

How do I get into a Docker container's shell?

Asked 9 years, 3 months ago Modified 1 month ago Viewed 3.0m times



I'm getting started working with Docker. I'm using the `WordPress` base *image* and `docker-compose` .

2300



I'm trying to `ssh` into one of the containers to inspect the files/directories that were created during the initial build. I tried to run `docker-compose run containername ls -la` , but that didn't do anything. Even if it did, I'd rather have a console where I can traverse the directory structure, rather than run a single command. What is the right way to do this with Docker?



`docker`

`docker-container`

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edited Feb 14 at 21:35



Manuel Jordan

16.1k ● 24 ● 102 ● 174

asked May 11, 2015 at 16:12



Andrew

236k ● 195 ● 526 ● 713

So it sounds like the answer is `docker attach`. But how can I get to that from `docker-compose`? – Andrew May 11, 2015 at 16:27

7 Use `docker exec` askubuntu.com/a/543057/35816 . Get the container id using `docker ps` – Mauricio Scheffer May 11, 2015 at 16:45

64 `sudo docker run -it --entrypoint /bin/bash <container_name>` gets you into the container interactively. Then one can inspect the file system in the container using `cd <path>` – Sergei May 25, 2017 at 16:14

, not a container ID. I was confused about writing [blog.andrewray.me/towards-a-strong-](http://blog.andrewray.me/towards-a-strong-model-of-docker)

[odel-of-docker](#) is a broken link, do you have a

orted by: Highest score (default)

ainer, but this isn't really the same thing
ample, `docker attach` will probably
won't necessarily give you a shell.



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The `docker exec` command is probably what you are looking for; this will let you run arbitrary commands inside an existing container. For example, to run `bash` inside a container:



```
docker exec -it <mycontainer> sh
```



Of course, whatever command you are running must exist in the container filesystem; if your container doesn't have `sh`, this will fail with something like:

```
OCI runtime exec failed: exec failed: unable to start container process:
exec: "sh": executable file not found in $PATH: unknown
```

[If your container doesn't have `sh` -- which is a common case for minimal images -- you may need to investigate other ways to explore the container filesystem.]

In the above command `<mycontainer>` is the name or ID of the target container. It doesn't matter whether or not you're using `docker compose`; just run `docker ps` and use either the ID (a hexadecimal string displayed in the first column) or the name (displayed in the final column). E.g., given:

```
$ docker ps
d2d4a89aaee9      larsks/mini-httpd  "mini_httpd -d /cont  7 days ago      Up
7 days                               web
```

I can run:

```
$ docker exec -it web ip addr
1: lo: <LOOPBACK,UP,LOWER_UP> mtu 65536 qdisc noqueue state UNKNOWN
    link/loopback 00:00:00:00:00:00 brd 00:00:00:00:00:00
    inet 127.0.0.1/8 scope host lo
```



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```
noqueue state UP
ff:ff
```

```
This is inside the container.  
/ # exit  
$
```

In commands shown in this answer, the `-i` and `-t` options (combined as `-it`) are necessary to get an interactive shell:

- `-i` keeps *stdin* connected; if you don't specify `-i`, the shell will simply exit.
- `-t` allocates a tty device; if you don't specify `-t`, you won't have a very pleasant interactive experience (there will be no shell prompt or job control, for example).

If you're specifically using `docker compose`, there is a convenience `docker compose exec` command that works very much like the `docker exec` command, except:

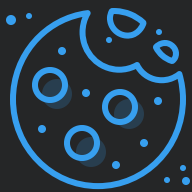
- It defaults to the behavior of `-i` and `-t`
- It allows you to refer to containers by their service name in your `compose.yaml` file.

For example, if you have a `compose.yaml` like this:

```
services:  
  web:  
    image: docker.io/alpinelinux/darkhttpd
```

Then you can run:

