

## WPBeginner

*Beginner's Guide for WordPress*

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# How to Install a WordPress Plugin – Step by Step for Beginners

Last updated on February 20th, 2020 by [Editorial Staff](#)

After [installing WordPress](https://www.wpbeginner.com/how-to-install-wordpress/) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/how-to-install-wordpress/>), the first thing every beginner needs to learn is how to install a WordPress plugin.

In simple words, WordPress plugins are like apps for your WordPress website. They allow you to add new features to WordPress like a [contact form](https://www.wpbeginner.com/plugins/5-best-contact-form-plugins-for-wordpress-compared/) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/plugins/5-best-contact-form-plugins-for-wordpress-compared/>), slideshow, shopping cart, and more.

There are thousands of free and paid plugins available for WordPress. In this step by step guide, we will show you how to install a WordPress plugin.



### Before You Start

If you are using [WordPress.com](https://www.wpbeginner.com/refer/wordpresscom/) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/refer/wordpresscom/>), then you cannot install plugins.

We often get complaints from users saying that they can't see the plugins menu in their WordPress dashboard. It is because you are using WordPress.com, which has [its limitations](https://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/what-are-the-limitations-of-wordpress-com/) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/what-are-the-limitations-of-wordpress-com/>).

You cannot install plugins on WordPress.com unless you upgrade to their business plan. On the other hand, you can install any plugin you want on your self hosted

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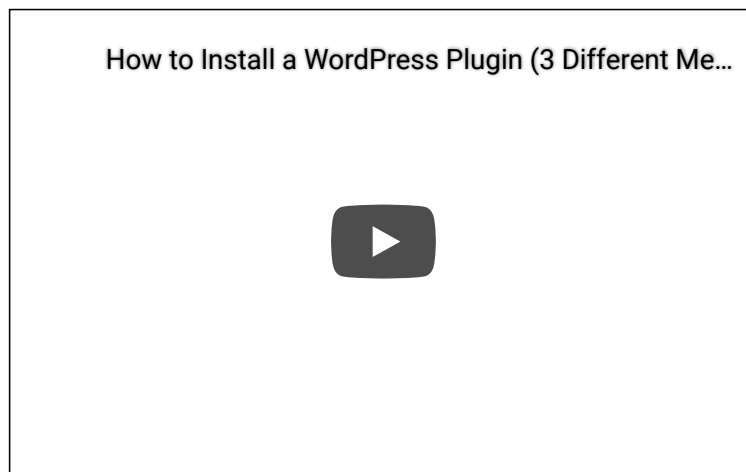
WordPress.org vs WordPress.com (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/self-hosted-wordpress-org-vs-free-wordpress-com-infograph/>)).

If you want to switch from WordPress.com to WordPress.org, then read our tutorial on [how to properly move from WordPress.com to WordPress.org](https://www.wpbeginner.com/wp-tutorials/how-to-properly-move-your-blog-from-wordpress-com-to-wordpress-org/) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/wp-tutorials/how-to-properly-move-your-blog-from-wordpress-com-to-wordpress-org/>).

That being said, now let's take a look at how to install a WordPress plugin on your website.

## How to Install a WordPress Plugin

To make it easy, we have created a video tutorial on how to install a WordPress plugin that you can watch below.



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However, if you just want to follow text-instructions, then you can follow our step by step tutorial on how to install a WordPress plugin.

We have covered all three methods: installing a WordPress plugin using search, uploading a WordPress plugin, and manually installing a WordPress plugin using FTP.

