

# Guide to full Excel 2016 (Part 8): Learn about Number Formats

The data in the Excel spreadsheet when you perform the import always have the default mode, General format, for Excel formats to display and calculate in accordance with the actual data format, you need to set the format for it. Join TipsMake.com to learn about Number Formats in Excel 2016!

## Number format in Excel 2016

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## What is I. Number Formats?

Whenever working with spreadsheets, it is better to use number formats that match your data. Number formats indicate the exact type of data you are using in the spreadsheet, such as percentage (%), currency unit (\$), number of times, date, etc.

See the video below to learn more about Number Formats in Excel:

## II. Why should I use the digital format?

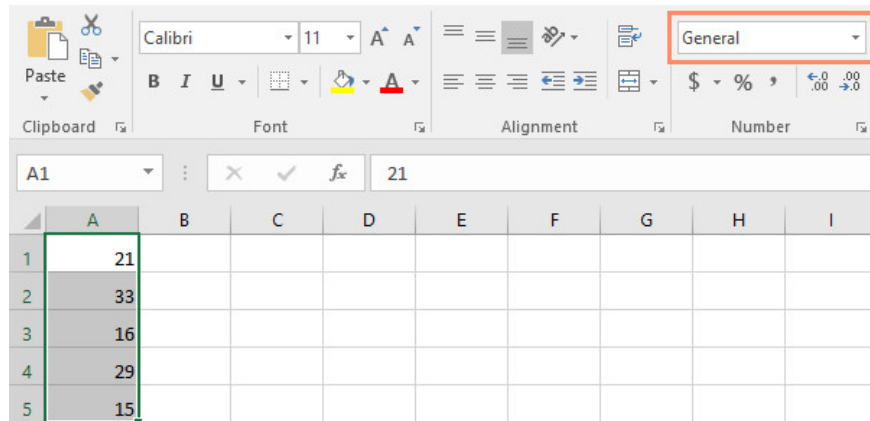
The digital format not only makes your spreadsheet easier to read but also makes it easier to use. When applying a numeric format, you are telling the worksheet exactly the type of value stored in a cell. For example, the date format (date format) tells the spreadsheet that you are entering a specific calendar date. This allows the spreadsheet to better understand the data, helping to ensure data integrity and your formula is calculated correctly.

1. If you do not need to use a specific number format, the spreadsheet will usually apply the general number format by default. However, the general format may apply some small format changes to your data.

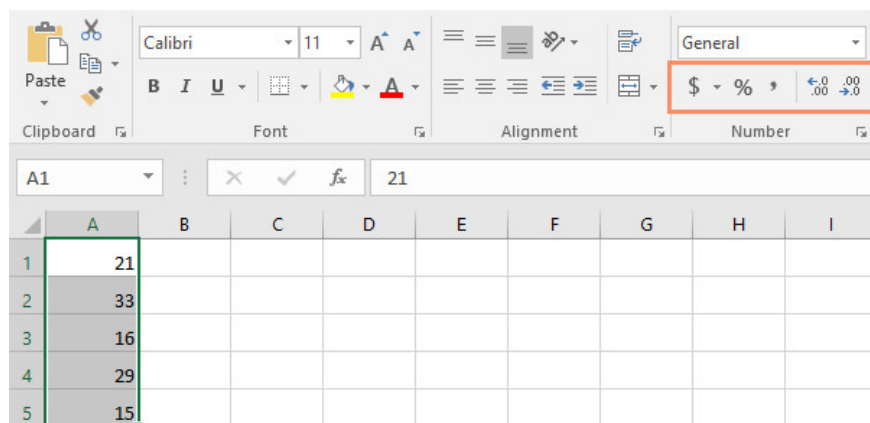
## Apply number format

Just like other types of formats, such as changing the font color, you will apply numeric formats by selecting the cell and selecting the desired format option. There are two main ways to choose a digital format:

1. Go to the **Home** tab, click the **Number Format** drop-down menu in the **Number** group and select the desired format.