```
docker compose exec web sh
```



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thing like:

answered May 11, 2015 at 16:44



larsks

304k ● 41 ● 442 ● 451

otherwise use `docker run -it --`

5 at 17:17

`-t` which is `--interactive` ("Keep STDIN a pseudo-TTY"). – [Adrian Föder](#) Jun 8, 2017

h, so if so, use sh instead. – [Robin Green](#) Mar

- 48 @L0j1k it is `docker run -it --entrypoint /bin/bash <imageid> --any --more --args` , just to clarify for people – [Alexander Mills](#) May 21, 2019 at 1:21
- 3 @AlexanderMills Yes, and to clarify further, those `--any --more --args` you have will be fed into whatever the image has defined as its `CMD` and not Docker (or if your image only defines an `ENTRYPOINT` and no `CMD` , then these options will be fed into `/bin/bash` as you've specified here). So for example any other `docker run` options (e.g. `--net "host"`) need to go before the `<imageid>` . – [L0j1k](#) May 22, 2019 at 17:10



To bash into a running container, type this:

522

```
docker exec -t -i container_name /bin/bash
```



or



```
docker exec -ti container_name /bin/bash
```



or

```
docker exec -ti container_name sh
```

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edited Jan 15, 2020 at 22:44

answered Oct 11, 2015 at 1:34



[Agustí Sánchez](#)

11.1k ● 2 ● 35 ● 27

- 2 Presuming it is a Linux container? – [Peter Mortensen](#) Aug 5, 2018 at 13:14

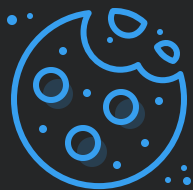
[key Philips](#) Nov 25, 2018 at 15:19

`c -t -i` – [VaTo](#) Mar 1, 2019 at 21:39

g will allow you to specify the user.

[v0003](#) Apr 6, 2021 at 22:00

, 2022 at 7:12



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of the question was: **"How to ssh into a**

execute and interact with preinstalled
ning container using [docker exec](#), rather



Note: The below answer is based on Ubuntu (of 2016). Some translation of the installation process will be required for non-Debian containers.

Let's say, for reasons that are your own, you really do want to use SSH. It takes a few steps, but it can be done. Here are the commands that you would run inside the container to set it up...

```
apt-get update
apt-get install openssh-server

mkdir /var/run/sshd
chmod 0755 /var/run/sshd
/usr/sbin/sshd

useradd --create-home --shell /bin/bash --groups sudo username ## includes 'sudo'
passwd username ## Enter a password

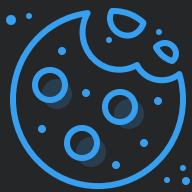
apt-get install x11-apps ## X11 demo applications (optional)
ifconfig | awk '/inet addr/{print substr($2,6)}' ## Display IP address (optional)
```

Now you can even run graphical applications (if they are installed in the container) using X11 forwarding to the SSH client:

```
ssh -X username@IPADDRESS
xeyes ## run an X11 demo app in the client
```

Here are some related resources:

- [openssh-server doesn't start in Docker container](#)
- [How to get bash or ssh into a running container in background mode?](#)



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How to ssh into a docker container?

with search: Docker X11

[doing it wrong!](#)

17:08

answered May 16, 2016 at 3:36



[Brent Bradburn](#)

54.2k ● 18 ● 161 ● 182

"How to ssh into a docker container?" Over the years and bots -- in some cases, possibly anonymously deleted. – [Brent Bradburn](#) Aug

[Community Wiki answer?](#) – [Brent Bradburn](#) Aug 9,



If the container has already exited (maybe due to some error), you can do:

76

