

Excel Formula Cheat Sheet

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Quick Reference — 1000+ Excel Formulas & Functions Handbook

Function Selection Guide

I need to...	Use this
Look up a value and return related data	XLOOKUP (modern) or VLOOKUP/INDEX+MATCH (legacy-safe)
Sum values that meet one or more conditions	SUMIF / SUMIFS
Count values that meet one or more conditions	COUNTIF / COUNTIFS
Average values that meet one or more conditions	AVERAGEIF / AVERAGEIFS
Make a decision with 2 outcomes	IF
Make a decision with 3+ outcomes	IFS or nested IF
Extract part of a text string	LEFT / RIGHT / MID / TEXTBEFORE / TEXTAFTER
Clean messy imported data	TRIM, CLEAN, SUBSTITUTE, VALUE
Get a distinct/unique list	UNIQUE (modern) or Remove Duplicates (legacy)
Filter a table live	FILTER (modern) or AutoFilter/SUMIFS (legacy)
Calculate a loan payment	PMT
Calculate return on an investment	IRR / XIRR / NPV / XNPV
Handle a potential error gracefully	IFERROR / IFNA
Rank values	RANK.EQ, LARGE, SMALL
Build a flexible 2-D lookup	INDEX + MATCH (2-way) or XLOOKUP nested

Error Code Quick Reference

Error	Most common cause	Fastest fix
#DIV/0!	Dividing by a blank or zero cell	IF (denominator=0,0,.. .) or IFERROR

Error	Most common cause	Fastest fix
#N/A	Lookup value not found	Check for extra spaces (TRIM); wrap with IFNA
#NAME?	Misspelled function name, or missing quotes	Check spelling and quotes around text
#REF!	A cell the formula depends on was deleted	Rebuild the reference; use Trace Precedents
#VALUE!	Formula is doing math on text	Check for numbers stored as text; use VALUE()
#NULL!	Wrong range operator (space instead of : or ,)	Fix the range syntax
#NUM!	Invalid number for the function (e.g. negative SQRT)	Check the function's valid input domain

Absolute vs Relative References

Style	Example	Behavior when copied
Relative	A1	Both row and column shift
Absolute	\$A\$1	Nothing shifts (fully locked)
Mixed (column locked)	\$A1	Column stays, row shifts
Mixed (row locked)	A\$1	Row stays, column shifts

Press **F4** to cycle through all four reference styles while editing a formula.

Keyboard Shortcuts for Formulas

Shortcut	Action
F2	Edit the active cell
F4	Cycle absolute/relative reference locks
F9	Recalculate (or preview a selected part of a formula)
Ctrl + `	Toggle Show Formulas view
Ctrl + ;	Insert today's date as a static value
Alt + =	AutoSum

SUM Family — Which One Do I Need?

Function	Use when...
SUM	Adding a plain range, no conditions
SUMIF	One condition
SUMIFS	Multiple conditions (AND logic)

Function	Use when...
SUMPRODUCT	Conditions requiring OR logic, or weighted sums
SUBTOTAL	Needs to ignore filtered/hidden rows
AGGREGATE	Needs to ignore errors as well as hidden rows

Date Format Codes (for TEXT function)

Code	Meaning	Example
dd	Day, 2-digit	05
mm	Month, 2-digit	03
mmm	Month, short name	Mar
mmmm	Month, full name	March
yyyy	Year, 4-digit	2026
ddd	Weekday, short name	Mon
dddd	Weekday, full name	Monday

Formula-Specific Cheat Cards

Cheat Sheet: Most-used lookup function today

=XLOOKUP(lookup_value,lookup_array,return_array,[if_not_found])

One-line syntax reminder for the modern default lookup function.

Common mistake: Using this card as a substitute for understanding argument order, rather than as a memory aid.

Cheat Sheet: SUMIFS argument order

=SUMIFS(sum_range,criteria_range1,criteria1,[criteria_range2,criteria2],...)

Reminds users that sum_range always comes FIRST in SUMIFS, unlike SUMIF.

Common mistake: Applying SUMIF's argument order (sum_range last) to SUMIFS by habit.

Cheat Sheet: Text function quick picks

LEFT / RIGHT / MID / TRIM / PROPER / TEXTBEFORE / TEXTAFTER / TEXTSPLIT

One-glance guide to which text function to reach for in common situations.

Common mistake: Reaching for a nested FIND+MID combo when a single modern function (TEXTBEFORE/AFTER) would do the job.

Cheat Sheet: Date format codes for TEXT()

dd, mm, mmm, mmmm, yyyy, ddd, dddd

Lists the common custom format codes used inside TEXT() for dates.

Common mistake: Confusing mm (month) with MM (also month; case doesn't matter in Excel format codes) vs mmm (month name) is a frequent mix-up.

Cheat Sheet: Error meanings at a glance

#DIV/0! #N/A #NAME? #REF! #VALUE! #NULL! #NUM!

Summarizes what each common Excel error code actually means.

Common mistake: Treating all errors the same way (e.g. wrapping everything in IFERROR) instead of diagnosing the specific cause.

Cheat Sheet: Function selection - SUM family

SUM / SUMIF / SUMIFS / SUMPRODUCT / SUBTOTAL / AGGREGATE

Helps decide which summing function fits a given scenario (single condition, multiple conditions, filtered data, or weighted totals).

Common mistake: Defaulting to SUMPRODUCT for everything when a simpler SUMIFS would be clearer and faster.

Cheat Sheet: Keyboard shortcuts for formulas

F2 edit, F4 toggle \$ lock, F9 calculate, Ctrl+` show formulas, Ctrl+Shift+Enter (legacy array)

Lists the most useful keyboard shortcuts specifically for formula work.

Common mistake: Forgetting F4 cycles through all 4 reference lock states (not just one).

Cheat Sheet: Financial function quick picks

PMT / FV / PV / NPER / RATE / NPV / IRR

One-glance guide to which financial function answers which kind of question (payment, growth, rate, or return).

Common mistake: Reaching for NPV when IRR (a rate, not a currency value) was actually the metric needed.

Cheat Sheet: Common wildcard characters

*** (any characters) and ? (single character)**

Explains Excel's two wildcard characters and where they can and can't be used.

Common mistake: Assuming wildcards work in every function (they don't work in FIND, only in SEARCH-adjacent and criteria-based functions).

Cheat Sheet: When to use FILTER vs SUMIFS vs a PivotTable

FILTER=live row extraction, SUMIFS=live single aggregate, PivotTable=flexible multi-dimension summary

Helps decide the right tool for the job among three commonly confused options.

Common mistake: Building a complex FILTER+SORT+UNIQUE chain when a two-minute PivotTable would have solved it just as well.

Cheat Sheet: Absolute vs relative reference quick guide

A1 (relative) / \$A\$1 (absolute) / A\$1 or \$A1 (mixed)

Summarizes the four reference-locking states and when to use each.

Common mistake: Defaulting to always using \$A\$1 everywhere out of habit, even when a relative reference was actually needed.

Companion reference for the '1000+ Excel Formulas & Functions' handbook. All formulas, company names, and figures used throughout are fictional, for illustration only.