The Fast Track to Julia 10/8/2018



English The Fast Track to A quick and dirty overview of



This page's source is located here. Pull requests are welcome!

What is...?

Julia is an open-source, multi-platform, high-level, high-performance programming language for technical computing.

Julia has an LLVM-based JIT compiler that allows it to match the performance of languages such as C and FORTRAN without the hassle of low-level code. Because the code is compiled on the fly you can run (bits of) code in a shell or REPL, which is part of the recommended workflow.

Julia is dynamically typed, provides multiple dispatch, and is designed for parallelism and distributed computation.

Julia has a built-in package manager.

Julia has many built-in mathematical functions, including special functions (e.g. Gamma), and supports complex numbers right out of the box.

Julia allows you to generate code automagically thanks to Lisp-inspired macros.

Julia was born in 2012.

Basics

answer = 42

Assignment x, y, z = 1, [1:10;], "A string"

x, y = y, x # swap x and y

Constant declaration const DATE OF BIRTH = 2012 End-of-line comment i = 1 # This is a comment Delimited comment #= This is another comment =#

x = y = z = 1 # right-to-left

Chaining 0 < x < 3 # true

5 < x != y < 5 # false

function add one(i)

Function definition return i + 1

end

\delta + [Tab] Insert LaTeX symbols

Operators

```
Basic arithmetic
                               +, -,*,/
Exponentiation
                               2^3 == 8
Division
                               3/12 == 0.25
Inverse division
                               7\3 == 3/7
Remainder
                               x % y or rem(x,y)
Negation
                               !true == false
Equality
                               a == b
Equality (composite types)
                               is(a, b) # done on bit level
Inequality
                               a != b or a \neq b
Less and larger than
                               < and >
Less than or equal to
                               <= or <
Greater than or equal to
                               [1, 2, 3] + [1, 2, 3] == [2, 4, 6]
Element-wise operation
                               [1, 2, 3] .* [1, 2, 3] == [1, 4, 9]
Not a number
                               isnan(NaN) not(!) NaN == NaN
                               a == b ? "Equal" : "Not equal"
Ternary operator
Short-circuited AND and OR
                               a && banda || b
Object equivalence
                               a === b
```

```
The shell a.k.a. REPL
```

```
Recall last result
                                           ans
Interrupt execution
                                           [Ctrl] + [C]
Clear screen
                                           [Ctrl] + [L]
                                           include("filename.jl")
Run program
Get help for func is defined
                                           ?func
See all places where func is defined
                                           apropos("func")
Command line mode
Package Manager mode
Help mode
Exit special mode / Return to REPL
                                           [Backspace] on empty line
Exit REPL
                                           exit() or [Ctrl] + [D]
```

Standard libraries

To help Julia load faster, many core functionalities exist in standard libraries that come bundled with Julia. To make their functions available, use using PackageName. Here are some Standard Libraries and popular functions.

Random rand, randn, randsubseq

Statistics mean, std, cor, median, quantile LinearAlgebra I, eigvals, eigvecs, det, cholesky

SparseArrays sparse, SparseVector, SparseMatrixCSC

Distributed @distributed, pmap, addprocs

Dates DateTime, Date

Package management

Packages must be registered before they are visible to the package manager. In Julia 1.0, there are two ways to work with the package manager: either with using Pkg and using Pkg functions, or by typing] in the REPL to enter the special interactive package management mode. (To return to regular REPL, just hit BACKSPACE on an empty line in package management mode). Note that new tools arrive in interactive mode first, then usually also become available in regular Julia sessions through Pkg module.

