Free Domain Name Registration with Freenom

In this tutorial I will demonstrate how to register a domain name for free with Freenom which is a free domain provider.
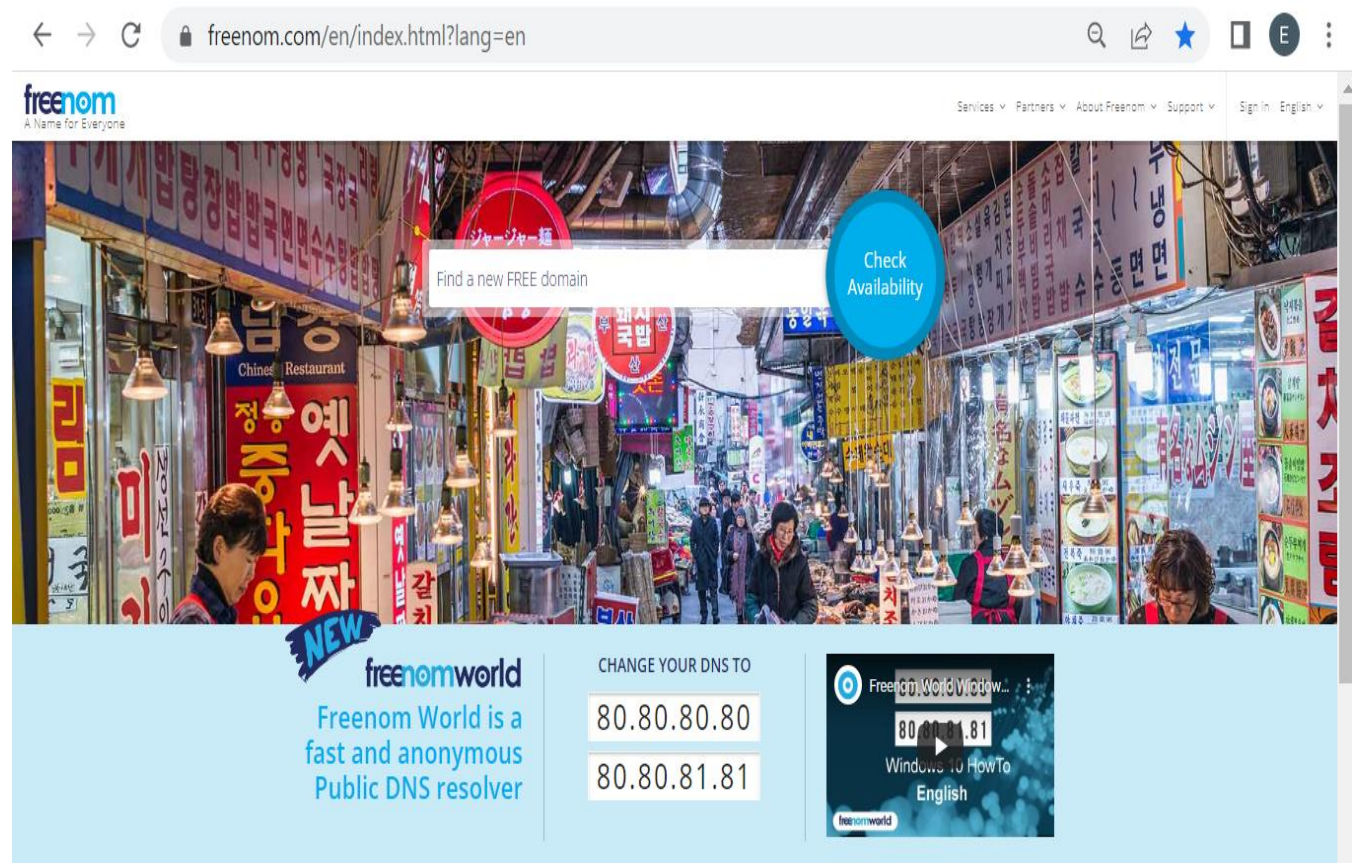
Prerequisites

- internet access

Steps to complete tutorial:

- [Order Free Domain](#)
- [Create Freenom Account](#)
- [Browse Client Area](#)
- [Create DNS records](#)
- [Test DNS Propagation](#)
- [Test DNS Resolution](#)

Order Free Domain

To begin, go to the following link: https://www.freenom.com/


Please note, if you already have a Freenom account, sign in before proceeding. Otherwise, follow the steps below and you will create a Freenom account during checkout.