```
$ docker run --rm -it --entrypoint /bin/bash image_name
```



or



```
$ docker run --rm -it --entrypoint /bin/sh image_name
```

or

```
$ docker run --rm -it --entrypoint /bin/bash image_name
```

to create a new container and get a shell into it.

Here is the breakdown of the command:

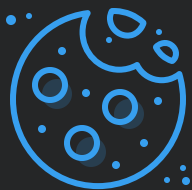
--rm: This option specifies that the container should be automatically removed when it is finished.

-it: These options allow the container to be run interactively with a pseudo-tty terminal. The -i option stands for interactive mode and the -t option stands for a pseudo-tty terminal.

--entrypoint /bin/bash: This option specifies the entry point for the container as /bin/bash, which is the shell program.

image_name: This is the name of the Docker image on which the container will be based.

Since you specified --rm, the container would be deleted when you exit the shell.



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t 0:15

oman

11

answered Nov 9, 2018 at 6:26



user674669

12k ● 20 ● 84 ● 114

swer like I was, it provides an easy way

per your `docker-compose.yml` file.

o:

18:34

answered Nov 24, 2017 at 9:21



Peter Mortensen

31.5k ● 22 ● 109 ● 132



bcmcfc

26.5k ● 29 ● 112 ● 183

`docker-compose run` works as well, if your container doesn't exist yet. – Paul Apr 1, 2020 at 19:15



Start a session into a Docker container using this command:

32

```
sudo docker exec -i -t (container ID) bash
```



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edited Jun 19, 2021 at 15:46

answered Nov 18, 2015 at 9:43



Tjs

857 ● 10 ● 17

2 or a little shorter: `sudo docker exec -it <container ID> bash` – YakovL Sep 22, 2021 at 12:34

or even shorter `docker exec -it <container-id> sh` :) – deadcoder0904 Feb 15 at 7:31



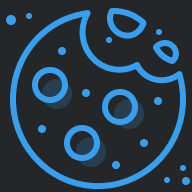
Notice: this answer promotes a tool I've written.

30

I've created a containerized SSH server that you can 'stick' to any running container. This way you can create compositions with every container. The only requirement is that the container has Bash.



The following example would start an SSH server attached to a container with name 'my-container'.



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with \

client of choice) a Bash session will be

<https://jeroenpeeters.com/jeroenpeeters/docker-ssh>

at 19:19

sen

109 ● 132

answered Oct 3, 2015 at 20:56



Jeroen Peeters

1,998 ● 1 ● 20 ● 26

1 That's pretty sweet. The big advantage of doing it this way is you're getting a fully functional terminal. When I used the "docker exec" approach then I couldn't clear the terminal content, `less` was showing a warning each time I run it etc. Using Jeroen's container is giving me a much better experience so far. Just make sure to **check out the documentation**. The sample command in the response doesn't seem valid any more. – [Rafał G.](#) Jun 18, 2016 at 14:26

1 it is a great tool. Do you know how can i use it as a jenkins pipeline docker agent? i Want jenkins to transfer some files by SCP to a remote host and execute them with SSH – [Gilson](#) Feb 4, 2019 at 18:34

Docker On Windows : `docker run -d -p 2222:22 -v //var/run/docker.sock:/var/run/docker.sock -e CONTAINER=my-container -e AUTH_MECHANISM=noAuth --name node-manager jeroenpeeters/docker-ssh` – [GGO](#) Oct 13, 2020 at 12:29

In some cases your image can be Alpine-based. In this case it will throw:

28

OCI runtime exec failed: exec failed: container_linux.go:348: starting container process caused "exec: \"bash\": executable file not found in \$PATH": unknown

Because `/bin/bash` doesn't exist. Instead of this you should use:

```
docker exec -it 9f7d99aa6625 ash
```

or

```
docker exec -it 9f7d99aa6625 sh
```

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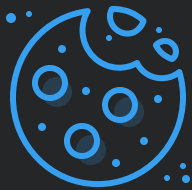
edited Aug 5, 2018 at 18:51

answered Apr 27, 2018 at 5:26

[sen](#)
109 ● 132



[Deoxyseia](#)
1,389 ● 18 ● 31



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If you're using Docker on Windows and want to get shell access to a container, use this:

27

