells

YEAR function

MONTH function

DAY function

TODAY function

DATEVALUE function

Date and time functions (reference)

All Excel functions (by category)

All Excel functions (alphabetical)