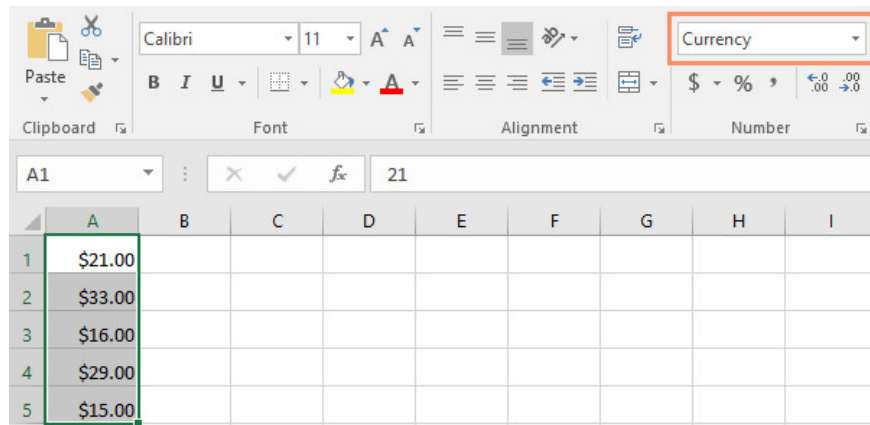


1. You can click on one of the quick number format commands under the drop-down menu.

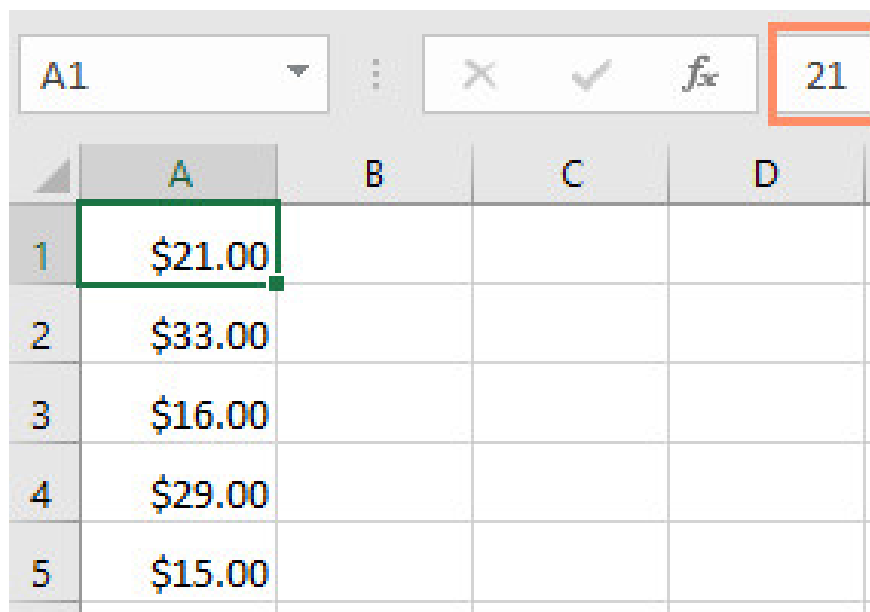


1. In addition, you can also select the desired cells and press **Ctrl + 1** on the keyboard to access other number format options.

In this example, we applied the **Currency number format** to add a currency symbol (\$) and displayed two decimal places for any numeric value.





1. If you select any cell with a numeric format, you can see the actual value of the cell in the formula bar. The spreadsheet will use this value for other formulas and calculations.