```
winpty docker exec -it <container_id> sh
```



Most likely, you already have [Git Bash](#) installed. **If you don't, make sure to install it.**



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answered Feb 9, 2017 at 9:04



[Cosmin Ababei](#)

[Cosm](#) 7,032 ● 2 ● 21 ● 34

1 Presumes a Linux Docker container? – [Peter Mortensen](#) Aug 5, 2018 at 13:35



To connect to cmd in a Windows container, use

21

```
docker exec -it d8c25fde2769 cmd
```



Where **d8c25fde2769** is the container id.



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edited Aug 5, 2018 at 13:38

answered Jun 13, 2017 at 8:50



[Peter Mortensen](#)

31.5k ● 22 ● 109 ● 132



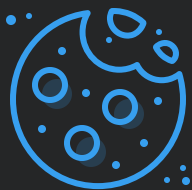
[Aqeel Qureshi](#)

447 ● 1 ● 4 ● 10



2024 version

Use `exec` with `sh` as a short-form:



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sh

NAME (last column) by performing `docker`

	CREATED	NAMES
...	3 hours ago	Up 3 hours
...	3 hours ago	Up 3 hours
/tcp		web_redis

ONTAINER_NAME is `web`. To get into `web`

```
docker exec -it 8e5611ba2567 sh
# or docker exec -it web sh (both are same)
```

For `redis:7.2.4`, `CONTAINER_ID` is `f3967286c492` & `CONTAINER_NAME` is `web_redis`. To get into `web_redis` container, type:

```
docker exec -it f3967286c492 sh
# or docker exec -it web_redis sh (both are same)
```

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edited Mar 4 at 10:22

answered Feb 15 at 7:32



[deadcoder0904](#)

8,266 ● 16 ● 79 ● 195



GOINSIDE SOLUTION

15 install `goinside` command line tool with:



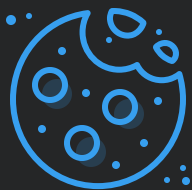
```
sudo npm install -g goinside
```



and go inside a docker container with a proper terminal size with:

```
goinside docker_container_name
```

old answer



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```
$ rows $LINES && bash";
```

unning container with:

[container terminal sizes](#). Which is very

on for your docker container names too.



Soorena

4,422 ● 5 ● 31 ● 43

- 1 Thanks. It works like a charm, at least for those images which have bash already included. Might not work for alpine based images, however, can be fixed with a different function specifically written for sh/ash etc.
– Gaurav Bhaskar Jun 15, 2018 at 22:35



15

To inspect files, run `docker run -it <image> /bin/sh` to get an interactive terminal. The list of images can be obtained by `docker images`. In contrary to `docker exec` this solution works also in case when an image doesn't start (or quits immediately after running).



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edited Jan 13, 2020 at 20:04

answered Sep 17, 2017 at 19:45



igo

6,688 ● 6 ● 43 ● 51



Presuming a Linux Docker image? – Peter Mortensen Aug 5, 2018 at 13:44



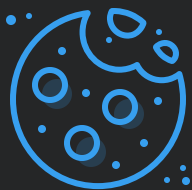
2022 Solution

15

Consider another option



Why do you need it?



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ed on [distroless](#) base images (they don't
sible to `docker exec -it {container-`

ordpress

/docker.sock:/var/run/docker.sock

name of any container you want to

How it works

[Opener](#) is a set of python scripts wrapped-up to a docker image. It finds target container by any unique attribute (name, id, port, image), tries to connect to target using `bash`. If `bash` is not found opener tries to connect using `sh`. Finally if `sh` is not found either opener installs `busybox` into target container and connects to the target using busybox shell, opener deletes `busybox` during disconnection.