Next, search for an available domain. Make sure to search for a unique domain name and click the **Check Availability** button.
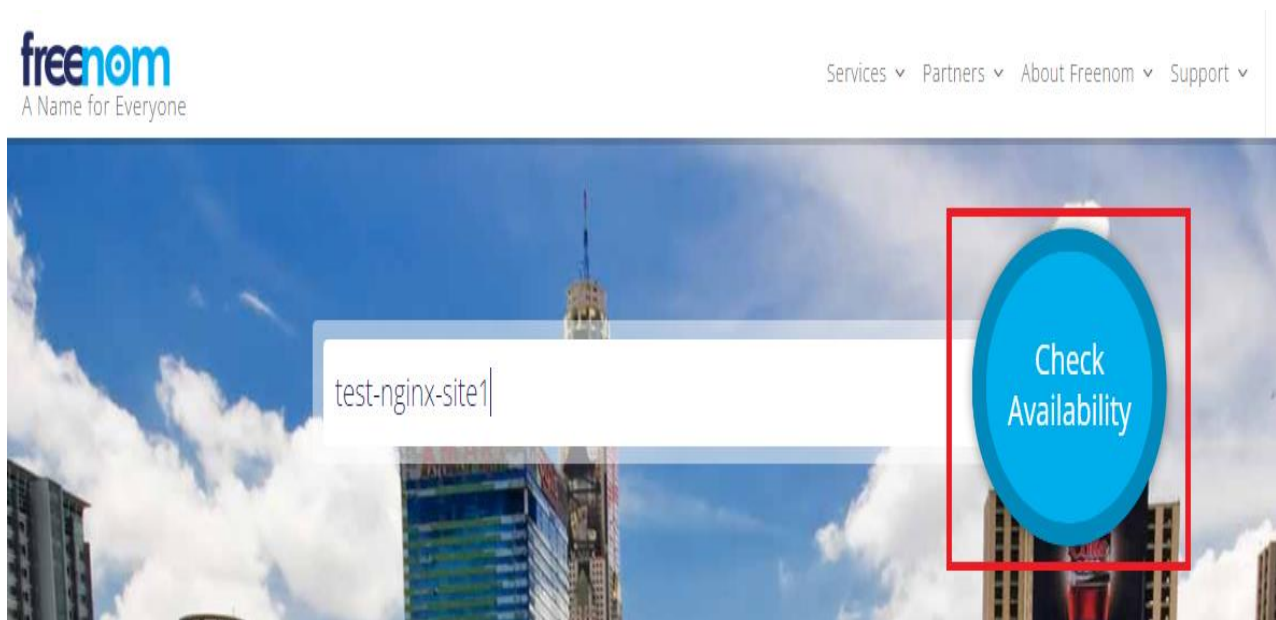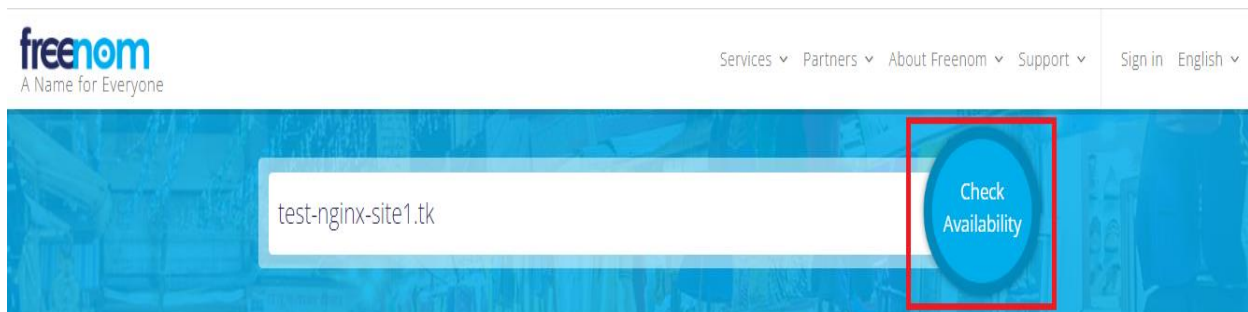

If the domain entered is available, a listing of available domain suffixes will be displayed on-screen. The listing includes free, as well as, paid domains.
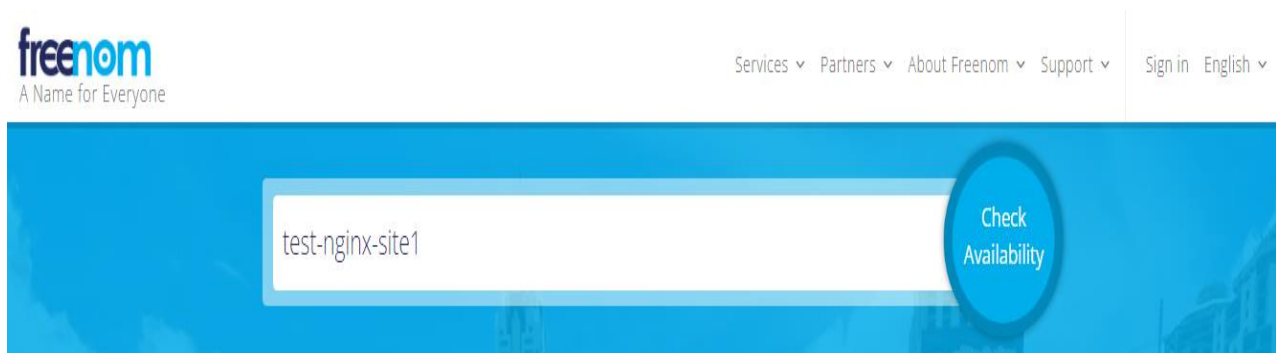
Once you decide on the suffix, append that suffix to the domain name in the search box and click the **Check Availability** button again.
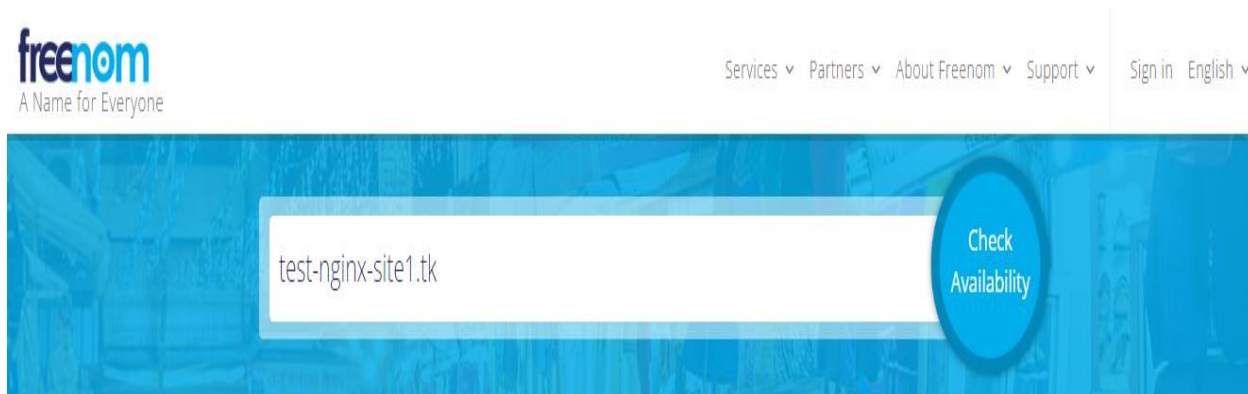
The selected domain will automatically be added to your shopping cart. Click the **Checkout** button to proceed.