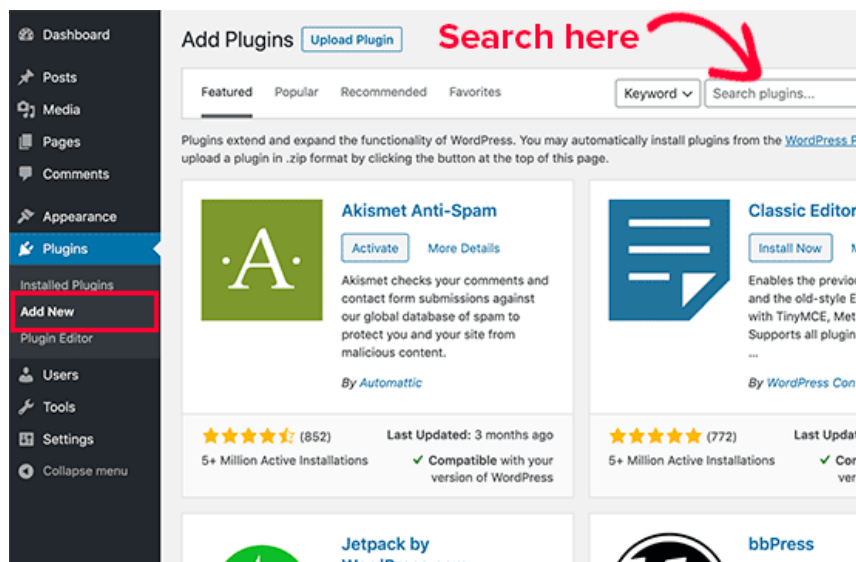
Ready? Let's get started.

## Install a Plugin using WordPress Plugin Search

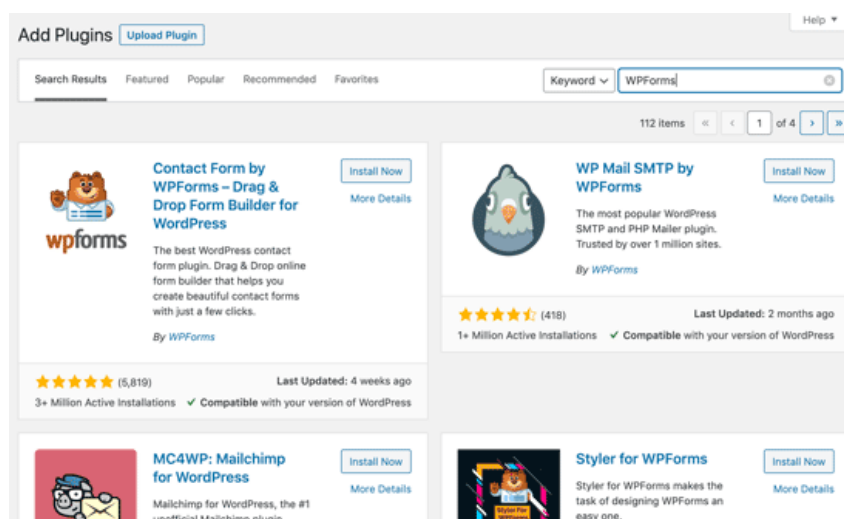
The easiest way of installing a WordPress plugin is to use the plugin search. The only downside of this option is that a plugin must be in the [WordPress plugin directory](https://wordpress.org/plugins/) (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/>) which is limited to only free plugins.

First thing you need to visit the **Plugins » Add New** page inside your WordPress

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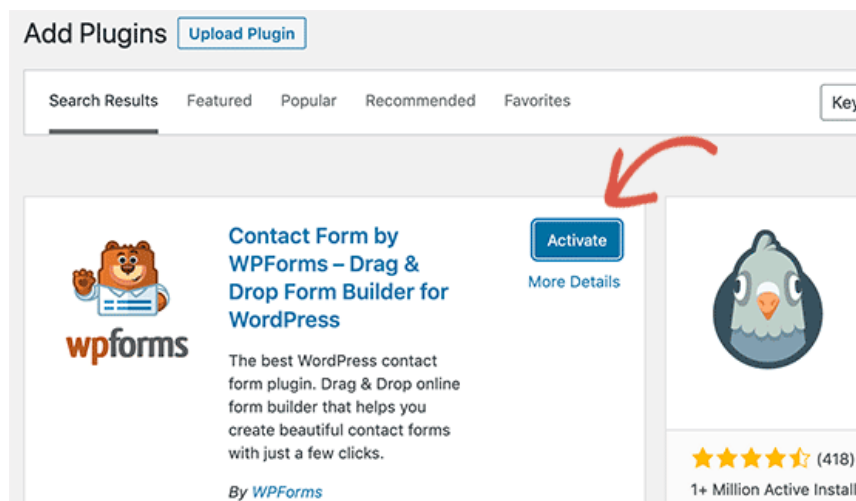
You will see a screen like the one in the screenshot above. Find the plugin by typing the plugin name or the functionality you are looking for. After that, you will see a bunch of listings like the example below:



