Cookies
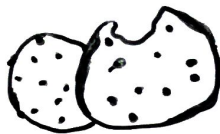
```
HTTP/1.1 200 OK
Date: Sat, 03 Jan 2026 03:59:04 GMT
Server: Apache
Pragma: no-cache
Set-cookie: NZSESSID=17624;
Connection: close
```

An HTTP response which sets
a cookie named "NZSESSID"
with the value "17624"

HTTP cookies are small pieces of information sent between browsers and websites. Typically, the web server will instruct the browser to store (or "set") a cookie with the Set-Cookie header.

‼ Once the browser has set a cookie, it will automatically include it in subsequent requests to the domain it has been scoped to (the browser won't send mybank.com's cookies to webforum.com.) ‼

Three reasons to use cookies:

1. Session management
2. Personalization
3. Tracking

Session Cookies

Sessions allow web pages to keep track of a user's navigation through the site. One way session information (which is usually marked by an identifier) is passed between browsers and websites is through cookie values. Cookies that contain session identifiers are sometimes referred to as "session cookies". [*]

Once a session cookie has been set, (see the previous HTTP response), the browser will submit it on subsequent requests.

```
GET /account HTTP/1.1
Host: www.examplebank.com
User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0
Accept: text/html
Accept-Encoding: gzip, deflate
Cookie: NZSESSID = 17624
```

An HTTP request header specifying the "NZSESSID" cookie.

[*] Note that "session cookies" also refer to cookies that were set without an expiration limit, and thus expire once the user closes their browser.

Attributes

Cookies can be set with different attributes. Here are some common ones:

- **Expires** — Sets the maximum lifetime of the cookie. This has been replaced by "max-age".

- **Secure** — Tells the browser to only include this cookies if the request is made via the HTTPS protocol

- **HTTPonly** — Prevents JavaScript from being able to access the cookie.

- **Domain** — Specifies allowed hosts to receive this cookie.

- **Path** — Indicates a URL path that must exist within the requested URL in order to send this cookie.