On the **Checkout** screen, you can select the duration of the domain registration. As you can see, you can register the selected domain for **FREE** for up to 12 months. *(NOTE: the default is 3 months)*
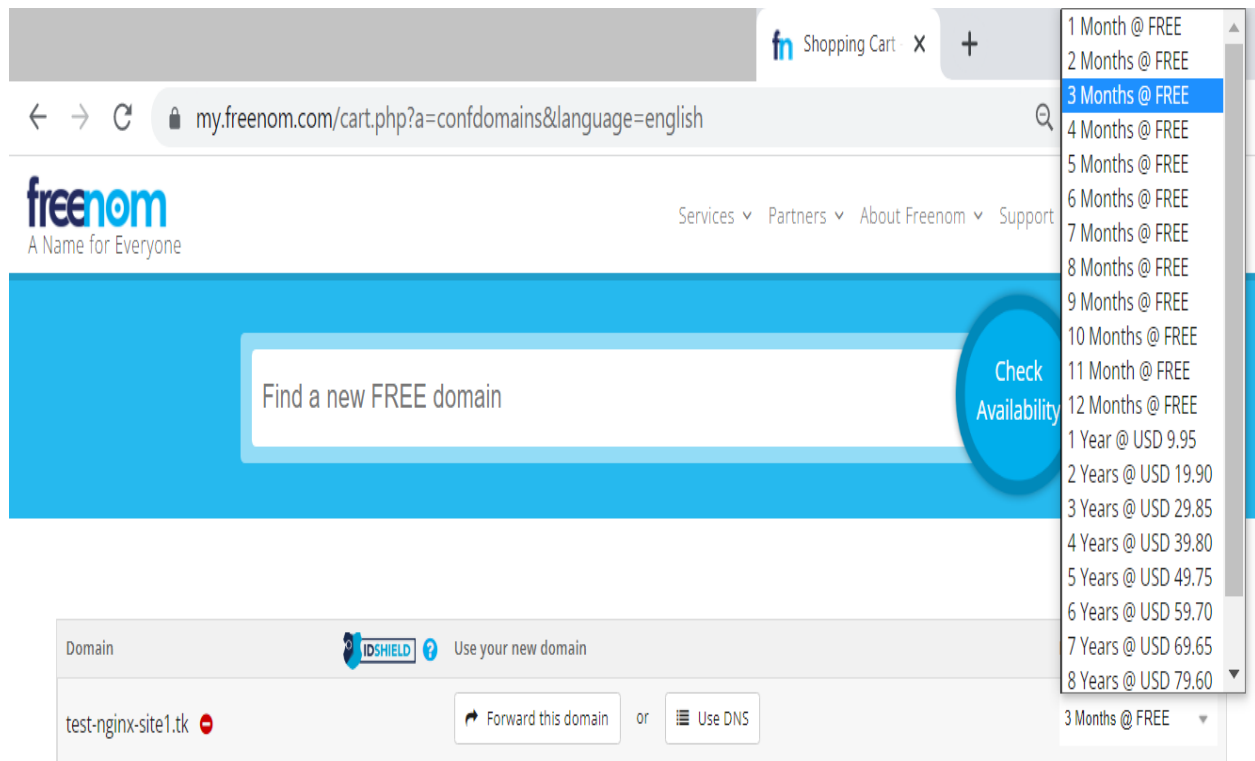
After you've selected the domain registration duration, or used the default of 3 months, click the **Continue** button to proceed.
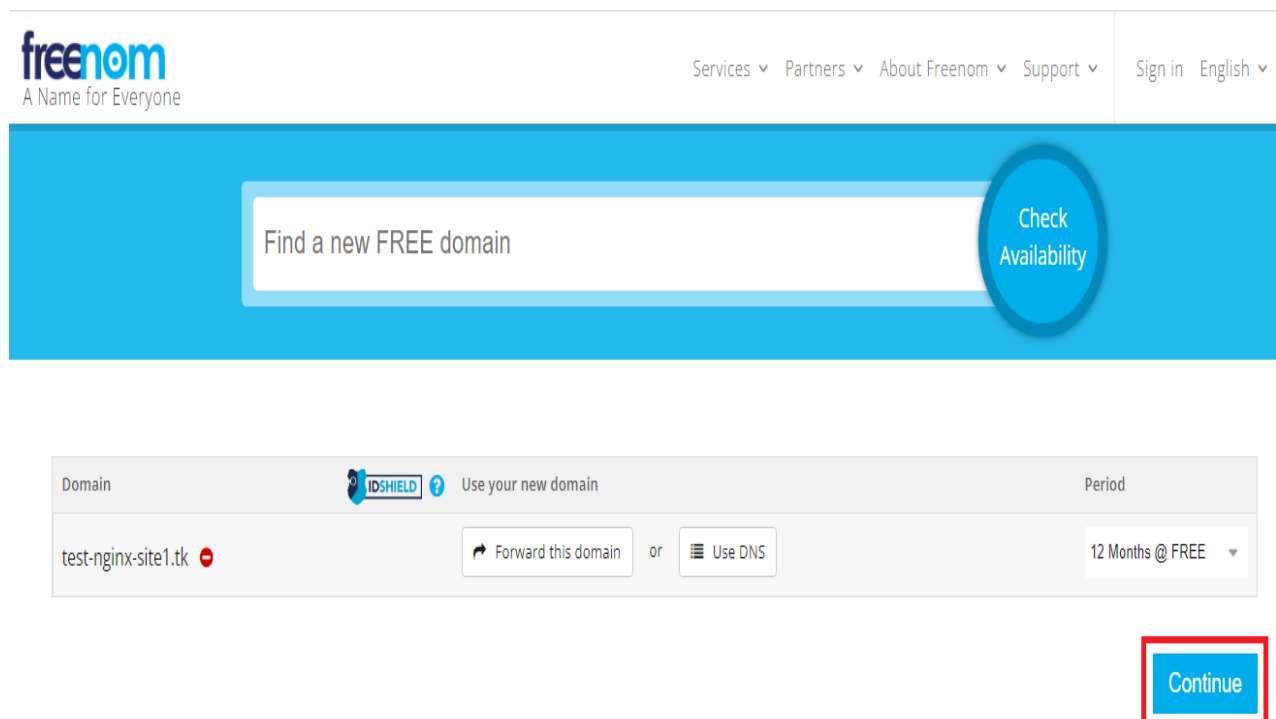
On the **Review & Checkout** screen, enter your email address and click the **Verify My Email Address** button.

