

How to display protected operating system files in Windows 11

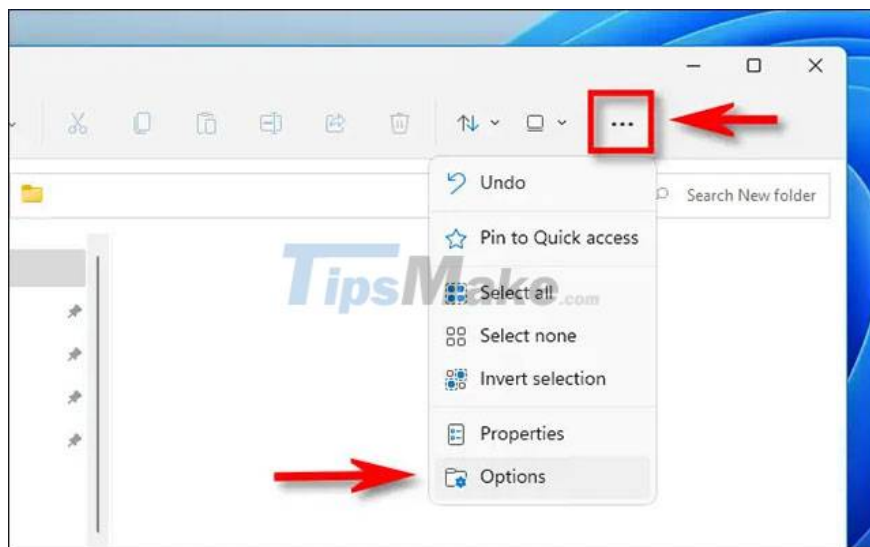
In general, the way Windows 11 handles hidden files and folders on the system is almost identical to previous versions of Windows. Therefore, displaying these hidden files in File Explorer will not be complicated.

Here's how to display protected operating system files in Windows 11.

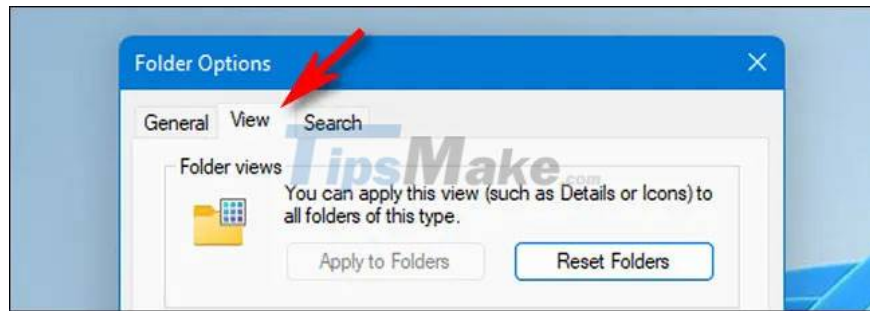
First, launch File Explorer by opening the Start menu and searching for the keyword ' **File Explorer** '. Or you can also click the Pinned File Explorer icon on the taskbar.



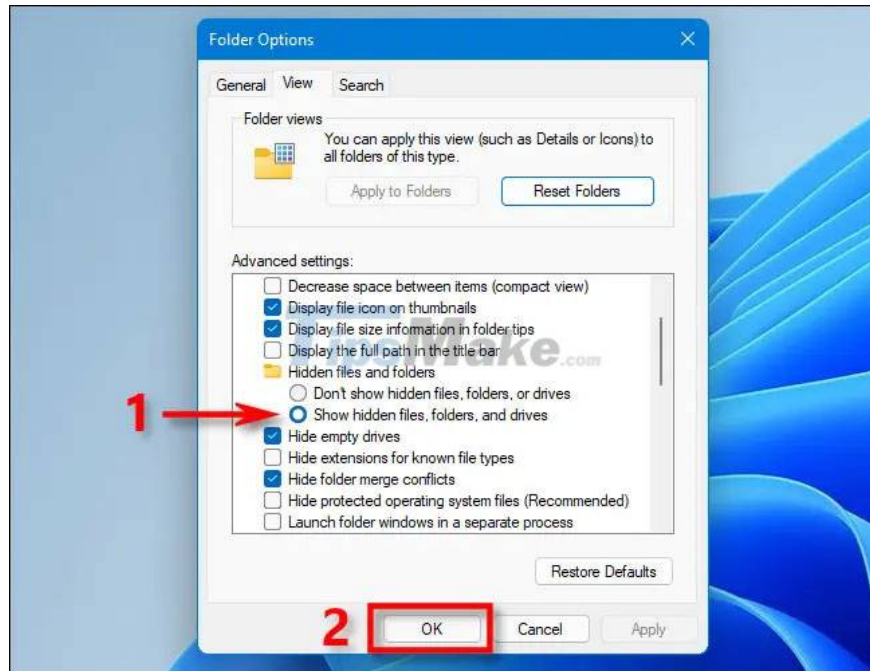
When File Explorer opens, click the three-dot button located on the toolbar near the top of the window. In the menu that appears, select ' **Options** '.