You can pick the plugin that is best for you. Since in our search, we were looking for WPForms (<https://wpforms.com>) which is the best WordPress contact form plugin (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/plugins/5-best-contact-form-plugins-for-wordpress-compared/>), we'll click the 'Install Now' button next to it.

WordPress will now download and install the plugin for you. After this, you'll notice the 'Install Now' button will change into the 'Activate' button.

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A WordPress plugin can be installed on your site, but it will not work unless you activate it. So go ahead and click on the activate button to start using that plugin on your [WordPress site \(https://www.wpbeginner.com/guides/\)](https://www.wpbeginner.com/guides/).

That's all, you have successfully installed your first WordPress plugin.

The next step is to configure the plugin settings. These settings will vary for each plugin therefore we will not be covering that in this post.

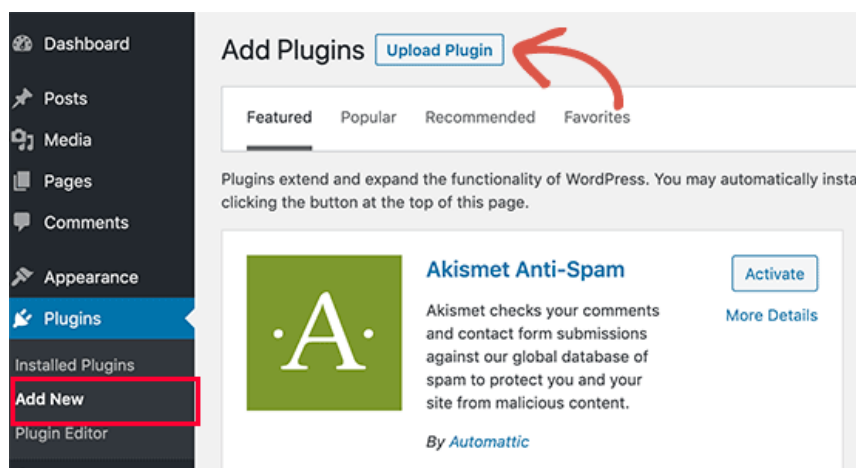
### Install a Plugin using the WordPress Admin Plugin Upload

Paid WordPress plugins are not listed in the WordPress plugin directory. These plugins cannot be installed using the first method.

That's why WordPress comes with the upload method to install such plugins. We will show you how to install WordPress plugins using the upload option in the admin area.

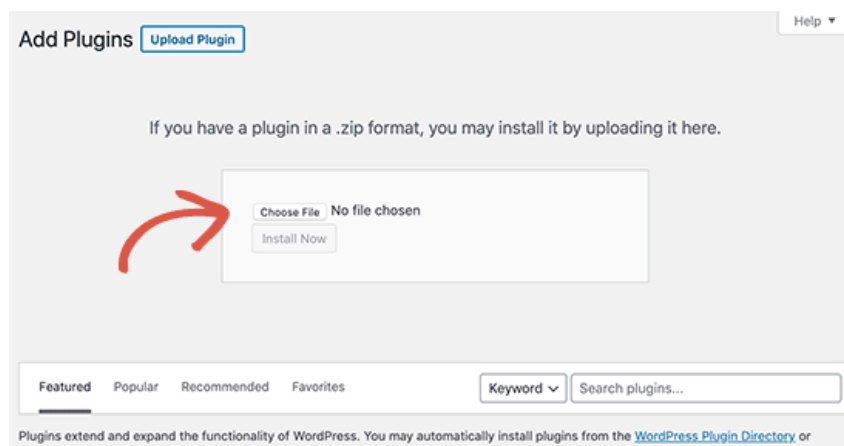
First, you need to download the plugin from the source (which will be a zip file). Next, you need to go to WordPress admin area and visit **Plugins » Add New** page.