On the **Review & Checkout** screen, a notification will appear regarding the email verification link that was sent to your email account.

Access the email and click the verification link to confirm your email address.

Create Freenom Account

After verifying your email, back on the **Review & Checkout** screen, you will need to provide your contact information to complete the checkout process. This information will also be used to create your Freenom account.

Description	Price
Domain Registration - test-nginx-site1.tk ⬤	$0.00USD
Subtotal:	$0.00USD
Total Due Today:	$0.00USD

Your Details

| First Name | |

Your Details

First Name	
Last Name	
Company Name	
Address 1	
Zip Code	
City	
Country	U.S.A.
State/Region	Choose One...

Complete the form and ensure that you agree to the **Terms & Conditions** before clicking the **Complete Order** button.

Phone Number	+1
Email Address	Change
Password	••••••••
Confirm Password	••••••••

Tax may be charged depending upon the state and country selections you make. Click to recalculate after making your choices. Update

☑ I have read and agree to the **Terms & Conditions**   Complete Order

This order form is provided in a secure environment and to help protect against fraud your current IP address (**24.48.113.24**) is being logged.

On the **Order Confirmation** screen, click the button to take you to your **Client Area**.

You might be prompted to login before accessing your client area. If so, enter the email and password you used during the account creation process.
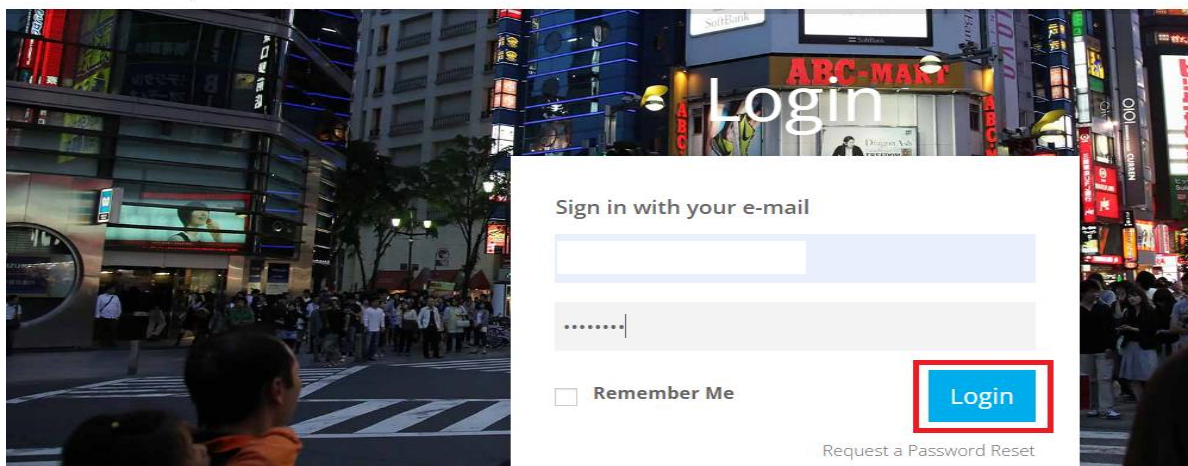
Browse Client Area