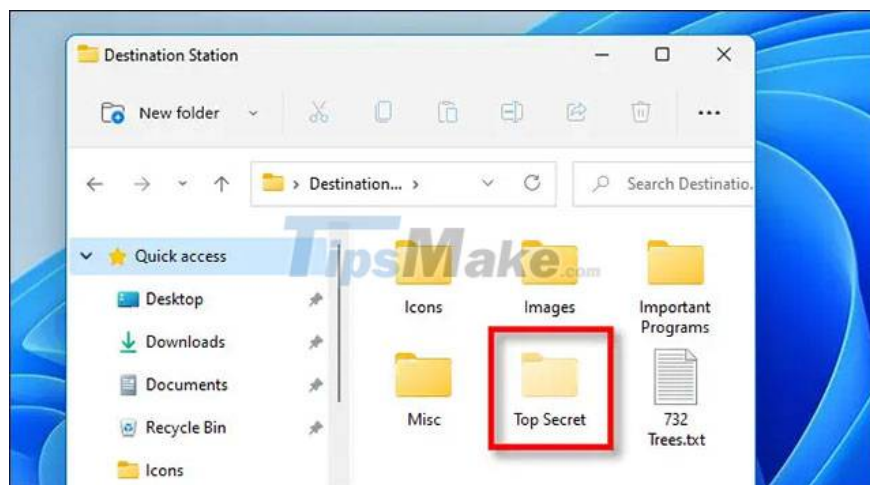
In the ' **Folder Options** ' window that opens, click the ' **View** ' tab .



In the ' **Advanced Settings** ' list, find the ' **Hidden Files and Folders** ' entry . Click the option ' **Show hidden files, folders, and drive** '. Then click ' **OK** ' at the bottom of the window.



Hidden files and folders are immediately visible in File Explorer and on the desktop. You should see their icons slightly blurred, as shown below:

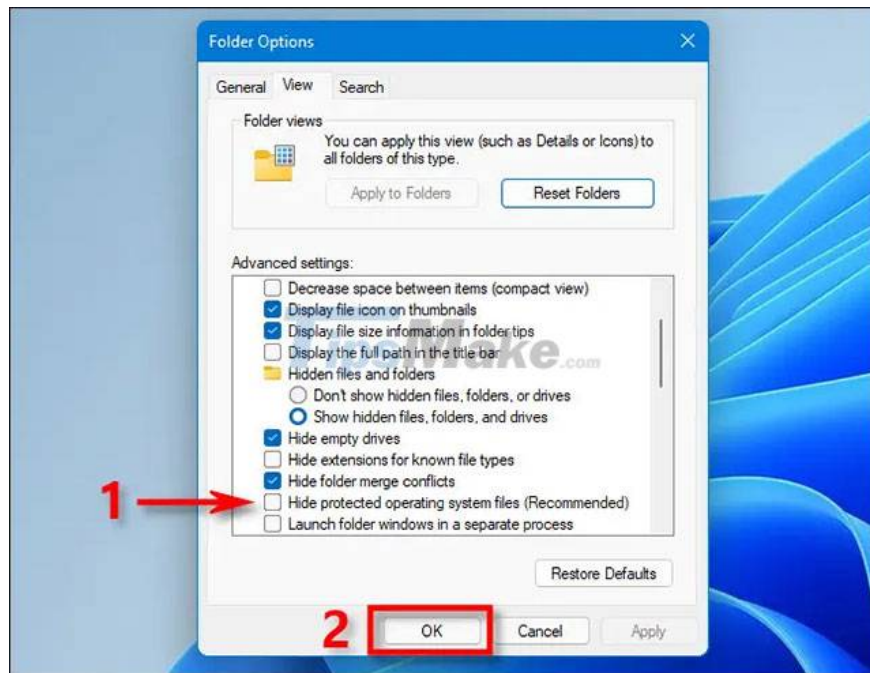


If you want to hide these files again, just go to **File Explorer > Options > View again**, then select '**Don't show hidden files, folders, or drives**' and click '**OK**'.

How to display protected operating system files in Windows 11

You may not have noticed, but in Windows there is another type of hidden file: system files, which are hidden and protected by default to keep your operating system working properly. If you want to see this hidden file type, open File Explorer, click the 'three dots' button on the toolbar, then select '**Options**'.

In the Folder Options window, click the '**View**' tab. Then in the '**Advanced Settings**' list, scroll down and uncheck the '**Hide protected operating system files (Recommended)**' option.



Immediately, a new dialog window will open, warning you of the 'dangers' of displaying protected operating system files.

(**Warning** : *These are sensitive system files. If you move or delete hidden system files, your Windows 11 installation environment may be damaged, or cause data loss. extreme caution*).

If you know what you're doing and are willing to take the risk, click '**Yes**'.



Then close the Folder Options window by clicking ' **OK** '. As with hidden files in the above section, protected operating system files will appear with a slightly dimmed icon on the desktop and in File Explorer.

When the job is done, you should hide your protected operating system files again by going to **File Explorer > Options > View again** . Then, check the box next to the option ' **Hide protected operating system files (Recommended)** ' and click ' **OK** '.

You finished reading the article "**How to display protected operating system files in Windows 11**" 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.