After that, click on the 'Upload Plugin' button on top of the page.



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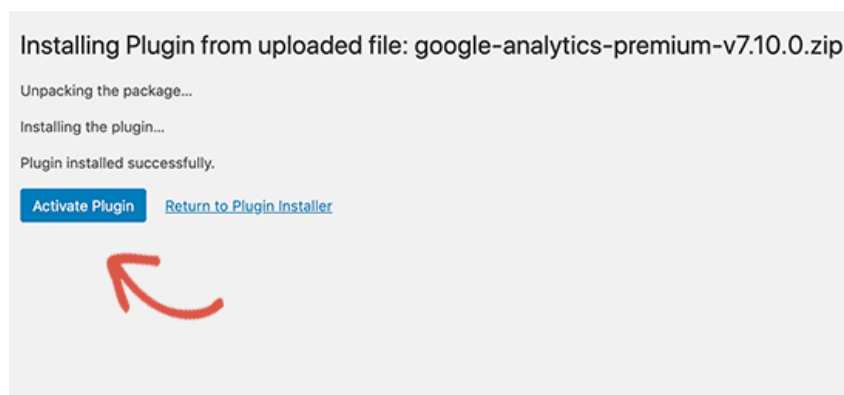
This will reveal the plugin upload form. Here you need to click on the 'Choose File' button and select the plugin file you downloaded earlier to your computer.



After you have selected the file, you need to click on the 'Install Now' button.

WordPress will now upload the plugin file from your computer and install it for you.

You will see a success message like this after the installation is finished.



Once installed, you need to click on the Activate Plugin link to start using the plugin.

You would have to configure the settings to fit your needs. These settings will vary for each plugin therefore we will not be covering that in this post.

## Manually Install a WordPress Plugin using FTP

In some rare cases, your [WordPress hosting](https://www.wpbeginner.com/wordpress-hosting/) provider may have file restrictions that could limit your ability to install a plugin from the admin area.

In this situation, your best bet is to install the plugin manually using FTP.

The FTP manager method is the least friendly for beginners.

First you will need to download the plugin's source file (it will be a zip file). Next, you

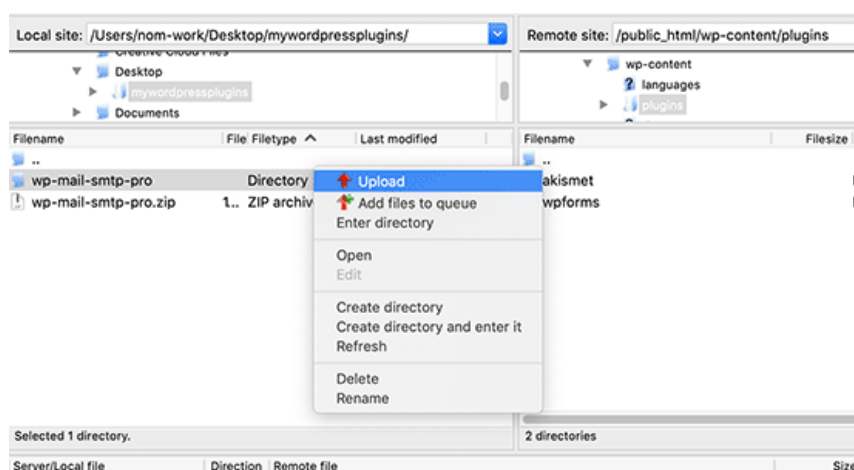
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Extracting the plugin zip file will create a new folder with the same name. This is the folder that you need to manually upload to your website using a [FTP client](https://www.wpbeginner.com/showcase/6-best-ftp-clients-for-wordpress-users/) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/showcase/6-best-ftp-clients-for-wordpress-users/>).