### III. Use the correct number format

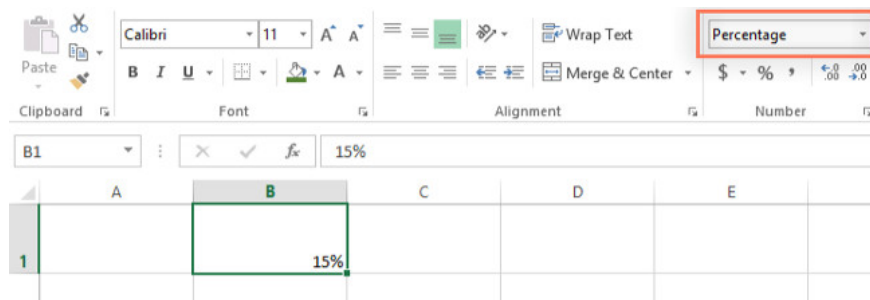
There are many ways to format a number and select a cell and apply a format. Spreadsheets can actually apply multiple number formats automatically based on how you enter data. This means that you will need to enter the data in a way that the program can understand and then make sure that the cells are using the appropriate number format. For example, the image below shows how to use numeric formats for **dates** ( **percentages** ), **percentages** (percentages) and **times** (times):

		
	<b>Wrong</b>	<b>Right</b>
<b>Date</b>	January 1st	1/1/2014
<b>Percent</b>	50	50%
<b>Time</b>	Noon	12:00 pm

Now that you know more about how digital formats work, we will look at a number of different number formats.

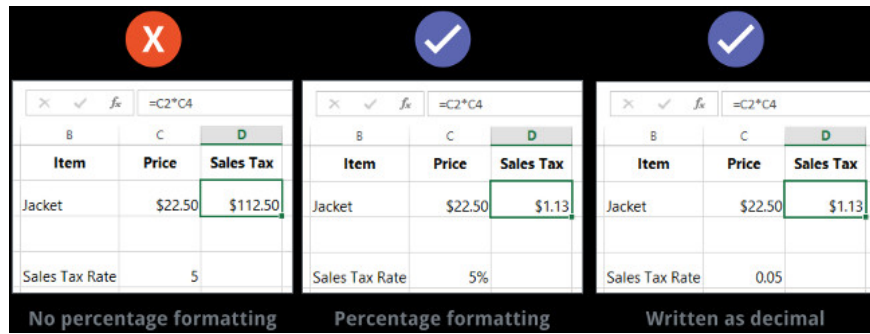
## 1. Percentage formats (Percentage formats)

One of the most useful number formats is **the percentage format (%)**. It displays values as percentages, such as 20% or 55%. This is especially useful when calculating such as sales tax or interest. When you enter a percent sign (%) after a number, the percentage format will be applied automatically to that cell.



In mathematical theory, one percent can also be written as a decimal. So 15% is equivalent to 0.15; 7.5% is 0.075; 20% is 0.20; 55% is 0.55 and more.

There are many times when the percentage format will be useful. For example, in the images below, note how the sales tax rate is formatted differently for each spreadsheet (5, 5% and 0.05):

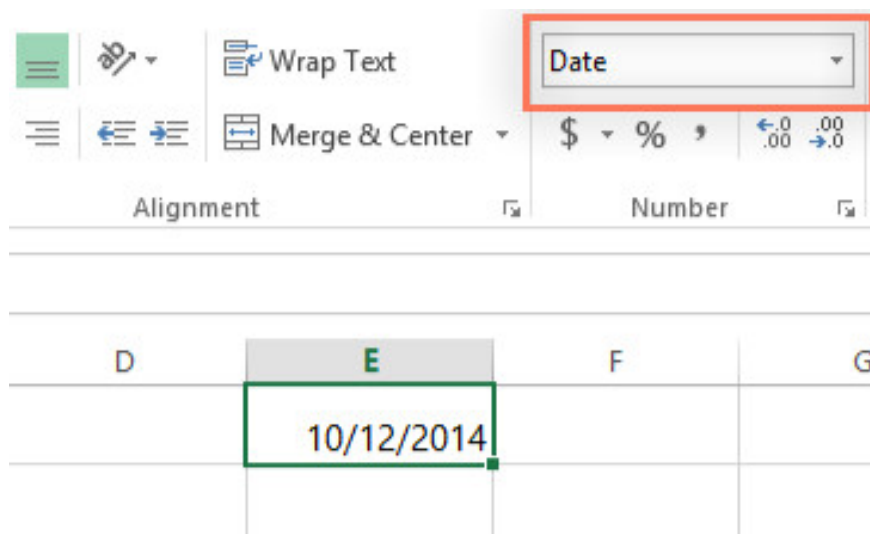


As you can see, the calculation in the worksheet on the left does not work correctly. Without the percentage format, the spreadsheet thinks we want to multiply \$ 22,50 by 5, not 5%. And even though the spreadsheet on the right still works without a percentage format, the spreadsheet in the middle is easier to read.