Using Pkg in Julia session

List installed packages (human-readable) Pkg.status()
List installed packages (machine-readable) Pkg.installed()
Update all packages Pkg.update()

Install PackageName Pkg.add("PackageName")
Rebuild PackageName Pkg.build("PackageName")

Use PackageName (after install) using PackageName

Remove PackageName Pkg.rm("PackageName")

In Interactive Package Mode

Add PackageName

Remove PackageName

Update PackageName

update PackageName

dev PackageName Or

Use development version dev PackageName or dev GitRepoUrl

Stop using development version, revert to public release free PackageName

Characters and strings

```
chr = 'C'
Character
String
                                     str = "A string"
Character code
                                     Int('J') == 74
Character from code
                                     Char(74) == 'J'
                                     chr = '\uXXXX' # 4-digit HEX
Any UTF character
                                     chr = '\uXXXXXXXX' # 8-digit HEX
                                     for c in str
Loop through characters
                                     println(c)
                                     end
Concatenation
                                     str = "Learn" * " " * "Julia"
                                     a = b = 2
String interpolation
                                     println("a * b = \$(a*b)")
First matching character or regular
                                     findfirst(isequal('i'), "Julia")
expression
                                     replace("Julia", "a" => "us") ==
Replace substring or regular
                                     "Julius'
expression
Last index (of collection)
                                     lastindex("Hello") == 5
Number of characters
                                     length("Hello") == 5
Regular expression
                                     pattern = r"l[aeiou]"
                                     str = "+1 234 567 890"
                                     pat = r" + ([0-9]) ([0-9]+)"
Subexpressions
                                     m = match(pat, str)
                                     m.captures == ["1", "234"]
                                     [m.match for m = eachmatch(pat,
All occurrences
                                     str)]
All occurrences (as iterator)
                                     eachmatch(pat, str)
                  multi-byte
                                Unicode
                                            encodings
                                                           in
                                                                 UTF-8:
10 == lastindex("Angström") != length("Angström") == 8
                                                           Strings are
immutable.
```

Numbers

IntN and UIntN, with Integer types

 $N \in \{8, 16, 32, 64, 128\}$, BigInt

FloatN with $N \in \{16, 32, 64\}$

Floating-point types BigFloat

Minimum and maximum typemin(Int8) values by type typemax(Int64) Complex types Complex{T}

Imaginary unit im

Machine precision eps() # same as eps(Float64)

round() # floating-point Rounding

round(Int, x) # integer

convert(TypeName, val) # attempt/error Type conversions

typename(val) # calls convert

pi # 3.1415... п # 3.1415...

im # real(im * im) == -1

More constants using Base.MathConstants

Julia does not automatically check for numerical overflow. Use package

SaferIntegers for ints with overflow checking.

Random Numbers

Global constants

Many random number functions require using Random.

Set seed seed!(seed)

rand() # uniform [0,1) Random numbers randn() # normal (-Inf,

Inf)

using Distributions

my dist = Bernoulli(0.2) # Random from Other Distribution

For example rand(my dist)

Random subsample elements from A with

inclusion probability p

randsubseq(A, p)

Random permutation elements of A

shuffle(A)

To string (with delimiter del between

elements)

Arrays Declaration arr = Float64[] Pre-allocation sizehint!(arr, 10^4) arr = Any[1,2]Access and assignment arr[1] = "Some text" a = [1:10;]b = a # b points to a Comparison a[1] = -99a == b # true b = copv(a)Copy elements (not address) b = deepcopy(a)Select subarray from m to n arr[n:m] n-element array with 0.0s zeros(n) n-element array with 1.0s ones(n) n-element array with #undefs Vector{Type}(undef,n) n equally spaced numbers from start range(start,stop=stop,length=n) to stop Array with n random Int8 elements rand(Int8, n) Fill array with val fill!(arr, val) Pop last element pop!(arr) Pop first element popfirst!(a) Push val as last element push!(arr, val) Push val as first element pushfirst!(arr, val) Remove element at index idx deleteat!(arr, idx) Sort sort!(arr) Append a with b append!(a,b) Check whether val is element in(val, arr) or val in arr Scalar product dot(a, b) == sum(a .* b)reshape(1:6, 3, 2)' == $[1 \ 2 \ 3]$; Change dimensions (if possible) 4 5 6]

join(arr, del)

Linear Algebra

For most linear algebra tools, use using LinearAlgebra.

I # just use variable I. Will automatically Identity matrix

conform to dimensions required.

