

How to update Arch Linux mirrorlist

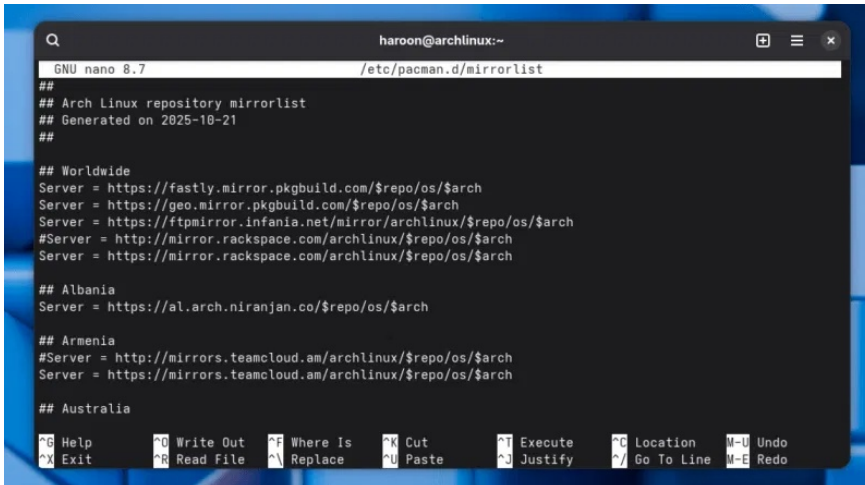
Let's delve deeper into Arch Linux mirrorlists, what they are, and how to update them using various methods.

If you're using Arch Linux and wondering why a simple update takes so long, even with a good internet connection, it could be due to outdated or poorly organized mirror lists. Keeping your mirror lists up-to-date and fresh will help your system run more smoothly. Let's delve deeper into Arch Linux mirror lists, what they are, and how to update them using various methods.

What is Arch Linux mirrorlist?

When you ask the pacman package manager to update Firefox or download the latest Linux kernel, it doesn't automatically download from the cloud. It has to connect to a specific server somewhere in the world to download those files. These servers are called mirrors.

In other words, an Arch Linux mirror is simply a server hosting a copy of the official Arch Linux repositories. There are hundreds of such servers scattered around the globe. Some are maintained by universities, some by Internet service providers (ISPs), and others by Linux enthusiasts.

A screenshot of a terminal window on an Arch Linux system. The window title is 'haroon@archlinux:~'. The terminal shows the GNU nano 8.7 editor editing the file '/etc/pacman.d/mirrorlist'. The content of the file is as follows:

```
##  
## Arch Linux repository mirrorlist  
## Generated on 2025-10-21  
##  
## Worldwide  
Server = https://fastly.mirror.pkgbuild.com/$repo/os/$arch  
Server = https://geo.mirror.pkgbuild.com/$repo/os/$arch  
Server = https://ftpmirror.infrania.net/mirror/archlinux/$repo/os/$arch  
#Server = http://mirror.rackspace.com/archlinux/$repo/os/$arch  
Server = https://mirror.rackspace.com/archlinux/$repo/os/$arch  
  
## Albania  
Server = https://al.arch.niranjan.co/$repo/os/$arch  
  
## Armenia  
#Server = http://mirrors.teamcloud.am/archlinux/$repo/os/$arch  
Server = https://mirrors.teamcloud.am/archlinux/$repo/os/$arch  
  
## Australia
```

The bottom of the terminal shows the nano editor's command palette with various shortcuts like 'H Help', 'W Write Out', 'R Read File', 'C Where Is', 'X Cut', 'E Execute', 'L Location', 'U Undo', 'O Exit', 'R Read File', 'N Replace', 'U Paste', 'J Justify', 'G Go To Line', and 'E Redo'.

The mirrorlist itself is a simple text file located at `/etc/pacman.d/mirrorlist` on your system. If you open that file now, you'll see a long list of web addresses, each pointing to a different mirror. Pacman reads this list from top to bottom and tries the first available mirror. If that mirror is slow, offline, or hasn't been synced for a week, your download will be slow or fail. When you run the ``pacman -syu`` command or install something new, pacman will

download packages from these mirrors.