Once logged in, under the **Services** menu, click **My Domains**
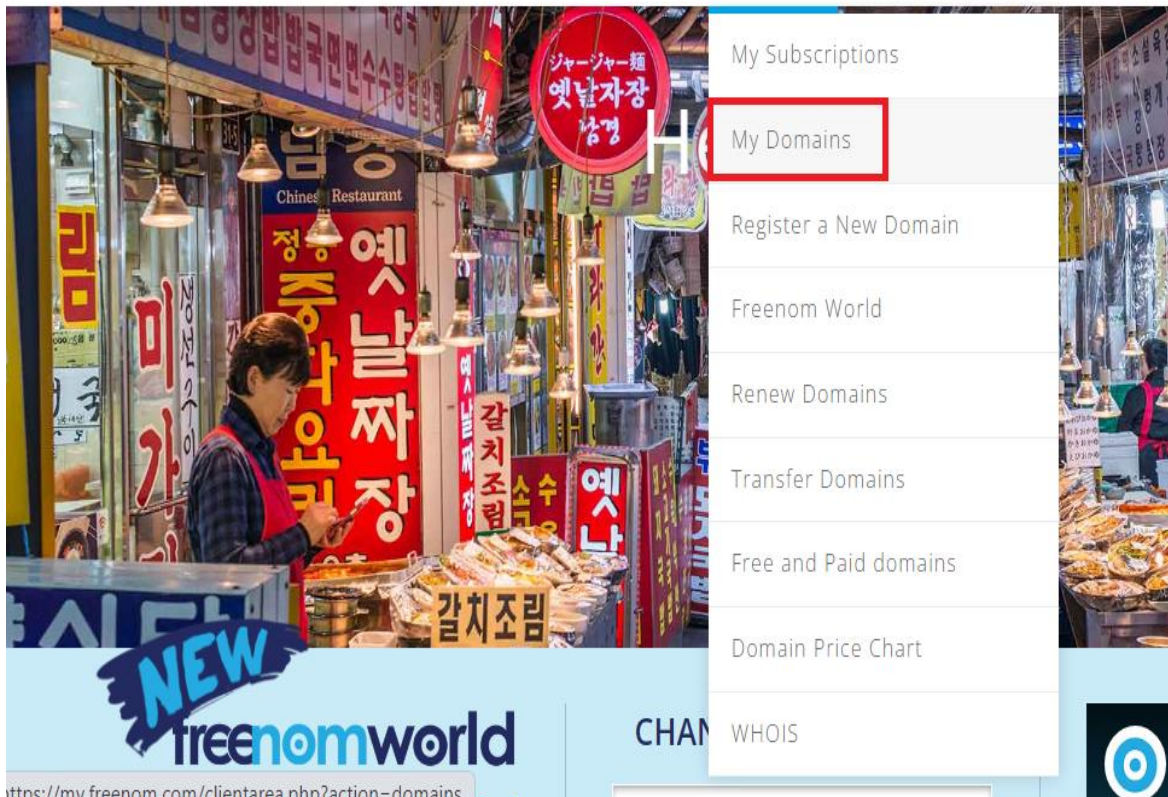
On the **My Domains** screen, you will see a listing of your domains. To check the DNS nameservers or to add DNS records, click the **Manage Domain** button next to the domain you want to work with.

My Domains

View & manage all the domains you have registered with us from here...

| Enter Domain to Find | Filter |

Domain ⇕	Registration Date ⇕	Expiry date ⇕	Status ⇕	Type	
test-nginx-site1.tk ⧉	2022-05-24	2023-05-24	ACTIVE	Free	Manage Domain ⚙

Results Per Page: 10   ▼   1 Records Found, Page 1 of 1

Managing test-nginx-site1.tk

Information   Upgrade   Management Tools ▼   Manage Freenom DNS

Information

To the right you can find the details of your domain. You can manage your domain using the tabs above.