Define matrix M = [1 0; 0 1]

Matrix dimensions size(M) Select i th row M[i,:] Select i th column M[:, i]

Concatenate M = [a b] or M = hcat(a, b)

horizontally

Concatenate M = [a; bor M = vcat(a, b)]vertically

Matrix

transpose(M) transposition

Conjugate matrix

M' or adjoint(M) transposition

Matrix trace tr(M) Matrix det(M) determinant

Matrix rank rank(M) Matrix eigenvalues eigvals(M) Matrix

eigvecs(M) eigenvectors

Matrix inverse inv(M)

M\v is better than inv(M)*v Solve M*x == v

Moore-Penrose pinv(M) pseudo-inverse

Julia has built-in support for matrix decompositions.

Julia tries to infer whether matrices are of a special type (symmetric, hermitian, etc.), but sometimes fails. To aid Julia in dispatching the optimal algorithms, special matrices can be declared to have a structure with functions like Symmetric, Hermitian, UpperTriangular, LowerTriangular, Diagonal, and more.

Control flow and loops

Conditional if-elseif-else-end

for i in 1:10

Simple for loop println(i)

end

for i in 1:10, j = 1:5

Unnested for loop println(i*j)

end

for (idx, val) in enumerate(arr)

Enumeration println("the \$idx-th element is \$val")

end

while bool_expr

while loop # do stuff

end

Exit loop break
Exit iteration continue

Functions

All arguments to functions are passed by reference.

Functions with ! appended change at least one argument, typically the first: sort!(arr).

Required arguments are separated with a comma and use the positional notation.

Optional arguments need a default value in the signature, defined with =.

Keyword arguments use the named notation and are listed in the function's signature after the semicolon:

```
function func(req1, req2; key1=dflt1, key2=dflt2)
    # do stuff
end
```

The semicolon is *not* required in the call to a function that accepts keyword arguments.

The return statement is optional but highly recommended.

Multiple data structures can be returned as a tuple in a single return statement.

Command line arguments julia script.jl arg1 arg2... can be processed from global constant ARGS:

```
for arg in ARGS
    println(arg)
end
```

Anonymous functions can best be used in collection functions or list comprehensions: $x \rightarrow x^2$.

Functions can accept a variable number of arguments:

```
function func(a...)
    println(a)
end
```

func(1. 2. [3:5]) # tuple: (1.2.[3.4.5])

```
Functions can be nested:
 function outerfunction()
     # do some outer stuff
     function innerfunction()
         # do inner stuff
         # can access prior outer definitions
     end
     # do more outer stuff
 end
Functions can have explicit return types
 # take any Number subtype and return it as a String
 function stringifynumber(num::T)::String where T <: Number</pre>
     return "$num"
Functions can be vectorized by using the Dot Syntax
 # here we broadcast the subtraction of each mean value
 # by using the dot operator
 julia> A = rand(3,4);
 julia> B = A .- mean(A,1)
 3×4 Array{Float64,2}:
 0.343976
            0.427378 -0.503356 -0.00448691
 -0.210096 -0.531489
                       0.168928 -0.128212
 -0.13388
             0.104111
                        0.334428
                                    0.132699
 julia> mean(B,1)
 1×4 Array{Float64,2}:
 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0
```

Julia generates specialized versions of functions based on data types. When a function is called with the same argument types again, Julia can look up the native machine code and skip the compilation process.

Since Julia 0.5 the existence of potential ambiguities is still acceptable, but actually calling an ambiguous method is an immediate error.