Furthermore, Arch doesn't automatically sort mirrors by speed or location. This means you might be downloading packages from the other side of the earth while a faster mirror sits at the bottom of the list unused. In short, the mirrorlist dictates where your system gets its software from. A well-maintained mirrorlist ensures fast and reliable updates. A neglected list turns every update into a test of patience.

If you're wondering why we need so many mirrors, it's because they distribute the load, ensure redundancy, and provide geographic diversity so that users worldwide can efficiently access the packets.

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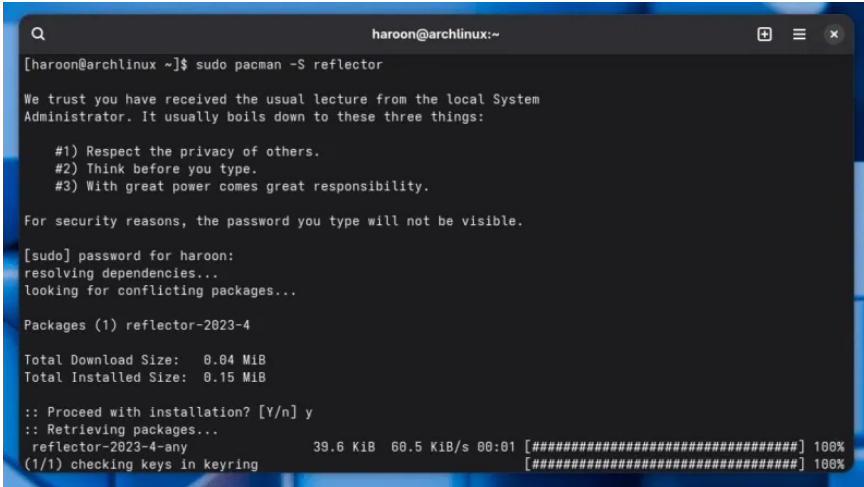
There are many ways to update mirror lists on Arch Linux, but the most efficient method is to use the reflector tool. This tool is designed to manage mirrors on Arch Linux. It retrieves the latest mirror data, checks mirrors based on speed and synchronization, and creates a clean mirror list for you.

Before making any changes, back up your existing mirrorlist. Open the terminal and run this command:

```
sudo cp /etc/pacman.d/mirrorlist /etc/pacman.d/mirrorlist.backup
```

Now you're safe. Next, make sure that reflector is installed. If not, install it using the command:

```
sudo pacman -S reflector
```

A terminal window screenshot showing the installation of the 'reflector' package. The user runs 'sudo pacman -S reflector'. The terminal displays the usual Arch Linux warning about system administrator trust, followed by three guidelines: #1) Respect the privacy of others, #2) Think before you type, and #3) With great power comes great responsibility. It then asks for the password, which is entered. The terminal shows the package 'reflector-2023-4' being resolved, with a total download size of 0.04 MiB and a total installed size of 0.15 MiB. The user proceeds with installation, and the terminal shows the package being retrieved and installed at 100% progress. The window title is 'haroon@archlinux:~' and the prompt is '[haroon@archlinux ~]\$'.

You can run reflector with different (optional) flags to control mirror selection. Here's a useful command to get the fastest and most up-to-date mirrors:

```
sudo reflector --country US --protocol https --latest 10 --sort rate --save /etc
```

This command selects recently synced mirrors, sorts them by download speed, and saves the results directly to the mirrorlist file. You can replace US with your country or omit the country option entirely if you want to use global mirrors.

After running, refresh the pacman database using the command:

```
sudo pacman -Syu
```

You will likely notice the difference in speed immediately.

Updating Arch Linux's mirrorlist might seem like a minor maintenance task, but its impact on your system is significant. Fast and reliable mirrors mean quick updates, smooth installations, and reduced package download times. Furthermore, you can explore various ways to make your Arch Linux more stable.

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