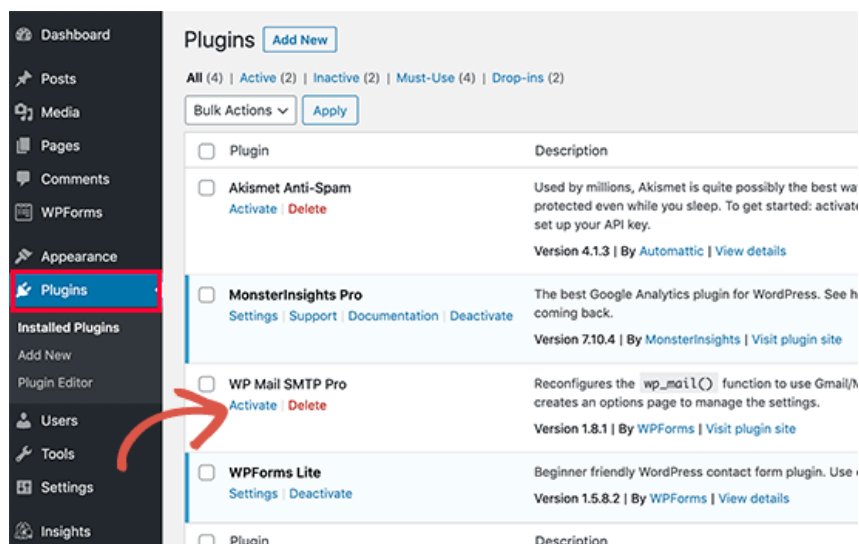
You would need to access your host through the FTP manager. If you do not have your FTP username and password, then contact your [WordPress hosting](https://www.wpbeginner.com/wordpress-hosting/) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/wordpress-hosting/>) provider and ask them.

Open the FTP client on your computer and connect to your website using the login credentials provided by your web host. Once connected, you need to go to the `/wp-content/plugins/` folder on your website.

Next, upload the folder you extracted from the zip file to the `/wp-content/plugins/` folder on your web server.



After uploading the files, you need to visit the WordPress admin area and click on the **Plugins** link in the admin menu. You'll see your plugin successfully installed on the plugins page.



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Upon activating, you may need to configure the plugin settings. WordPress plugins come with their own settings which differ from one plugin to another so we will not describe them here.

## FAQs About Installing WordPress Plugins

As a beginners you may have few questions about installing WordPress plugins. As the largest WordPress resource site, we have heard all of them.

Here are some of the most frequently asked questions about installing WordPress plugins.

### 1. How do I find the best WordPress plugins to install on my website?

There are more than 55,000 WordPress plugins on the free WordPress plugin directory alone. Many more are available as [premium plugins](#) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/wordpress-plugins/>). This makes it a bit difficult for beginners to find the best plugin for the feature they need.

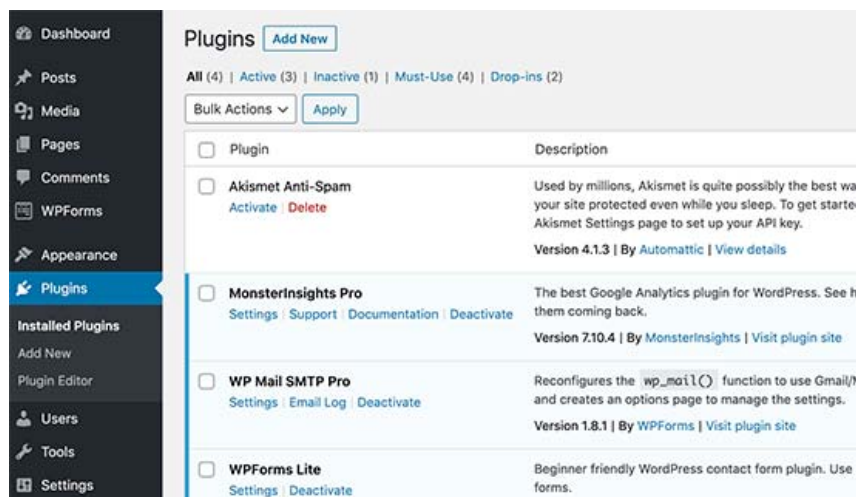
We have compiled a list of all the [essential WordPress plugins](#) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/showcase/24-must-have-wordpress-plugins-for-business-websites/>) that most WordPress websites need.