Stack overflow is possible when recursive functions nest many levels deep. Trampolining can be used to do tail-call optimization, as Julia does not do that automatically yet. Alternatively, you can rewrite the tail recursion as an iteration.

```
Dictionaries
                            d = Dict(key1 => val1, key2 => val2,
                            ...)
Dictionary
                            d = Dict(:key1 => val1, :key2 => val2,
                            ...)
All keys (iterator)
                            keys(d)
All values (iterator)
                            values(d)
                            for (k,v) in d
Loop through key-value
                            println("key: $k, value: $v")
pairs
                            end
Check for key:k
                            haskey(d, :k)
                            arr = collect(keys(d))
Copy keys (or values) to
аггау
                            arr = [k for (k,v) in d]
Dictionaries are mutable; when symbols are used as keys, the keys are
immutable.
```

Sets

Declaration s = Set([1, 2, 3, "Some text"])

Union s1 \cup s2 union(s1, s2) Intersection s1 \cap s2 intersect(s1, s2) Difference s1 \setminus s2 setdiff(s1, s2) Difference s1 \triangle s2 symdiff(s1, s2) Subset s1 \subseteq s2 issubset(s1, s2)

Checking whether an element is contained in a set is done in O(1).

Collection functions

map(f, coll) or
Apply f to all elements of collection

map(coll) do elem

do stuff with elem # must contain return

end

Filter coll for true values of f filter(f, coll)

List comprehension arr = [f(elem) for elem in elem

coll]

Types

Julia has no classes and thus no class-specific methods.

Types are like classes without methods.

Abstract types can be subtyped but not instantiated.

Concrete types cannot be subtyped.

By default, struct s are immutable.

Immutable types enhance performance and are thread safe, as they can be shared among threads without the need for synchronization.

Objects that may be one of a set of types are called Union types.

Type annotation var::TypeName

struct Programmer

name::String

Type declaration birth year::UInt16

fave language::AbstractString

end

Mutable type declaration replace struct with mutable struct

Type alias const Nerd = Programmer

Type constructors methods(TypeName)

Type instantiation me = Programmer("Ian", 1984, "Julia")

me = Nerd("Ian", 1984, "Julia")

abstract type Programmer
name::AbstractString

Subtype declaration birth_year::UInt16

fave language::AbstractString

end

struct Point{T <: Real}</pre>

x::T

Parametric type y::T

p =Point{Float64}(1,2)

Union types Union{Int, String}

Traverse type hierarchy supertype(TypeName) and subtypes(TypeName)

Default supertype Any

All fields fieldnames(TypeName)

All field types TypeName.types

When a type is defined with an *inner* constructor, the default *outer* constructors are not available and have to be defined manually if need be. An inner constructor is best used to check whether the parameters conform to certain (invariance) conditions. Obviously, these invariants can be violated by accessing and modifying the fields directly, unless the type is defined as immutable. The new keyword may be used to create an object of the same type.

invariant, which Type parameters that аге means Point{Float64} <: Point{Real} is false, even though Float64 <: Real. Tuple the other hand. covariant: tvpes. on аге Tuple{Float64} <: Tuple{Real}.</pre>

The type-inferred form of Julia's internal representation can be found with code_typed(). This is useful to identify where Any rather than type-specific native code is generated.

Missing and Nothing

Programmers Null nothing Missing Data missing Not a Number in Float NaN

Filter missings skipmissing([1, 2, missing]) == [1,2]

Replace missings collect((df[:col], 1))

Check if missing ismissing(x) not x == missing

```
Exceptions
Throw
                  throw(SomeExcep())
SomeExcep
Rethrow current
                  rethrow()
exception
                  struct NewExcep <: Exception</pre>
                  v::String
                  end
Define NewExcep
                  Base.showerror(io::I0, e::NewExcep) = print(io,
                   "A problem with $(e.v)!")
                  throw(NewExcep("x"))
Throw error with
                  error(msg)
msg text
                  try
                  # do something potentially iffy
                  catch ex
                  if isa(ex, SomeExcep)
                  # handle SomeExcep
                  elseif isa(ex, AnotherExcep)
Handler
                  # handle AnotherExcep
                  else
                  # handle all others
                  finally
                  # do this in any case
                  end
```

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Modules

Modules are separate global variable workspaces that group together similar functionality.

```
module PackageName
# add module definitions
```

Definition # use export to make definitions accessible

end

Include

Exports

include("filename.jl") filename.jl

> using ModuleName # all exported names using ModuleName: x, y # only x, y

using ModuleName.x, ModuleName.y: # only x, y Load

import ModuleName # only ModuleName import ModuleName: x, y# only x, y

import ModuleName.x, ModuleName.y # only x, y # Get an array of names exported by Module

names(ModuleName)

include non-exports, deprecateds # and compiler-generated names names(ModuleName, all::Bool)

#also show namesexplicitely imported from other

modules

names(ModuleName, all::Bool, imported::Bool)

There is only one difference between using and import: with using you need to say function Foo.bar(.. to extend module Foo's function bar with a new method, but with import Foo.bar, you only need to say function bar(... and it automatically extends module Foo's function bar.