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edited Mar 27, 2022 at 10:52

answered Mar 27, 2022 at 10:02



[artemkaxboy](#)

608 ● 6 ● 12

- 1 That is very cool, I tried this and it works great. I love how simple the scripts are that it runs. I never would have thought to try installing busybox in order to get a shell environment working in a docker container.
– [SenorCardgage](#) Jul 22, 2022 at 16:53

Love how simple this is. Shell alias set, so this it the last time I'll have to go looking for help on this. Thank you for the tool! – [Nick K9](#) Oct 25, 2022 at 10:46 ✎



It is simple!

14

List out all your Docker images:



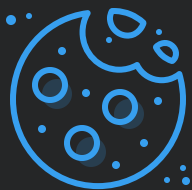
```
sudo docker images
```



On my system it showed the following output:



REPOSITORY	TAG	IMAGE ID	CREATED
		a5e	9 hours ago
		c69	5 weeks ago
		81.15	



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run the first one.

you can do all type of shell operations
s in the root of the file system.

```
opt proc root run sbin srv
```

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edited Aug 5, 2018 at 18:54

answered Jul 12, 2018 at 8:47

[Peter Mortensen](#)

31.5k ● 22 ● 109 ● 132

[Patel Sunil](#)

461 ● 7 ● 7



I've created a terminal function for easier access to the container's terminal. Maybe it's useful to you guys as well:

12

So the result is, instead of typing:

```
docker exec -it [container_id] /bin/bash
```



you'll write:

```
dbash [container_id]
```

Put the following in your `~/.bash_profile` (or whatever else that works for you), then open a new terminal window and enjoy the shortcut:

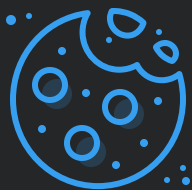
```
#usage: dbash [container_id]
dbash() {
    docker exec -it "$1" /bin/bash
}
```

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answered Jul 16, 2019 at 8:34

[Guy](#)

1,322 ● 18 ● 19



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```
$ docker exec -it <Container-Id> /bin/bash
```

10

Or depending on the shell, it can be



```
$ docker exec -it <Container-Id> /bin/sh
```



You can get the **container-id** via `docker ps` command

`-i` = interactive

`-t` = to allocate a psuedo-TTY

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edited May 24, 2019 at 12:22

answered Jan 22, 2019 at 5:46



slm

16.1k ● 13 ● 114 ● 128



Ashutosh Chamoli

1,007 ● 1 ● 12 ● 27



you can interact with the terminal in docker container by passing the option `-ti`

8

```
docker run --rm -ti <image-name>  
eg: docker run --rm -ti ubuntu
```



`-t` stands for terminal `-i` stands for interactive



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answered Mar 11, 2019 at 17:46



Alwin

153 ● 1 ● 6



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the following commands

it's present

answered May 31, 2020 at 23:52



nischay goyal

3,426 ● 1 ● 13 ● 23



There are at least 2 options depending on the target.

8



Option 1: Create a new bash process and join into it (*easier*)

- Sample start: `docker exec -it <containername> /bin/bash`
- Quit: type `exit`
- Pro: Does work on all containers (not depending on CMD/Entrypoint)
- Contra: Creates a new process with own session and own environment-vars

Option 2: Attach to the already running bash (*better*)

- Sample start: `docker attach --detach-keys ctrl-d <containername>`
- Quit: use keys `ctrl` and `d`
- Pro: Joins the exact same running bash which is in the container. You have same the session and same environment-vars.
- Contra: Only works if CMD/Entrypoint is an interactive bash like `CMD ["/bin/bash"]` or `CMD ["/bin/bash", "--init-file", "myfile.sh"]` **AND** if container has been started with interactive options like `docker run -itd <image>` (-i=interactive, -t=tty and -d=daemon [opt])

We found option 2 more useful. For example we changed `apache2-foreground` to a normal background `apache2` and started a `bash` after that.

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edited Aug 4, 2020 at 16:01

answered Jul 23, 2020 at 16:04



terraloader

331 ● 3 ● 10



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to work with the question you asked is by **system's directory**.

at 19:17


sen
109 ● 132

answered May 12, 2015 at 5:19



Pratik

1,216 ● 11 ● 18

- 1 your command is actually mounting the host's directory into the container. – [Demonbane](#) Jun 15, 2016 at 14:49 

Yeah! Take a backup to another directory and then mount the volume, then move the backup to the mounted folder. – [Pratik](#) Jun 16, 2016 at 20:37

Use:

7