Domain:
test-nginx-site1.tk   ACTIVE

Registration Date:
24/05/2022

Expiry date:
24/05/2023

« Back to Domains List

To check the nameservers being used by the domain, under **Management Tools**, click **Nameservers**
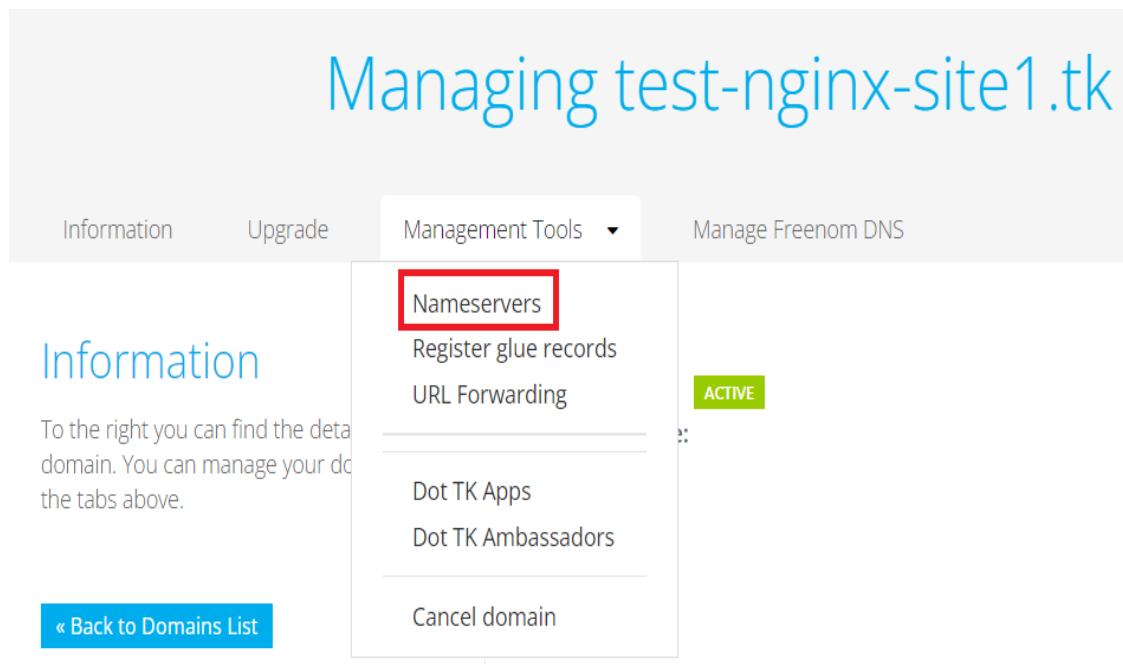
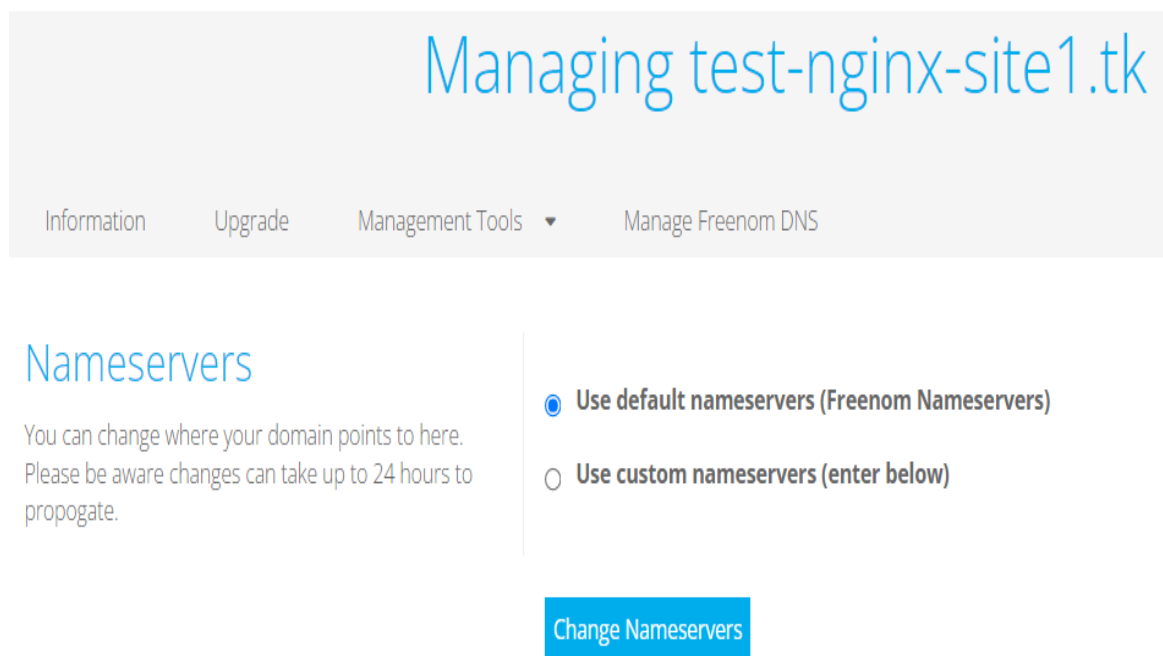From the screen below, we can see that the domain, by default, uses the **Freenom Nameservers** which are **80.80.80.80** & **80.80.81.81.** If you wish to manage your Freenom domains using a DNS hosting service, you have the option of changing the nameservers to those of your DNS hosting service.

Create DNS records

In order to use the newly created domain name, we will need to create at least 1 **A** record, also known as a host record. The **A** (host) record makes the connection between your domain name and its matching IPv4 address.

We will also create a **CNAME** record. A Canonical Name (CNAME) Record is used to create an alias from one domain name to another domain name, rather than an IP address. Since some people assume that the prefix **www** is part a domain name, and not a subdomain pointing to a different IP address, it is good practice to account for that by creating a CNAME record.

To add DNS records, click **Manage Freenom DNS**

On the **DNS Management** screen, enter the record type **A** and the public IPv4 address you wish to use and click **Save Changes**. Note that the IP address must be available, and accessible, in order for the domain name to be resolved. In my case, I have a running AWS Ubuntu 20 compute instance with the Nginx web server installed. I will use its IPv4 Public address during **A** (host) record creation for my free domain: **test-nginx-site1.tk**

My **A** (host) record was successfully added.

Record added successfully

Modify Records

Name	Type	TTL	Target	
	A	3600	3.239.167.75	Delete

Save Changes

I will now add a CNAME record to point the prefix **www** to my domain: `test-nginx-site1.tk`

Add Records

Name	Type	TTL	Target
www	CNAME ▾	3600	test-nginx-site1.tk

+ More Records   Save Changes

My **CNAME** record was successfully added. When a DNS record is added, or changed, the change needs to be propagated to all systems around the world participating in the DNS process. That's next.