Expressions

Julia is homoiconic: programs are represented as data structures of the language itself. In fact, everything is an expression Expr.

Symbols are interned strings prefixed with a colon. Symbols are more efficient and they are typically used as identifiers, keys (in dictionaries), or columns in data frames. Symbols cannot be concatenated.

Quoting :(...) or quote ... end creates an expression, just like parse(str), and Expr(:call, ...).

```
x = 1
line = "1 + $x"
                    # some code
expr = parse(line) # make an Expr object
typeof(expr) == Expr # true
dump(expr)
                    # generate abstract syntax tree
eval(expr) == 2
                    # evaluate Expr object: true
```

Macros

Macros allow generated code (i.e. expressions) to be included in a program.

macro macroname(expr)

Definition # do stuff

end

Usage macroname(ex1, ex2, ...) or @macroname ex1, ex2, ...

@test # equal (exact)

@test_approx_eq # equal (modulo numerical errors)

@test x \approx y # isapprox(x, y)
@assert # assert (unit test)

@which # types used

@time # time and memory statistics

Built-in macros @elapsed # time elapsed

@allocated # memory allocated

@profile # profile

@spawn # run at some worker

@spawnat #run at specified worker

@async # asynchronous task
@distributed # parallel for loop

@everywhere # make available to workers

Rules for creating *hygienic* macros:

- Declare variables inside macro with local.
- Do not call eval inside macro.
- Escape interpolated expressions to avoid expansion: \$(esc(expr))

Parallel Computing

Parallel computing tools are available in the Distributed standard library.

```
Launch REPL with N workers
                                 julia -p N
Number of available workers
                                 nprocs()
Add N workers
                                 addprocs(N)
                                 for pid in workers()
See all worker ids
                                 println(pid)
                                 end
Get id of executing worker
                                 mvid()
Remove worker
                                 rmprocs(pid)
                                 r = remotecall(f, pid, args...)
                                 # or:
Run f with arguments args on
                                 r =  @spawnat pid f(args)
biq
                                 fetch(r)
Run f with arguments args on
                                 remotecall fetch(f, pid, args...)
pid (more efficient)
Run f with arguments args on
                                 r = Qspawn f(args) ... fetch(r)
any worker
Run f with arguments args on
                                 r = [@spawnat w f(args) for w in
all workers
                                 workers()] ... fetch(r)
Make expr available to all
                                 @everywhere expr
workers
                                 sum = @distributed (red) for i in
                                 1:10^6
Parallel for loop with reducer
                                 # do parallelstuff
function red
                                 end
Apply f to all elements in
                                 pmap(f, coll)
collection coll
```

Workers are also known as concurrent/parallel processes.

Modules with parallel processing capabilities are best split into a functions file that contains all the functions and variables needed by all workers, and a driver file that handles the processing of data. The driver file obviously has to import the functions file.

A non-trivial (word count) example of a reducer function is provided by Adam DeConinck.

I/O

stream = stdin

Read stream for line in eachline(stream)

do stuff

end

open(filename) do file
for line in eachline(file)

Read file # do stuff

end

end

Read CSV file using CSV

CSV.read(filename)

Save Julia Object using JLD

save(filename, "object_key", object, ...)

Load Julia Object using JLD

d = load(filename) # Returns a dict of objects

using HDF5

Save HDF5 h5write(filename, "key", object)

Load HDF5 using HDF5

h5read(filename, "key")

DataFrames

For dplyr-like tools, see DataFramesMeta.jl.