## 2. Date formats (Date formats)

Whenever you work with dates, you'll want to use the date format to tell the spreadsheet you're referring to specific calendar dates, such as July 15, 2014. The date format also allows You work with a set of date functions (Date functions) that use time and date information to calculate answers.

Spreadsheets do not understand information in the same way as humans. For example, if you enter October in the box, the spreadsheet will not know if you are entering a date to process it like any other text. Instead, when entering a date, you'll need to use the specific format that your spreadsheet understands, such as **month / day / year** (or day / month / year depending on the country you're in). In the example below, we will enter 10/12/2014 on October 12, 2014. The worksheet will then automatically apply the date format to that cell.

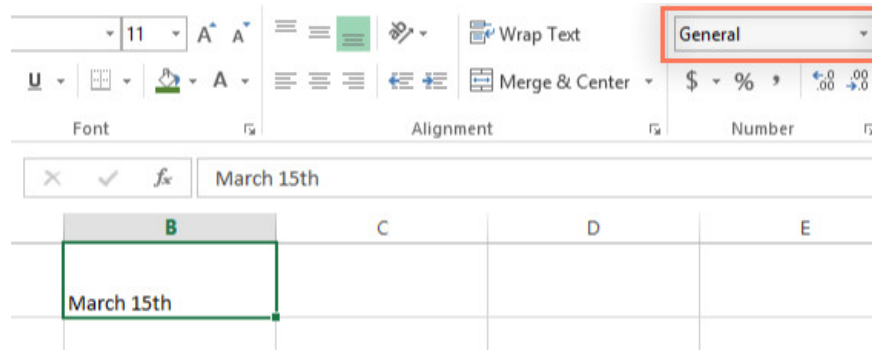


Now that we have the date formatted correctly, we can do many things different from this data. For example, we can use processing handles to continue the days through the column, so another day will appear in each cell:

D	E	F
	10/12/2014	
		10/18/2014

D	E	F
	10/12/2014	
	10/13/2014	
	10/14/2014	
	10/15/2014	
	10/16/2014	
	10/17/2014	
	10/18/2014	

If the date format is not applied automatically, it means that the spreadsheet does not understand the data you entered. In the example below, we entered on March 15. The spreadsheet doesn't understand we're talking about a day, so this box is still using the general number format.



On the other hand, if we enter **March 15** (March 15) (without "th"), the spreadsheet will identify it as the date. Because it does not include years, the spreadsheet will automatically add the current year, so the date will have all the necessary information. We may also enter dates in a number of other ways, such as 3/15; 3/15/2014 or July 15, 2014 and the spreadsheet will still identify it as that day.