Record added successfully

Modify Records

| Name	Type	TTL	Target	
	A	3600	3.239.167.75	Delete
WWW	CNAME	3600	test-nginx-site1.tk	Delete

Save Changes

Test DNS Propagation

Before testing that my domain is available using my live AWS instance, I will verify DNS propagation.
To verify propagation, we will use the DNS Propagation Checker at **whatsmydns.net** . It will allow us to perform a DNS lookup to check a domain name's current IP address and DNS record information against multiple nameservers located in different parts of the world.
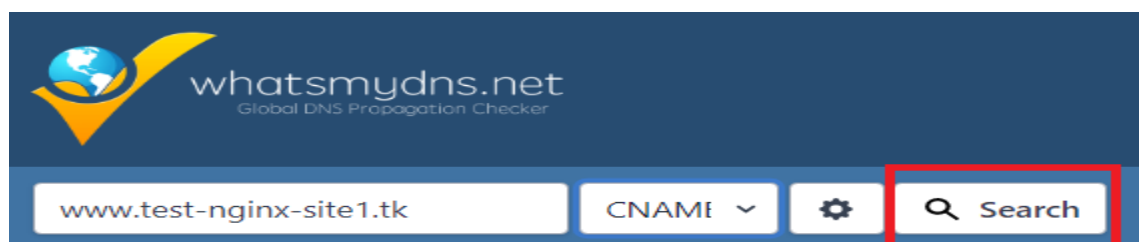
At **whatsmydns.net**, enter your domain name (**your domain will be different**) and click **Search**
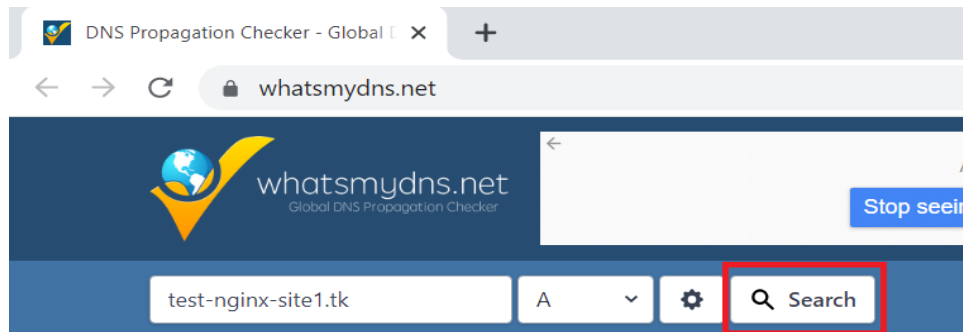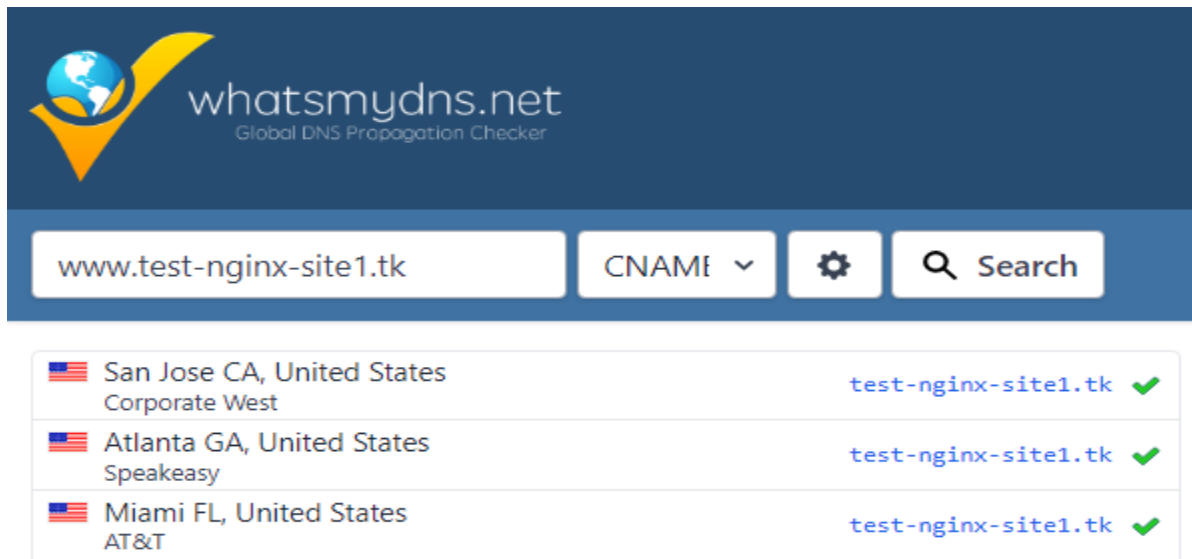