```
docker attach <container name/id here>
```

The other way, albeit there is a danger to it, is to use `attach`, but if you `Ctrl + C` to exit the session, you will also stop the container. If you just want to see what is happening, use `docker logs -f`.

```
~$ docker attach --help
Usage:  docker attach [OPTIONS] CONTAINER
```

Attach to a running container

Options:

<code>--detach-keys string</code>	Override the key sequence for detaching a container
<code>--help</code>	Print usage
<code>--no-stdin</code>	Do not attach STDIN
<code>--sig-proxy</code>	Proxy all received signals to the process (default true)

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edited Aug 5, 2018 at 13:34



[Peter Mortensen](#)

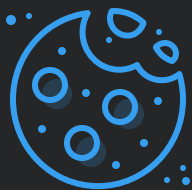
31.5k ● 22 ● 109 ● 132

answered Feb 2, 2017 at 18:03



[Ramon](#)

109 ● 1 ● 6



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t 7:10

answered Jul 26, 2018 at 13:02



[Admin Hack](#)

67 ● 2 ● 4

your docker build file..

iner_name>

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edited Jul 5, 2023 at 0:27

answered Nov 23, 2022 at 0:20



Magic Mick

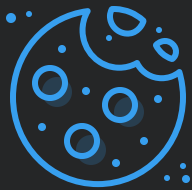
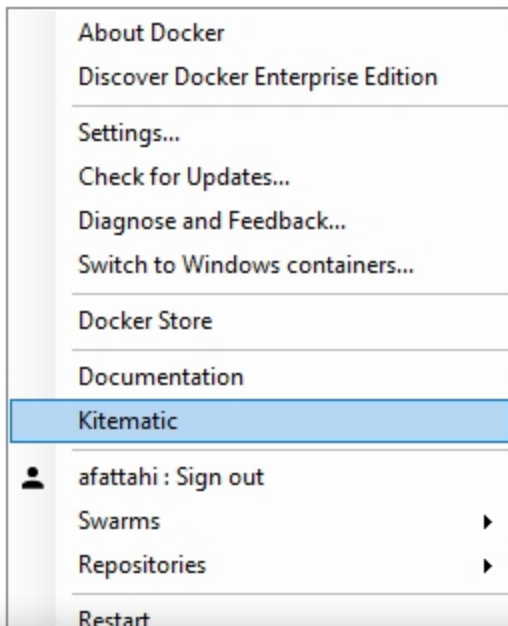
1,523 ● 1 ● 21 ● 32

Shouldn't it be <image_name> instead of <container_name>? – [Ulises](#) Jul 9 at 12:55

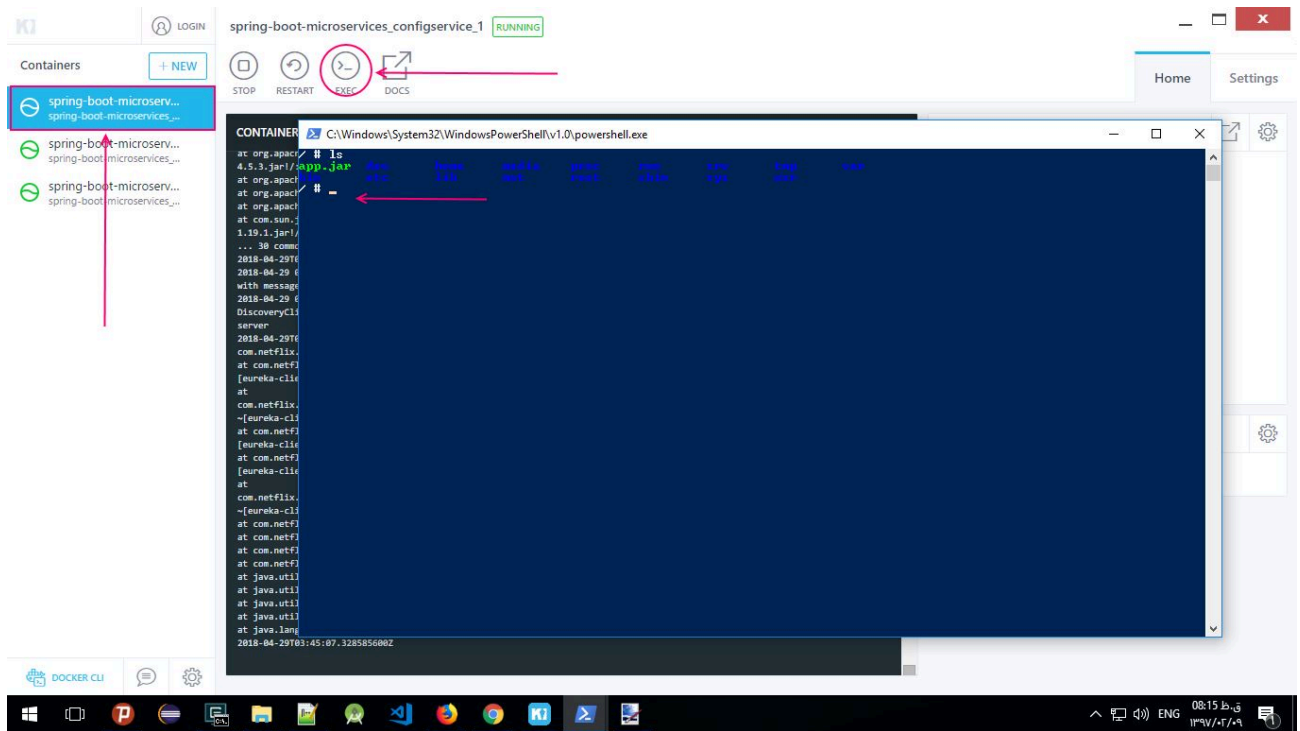
If you have Docker installed with `kitematic`, you can use the GUI. Open `kitematic` from the Docker icon and in the `kitematic` window select your container, and then click on the `exec` icon.

4

You can see the container log and lots of container information (in settings tab) in this GUI too.



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edited Aug 5, 2018 at 18:52

answered Apr 29, 2018 at 3:56



Peter Mortensen

31.5k ● 22 ● 109 ● 132



Alireza Fattahi

44.8k ● 14 ● 130 ● 184

There are two options we can connect to the docker terminal directly with these method `shell` and `bash` but usually bash is not supported and default sh is supported terminal To sh into the running container, type this:

3