Read CSV using CSV

CSV.read(filename)

Write CSV using CSV

CSV.write(filename)

Read Stata, SPSS, etc. StatFiles Package
Describe data frame describe(df)

Make vector of column col v = df[:col]

Sort by col sort!(df, [:col])

Categorical col categorical!(df, [:col])

List col levels levels(df[:col])

All observations with col==val df[df[:col] .== val, :]

Reshape from wide to long stack(df, [1:n;])

format stack(df, [:col1, :col2, ...]

melt(df, [:col1, :col2]) [

Reshape from long to wide unstack(df, :id, :val)

format

Make Nullable allowmissing!(df) or

allowmissing!(df, :col)
for r in eachrow(df)

do stuff.

Loop over Rows # r is Struct with fields of col

names. end

for c in eachcol(df)

do stuff.

Loop over Columns # do stuff: # c is tuple with name, then vector

end

Apply func to groups by(df, :group col, func)

using Query

query = @from r in df begin

Owhere r.col1 > 40

Query @select {new name=r.col1, r.col2}

@collect DataFrame #Default: iterator

end

Introspection and reflection

Type typeof(name)

Type check isa(name, TypeName)

List subtypes subtypes(name)
List supertype super(TypeName)
Function methods methods(func)
JIT bytecode code_llvm(expr)
Assembly code code native(expr)

Noteworthy packages and projects

Many core packages are managed by communities with names of the form Julia[Topic].

Statistics **JuliaStats** Automatic differentiation JuliaDiff Numerical optimization JuliaOpt **JuliaPlots** Plotting JuliaGraphs Network (Graph) Analysis JuliaWeb Web Geo-Spatial JuliaGeo Machine Learning JuliaML

DataFrames # linear/logistic regression
Distributions # Statistical distributions

Flux # Machine learning

Super-used Packages Gadfly # ggplot2-likeplotting

LightGraphs # Network analysis

TextAnalysis # NLP

Naming Conventions

The main convention in Julia is to avoid underscores unless they are required for legibility.

Variable names are in lower (or snake) case: somevariable.

Constants are in upper case: SOMECONSTANT.

Functions are in lower (or snake) case: somefunction.

Macros are in lower (or snake) case: @somemacro.

Type names are in initial-capital camel case: SomeType.

Julia files have the jl extension.

For more information on Julia code style visit the manual: style guide.

Performance tips

- Write type-stable code.
- In fact, use immutable types where possible.
- Use sizehint for large arrays.
- Free up memory for large arrays with arr = nothing.
- Access arrays along columns, because multi-dimensional arrays are stored in column-major order.
- Pre-allocate resultant data structures.
- Disable the garbage collector in real-time applications: disable gc().
- Avoid the splat (...) operator for keyword arguments.
- Use mutating APIs (i.e. functions with ! to avoid copying data structures.
- Use array (element-wise) operations instead of list comprehensions.
- Avoid try-catch in (computation-intensive) loops.
- Avoid Any in collections.
- Avoid abstract types in collections.
- Avoid string interpolation in I/O.
- Vectorizing does not improve speed (unlike R, MATLAB or Python).
- Avoid eval at run-time.

IDEs, Editors and Plug-ins

- Juno (editor)
- JuliaBox (online IJulia notebook)
- Jupyter (online IJulia notebook)
- Emacs Julia mode (editor)
- vim Julia mode (editor)
- VS Code extension (editor)
- Sublime Text Julia plug-in (editor)
- Sublime Text IJulia plug-in (editor)

Resources

- Official documentation .
- Learning Julia page.
- Month of Julia
- Community standards.
- Julia: A fresh approach to numerical computing (pdf)
- Julia: A Fast Dynamic Language for Technical Computing (pdf)

Videos

- The 5th annual JuliaCon 2018
- The 4th annual JuliaCon 2017 (Berkeley)
- The 3rd annual JuliaCon 2016
- Getting Started with Julia by Leah Hanson
- Intro to Julia by Huda Nassar
- Introduction to Julia for Pythonistas by John Pearson