We also have a detailed tutorial on [choosing the best WordPress plugin](#) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/how-to-choose-the-best-wordpress-plugin/>) where we show you what to look for when looking for a plugin.

### 2. What is the difference between installed and active plugins?

WordPress allows you to install a plugin and not use it at all. In order to use a plugin on your site, you need to 'Activate' it.

You can see active plugins by visiting the 'Plugins' page in the WordPress admin area. They will be highlighted with a blue background.



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Plugins with the white background are installed on your website but not active.

### 3. Should I delete inactive plugins?

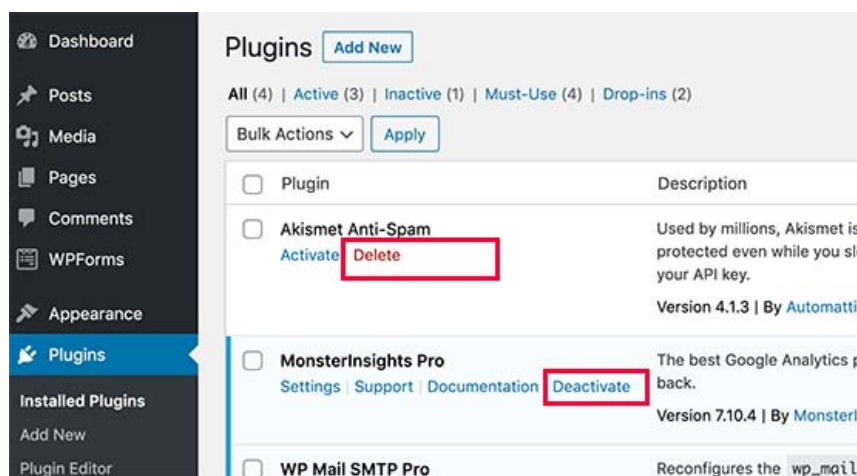
If you are not using a plugin, then it is recommended to delete it from your website. For more on this topic, see our article on [why should you delete inactive plugins in WordPress](https://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/will-inactive-plugins-slow-down-wordpress-should-you-delete-inactive-plugins/) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/will-inactive-plugins-slow-down-wordpress-should-you-delete-inactive-plugins/>).

### 4. How many plugins I can install in WordPress?

You can install as many WordPress plugins as you need. It is not the number of plugins that affect your website speed, but the quality of those plugins. For more information, see our article on [how many WordPress plugins you should install](https://www.wpbeginner.com/opinion/how-many-wordpress-plugins-should-you-install-on-your-site/) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/opinion/how-many-wordpress-plugins-should-you-install-on-your-site/>).

### 5. How do I uninstall a WordPress plugin

You can uninstall a WordPress plugin by visiting the Plugins page in the WordPress admin area. If the plugin you want to remove is currently active, then first you'll need to deactivate it. After that, you can simply click on the delete link to remove it from your website.



For more detailed instructions, see our guide on how to [properly uninstall a WordPress plugin](https://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/how-to-properly-uninstall-a-wordpress-plugin/) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/how-to-properly-uninstall-a-wordpress-plugin/>).

We hope this helped you learn how to install WordPress plugins.

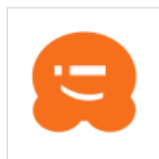
You may also want to see our plugins category where we write about the [best WordPress plugins](https://www.wpbeginner.com/category/plugins/) (<https://www.wpbeginner.com/category/plugins/>) that you can use to accomplish whatever you're looking to do. Each of those articles comes with step-by-step instructions on how to set up individual plugins.

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Editorial Staff at WPBeginner is a team of WordPress experts led by Syed Balkhi. Trusted by over 1.3 million readers worldwide.

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