As you can see the DNS lookup was run against multiple nameservers from different parts of the world.
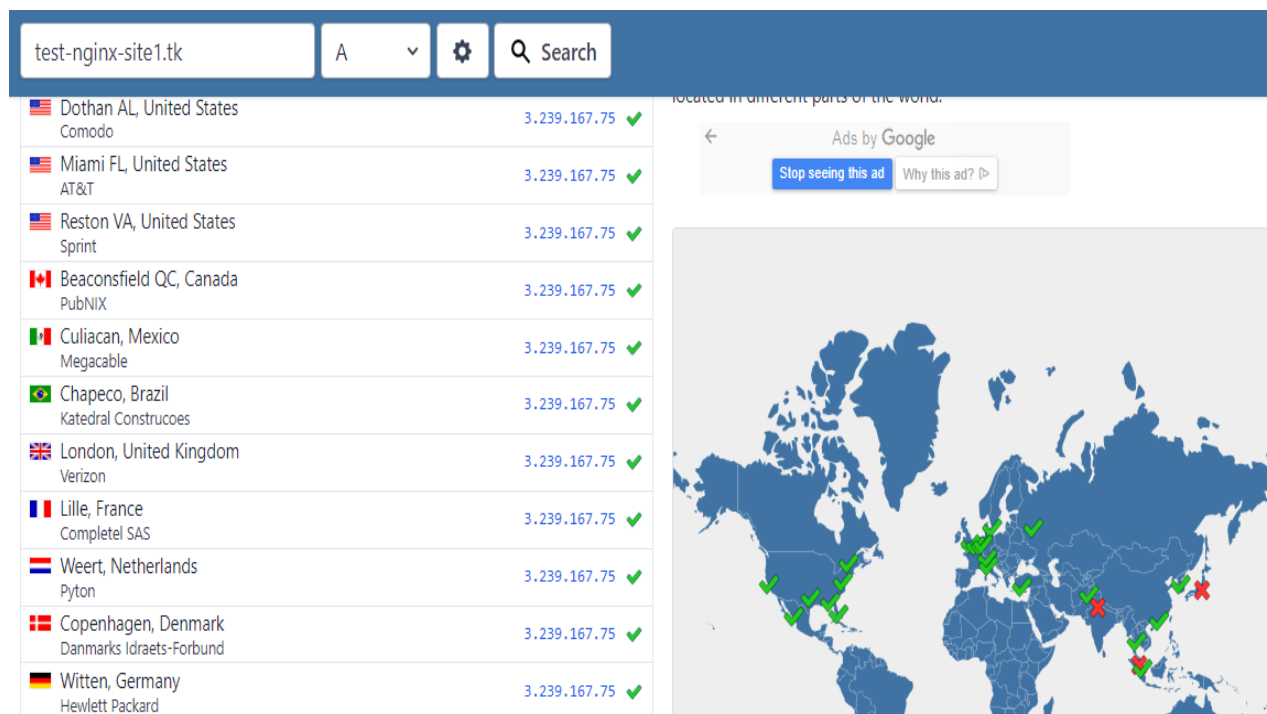
I will now test that my CNAME record is pointing to my domain.

Once again, the DNS lookup was successful.

Test DNS Resolution

Now that I've confirmed that the domain name can be resolved in a DNS query, I will make a change to one of my existing websites that I created in my **AWS Ubunto 20 EC2 Nginx Install** tutorial, accessible **here**. I changed the Nginx server block to use my new domain name, instead of the Public IPv4 address of my AWS Ubuntu 20 compute instance.

$ cd /etc/nginx/sites-available

$ cat test_site

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-4-185:/etc/nginx/sites-available$
ubuntu@ip-172-31-4-185:/etc/nginx/sites-available$ cat test_site
server {
  listen 80;
  server_name test-nginx-site1.tk www.test-nginx-site1.tk;
  root /var/www/test_site/html;
}
ubuntu@ip-172-31-4-185:/etc/nginx/sites-available$
```
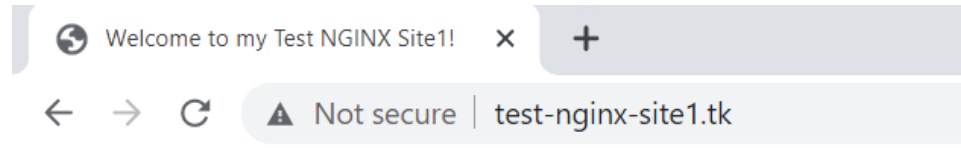
$ cd /var/www/test_site

$ sudo cat html/index.html

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-4-185:/var/www/test_site$
ubuntu@ip-172-31-4-185:/var/www/test_site$ sudo cat html/index.html
<html>
    <head>
        <title>Welcome to my Test NGINX Site1!</title>
    </head>
    <body>
        <p>It works! Thanks for visiting my new domain
                <b><span style="color:blue">test-nginx-site1.tk</span></b>!</p>
    </body>
</html>
```
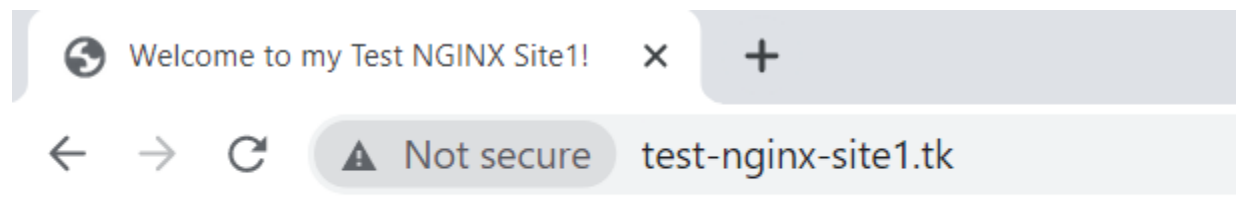
After making the change, I will restart the Nginx service.

```
$ sudo systemctl restart nginx
```

Now I open a web browser and enter my domain name, **test-nginx-site1.tk**

I will now test that my CNAME record is working by entering: **www.test-nginx-site1.tk**

We've successfully registered a free domain name. We've also added a host and CNAME record to ensure DNS can resolve requests for our domain name. This process involved the propagation of the DNS records worldwide which was confirmed using the DNS propagation checker at https://www.whatsmydns.net/. Finally, I demonstrated how to configure Nginx to host a website using a domain name instead of an IP address.

I hope you've enjoyed this tutorial.

Now that you know how to register free domain names, you might be interested in my other tutorial, **Nginx Multisite Hosting**. The AWS Ubuntu 20 EC2 version is accessible **here**, while the AWS RHEL 8 EC2 version is accessible **here**.

Finally, my main tutorials page is accessible **here**.

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