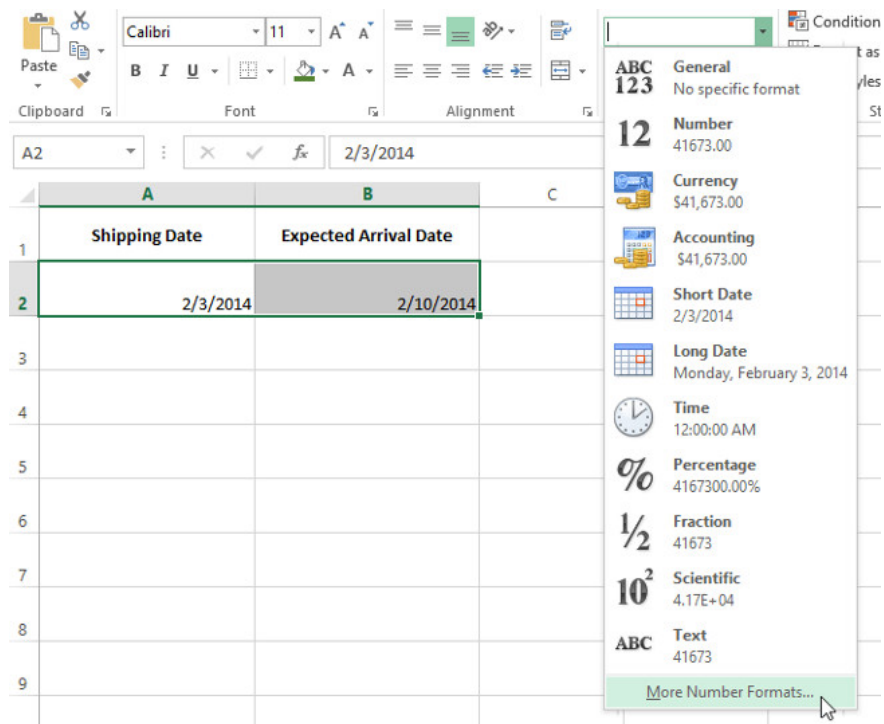
Try entering the dates below into the spreadsheet and see if the date format is automatically applied:

1. December 10
2. October
3. October 12
4. October 2016
5. December 10, 2016
6. October 12, 2016
7. 2016
8. October 12

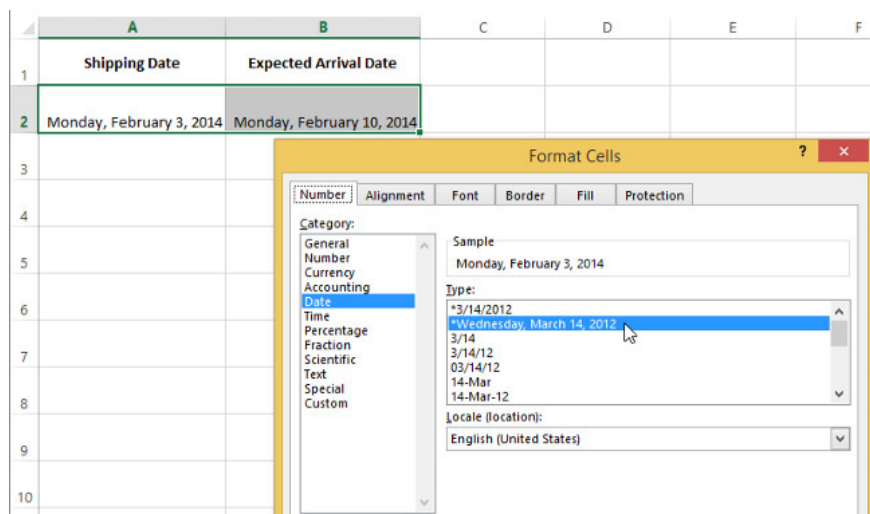
If you want to add the current date to a cell, you can use the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl +;** as in the video below:

### 3. Other date format options

To access other date format options, select the **Number Format** drop-down menu and select **More Number Formats**. These are different date display options, like including day of the week or skip the year.



The **Format Cells** dialog box will appear. From here, you can choose the desired date format option.



As you can see in the formula bar, the custom date format does not change the actual date in the cell - it only changes the display.

	A	B
1	Shipping Date	Expected Arrival Date
2	Monday, February 3, 2014	Monday, February 10, 2014

## IV. Tips on number format

Here are some tips for getting the best results with the digital format:

1. **Apply a number format to the entire column** : If you plan to use each column for a certain data type, such as a date or a percentage, you can see the simplest way to select the entire column by clicking on the column letters and apply the number format you want. In this way, any data you add to that column in the future will have the correct digital format. Note that the title row will usually not be affected by the number format.