```
docker exec -it container_name/container_ID sh
```



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install the bash terminal in your

16:27

answered Feb 7, 2022 at 16:02



Muhammad Irfan Aslam

755 ● 9 ● 15

inside a Docker container.

2

```
docker-compose run container_name /bin/bash
```



Inside the container it will take you to WORKDIR defined in the Dockerfile. You can change your work directory by



```
WORKDIR directory_path # E.g /usr/src -> container's path
```

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edited Aug 5, 2018 at 18:47

answered Feb 2, 2018 at 11:37



Peter Mortensen

31.5k ● 22 ● 109 ● 132



Sivakumar

Sivak 1,119 ● 1 ● 14 ● 25



2



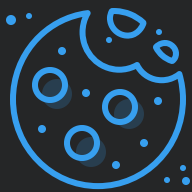
In my case, for some reason(s) I need to check all the network involved information in each container. So the following commands must be valid in a container...

```
ip
route
netstat
ps
...
```

I checked through all these answers, none were helpful for me. I've searched information in other websites. I won't add a super link here, since it's not written in English. So I just put up this post with a summary solution for people who have the same requirements as me.

Say you have one running container named light-test. Follow the steps below.

- `docker inspect light-test -f {{.NetworkSettings.SandboxKey}}`. This command will get



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n/netns/xxxx. The directory may not

r show to explore network world in

first command. And of course, any other

-antp|grep 8080.

t 14:14

answered Sep 4, 2018 at 4:48



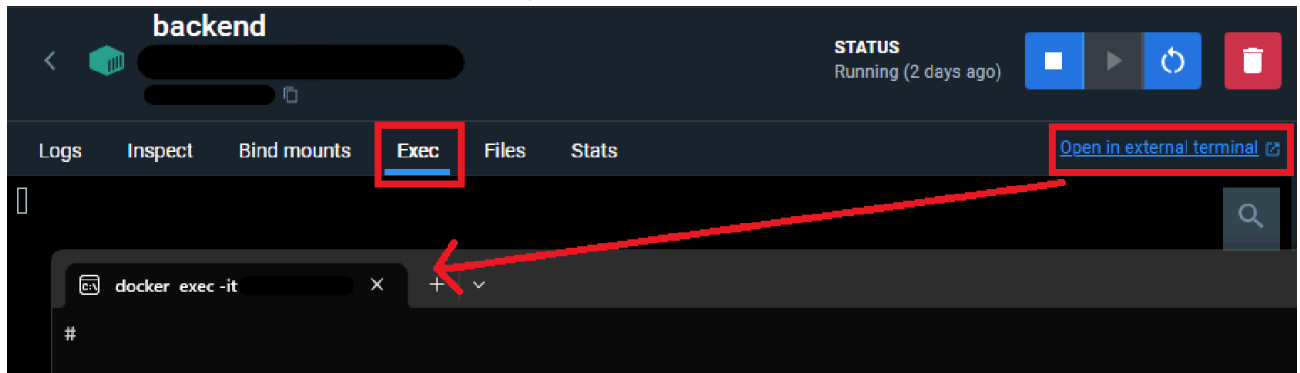
Light.G

114 ● 128

6,884 ● 1 ● 15 ● 26

en exploring a more user-friendly

- 2 With the Windows [Docker Desktop GUI](#), there's a feature that not only lets you open a direct shell on a container but also opens that shell in an external terminal. Essentially, it creates an instance of your selected terminal, and every command thereafter automatically utilizes 'docker exec -it' without the need for manual input each time.



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edited Sep 27, 2023 at 13:42

answered Sep 27, 2023 at 13:33



Cristian Camilo Cabrera

148 ● 1 ● 10

There now is an official docker command for this:

2 `docker debug <container or image>`

It allows you to get a shell (bash/fish/zsh) into any container. It also works for stopped containers and images. Essentially it's a replacement of `docker exec -it <container> sh` but with more features and less constraints (eg the debug shell has an `install` command to add further tools). Using `docker debug` does not modify your container/image (unless you explicitly do so, and only possible for running containers)



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s Docker Desktop >= 4.27. Ie., if you want
sh still is the valid answer.

answered Feb 13 at 12:58



Mr_Cross

101 ● 6

5 at 21:44

mentioned in the disclaimer and in the referenced
docker desktop 4.27. – Mr_Cross Feb 18 at

with docker as a backend Client - Version:

Feb 19 at 17:24

That feature is paywalled: "Docker Debug requires a Pro, Teams, or Business Subscription." – [Oscar](#) Jul 10 at 16:29

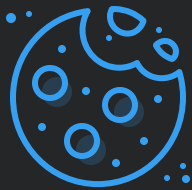
1

2

Next



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