The screenshot shows the Excel ribbon with the 'Number' group selected. The 'Number' format menu is open, showing various options. The 'Currency' option is highlighted. The background shows a spreadsheet with column B selected and the 'Price' header.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Item Name	Price			
2	Measuring Cups	\$4.99			
3	Ladel	\$2.99			
4	Slotted Spoon	\$2.79			
5	12" Skillet	\$14.59			
6	Garlic Press	\$7.45			
7					
8					
9					
10					

1. **Check the values ??after applying the digital format** : If you apply a digital format to existing data, you may have unexpected results. For example, applying the percentage (%) format to a cell with a value of 5 will give you 500%, not 5%. In this case, you need to re-enter the value correctly in each cell.

	A	B
1	<b>Percentage of Total</b>	
2		500%
3		7300%
4		1200%
5		550%
6		1200%

1. If you reference a cell with a numeric format in a formula, the worksheet can automatically apply the same number format to the new cell. For example, if you use a value with the currency format in a formula, the calculated value will also use the currency number format.

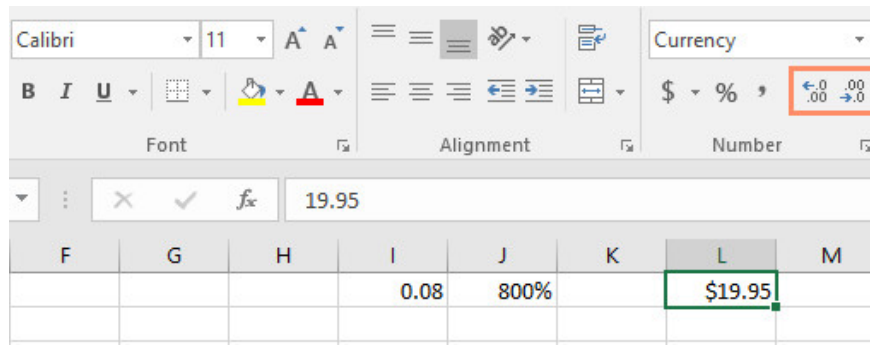
	A	B	C
1	\$184.50	\$92.25	

Formula bar: B1 :   *fx* =A1/2

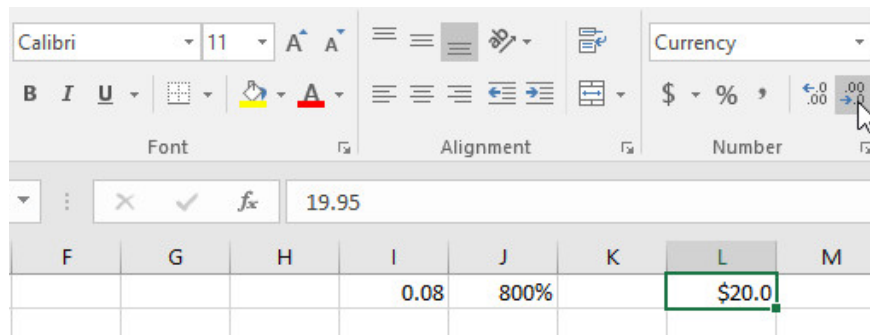
If you want the data to appear exactly as entered, you will have to use the text number format. This format is especially good for numbers you don't want to perform calculations, such as phone numbers, zip codes or numbers starting with 0, like 02415. For best results, you can apply format the text number before entering data into these cells.

### Increase and decrease the number of digits after the comma

The **Increase Decimal** command and **Decrease Decimal** allow you to control the decimal position displayed in a cell. These commands do not change the value of the cell; instead, they display values ??for a set of decimals.



**Decrease Decimal** will display the rounded value to that decimal place but the actual value in the cell will still be displayed in the formula bar.



The **Increase / Decrease Decimal** command does not work with a number of digital formats, such as Date and Fraction.

Having fun!

You finished reading the article "**Guide to full Excel 2016 (Part 8): Learn about Number Formats**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.