

Chapter 5: Date and Time

Section 5.1: Parsing a string into a timezone aware datetime object

Python 3.2+ has support for %z format when [parsing a string](#) into a `datetime` object.

UTC offset in the form +HHMM or -HHMM (empty string if the object is naive).

Python 3.x Version \geq 3.2

```
import datetime
dt = datetime.datetime.strptime("2016-04-15T08:27:18-0500", "%Y-%m-%dT%H:%M:%S%z")
```

For other versions of Python, you can use an external library such as [dateutil](#), which makes parsing a string with timezone into a `datetime` object is quick.

```
import dateutil.parser
dt = dateutil.parser.parse("2016-04-15T08:27:18-0500")
```

The dt variable is now a `datetime` object with the following value:

```
datetime.datetime(2016, 4, 15, 8, 27, 18, tzinfo=tzoffset(None, -18000))
```

Section 5.2: Constructing timezone-aware datetimes

By default all `datetime` objects are naive. To make them timezone-aware, you must attach a `tzinfo` object, which provides the UTC offset and timezone abbreviation as a function of date and time.

Fixed Offset Time Zones

For time zones that are a fixed offset from UTC, in Python 3.2+, the `datetime` module provides the `timezone` class, a concrete implementation of `tzinfo`, which takes a `timedelta` and an (optional) name parameter:

Python 3.x Version \geq 3.2

```
from datetime import datetime, timedelta, timezone
JST = timezone(timedelta(hours=+9))

dt = datetime(2015, 1, 1, 12, 0, 0, tzinfo=JST)
print(dt)
# 2015-01-01 12:00:00+09:00

print(dt.tzname())
# UTC+09:00

dt = datetime(2015, 1, 1, 12, 0, 0, tzinfo=timezone(timedelta(hours=9), 'JST'))
print(dt.tzname())
# 'JST'
```

For Python versions before 3.2, it is necessary to use a third party library, such as [dateutil](#). `dateutil` provides an equivalent class, `tzoffset`, which (as of version 2.5.3) takes arguments of the form `dateutil.tz.tzoffset(tzname, offset)`, where `offset` is specified in seconds:

Python 3.x Version $<$ 3.2

Python 2.x Version < 2.7

```
from datetime import datetime, timedelta
from dateutil import tz

JST = tz.tzoffset('JST', 9 * 3600) # 3600 seconds per hour
dt = datetime(2015, 1, 1, 12, 0, tzinfo=JST)
print(dt)
# 2015-01-01 12:00:00+09:00
print(dt.tzname)
# 'JST'
```

Zones with daylight savings time

For zones with daylight savings time, python standard libraries do not provide a standard class, so it is necessary to use a third party library. [pytz](#) and `dateutil` are popular libraries providing time zone classes.

In addition to static time zones, `dateutil` provides time zone classes that use daylight savings time (see [the documentation for the tz module](#)). You can use the `tz.gettz()` method to get a time zone object, which can then be passed directly to the `datetime` constructor:

```
from datetime import datetime
from dateutil import tz
local = tz.gettz() # Local time
PT = tz.gettz('US/Pacific') # Pacific time

dt_l = datetime(2015, 1, 1, 12, tzinfo=local) # I am in EST
dt_pst = datetime(2015, 1, 1, 12, tzinfo=PT)
dt_pdt = datetime(2015, 7, 1, 12, tzinfo=PT) # DST is handled automatically
print(dt_l)
# 2015-01-01 12:00:00-05:00
print(dt_pst)
# 2015-01-01 12:00:00-08:00
print(dt_pdt)
# 2015-07-01 12:00:00-07:00
```

CAUTION: As of version 2.5.3, `dateutil` does not handle ambiguous datetimes correctly, and will always default to the *later* date. There is no way to construct an object with a `dateutil` timezone representing, for example `2015-11-01 1:30 EDT-4`, since this is *during* a daylight savings time transition.

All edge cases are handled properly when using `pytz`, but `pytz` time zones should *not* be directly attached to time zones through the constructor. Instead, a `pytz` time zone should be attached using the time zone's `localize` method:

```
from datetime import datetime, timedelta
import pytz

PT = pytz.timezone('US/Pacific')
dt_pst = PT.localize(datetime(2015, 1, 1, 12))
dt_pdt = PT.localize(datetime(2015, 11, 1, 0, 30))
print(dt_pst)
# 2015-01-01 12:00:00-08:00
print(dt_pdt)
# 2015-11-01 00:30:00-07:00
```

Be aware that if you perform `datetime` arithmetic on a `pytz`-aware time zone, you must either perform the calculations in UTC (if you want absolute elapsed time), or you must call `normalize()` on the result:

```
dt_new = dt_pdt + timedelta(hours=3) # This should be 2:30 AM PST
print(dt_new)
# 2015-11-01 03:30:00-07:00
dt_corrected = PT.normalize(dt_new)
print(dt_corrected)
# 2015-11-01 02:30:00-08:00
```

Section 5.3: Computing time differences

the `timedelta` module comes in handy to compute differences between times:

```
from datetime import datetime, timedelta
now = datetime.now()
then = datetime(2016, 5, 23) # datetime.datetime(2016, 05, 23, 0, 0, 0)
```

Specifying time is optional when creating a new `datetime` object

```
delta = now - then
```

`delta` is of type `timedelta`

```
print(delta.days)
# 60
print(delta.seconds)
# 40826
```

To get `n` day's after and `n` day's before date we could use:

`n` day's after date:

```
def get_n_days_after_date(date_format="%d %B %Y", add_days=120):
    date_n_days_after = datetime.datetime.now() + timedelta(days=add_days)
    return date_n_days_after.strftime(date_format)
```

`n` day's before date:

```
def get_n_days_before_date(self, date_format="%d %B %Y", days_before=120):
    date_n_days_ago = datetime.datetime.now() - timedelta(days=days_before)
    return date_n_days_ago.strftime(date_format)
```

Section 5.4: Basic datetime objects usage

The `datetime` module contains three primary types of objects - date, time, and datetime.

```
import datetime

# Date object
today = datetime.date.today()
new_year = datetime.date(2017, 01, 01) #datetime.date(2017, 1, 1)

# Time object
noon = datetime.time(12, 0, 0) #datetime.time(12, 0)

# Current datetime
now = datetime.datetime.now()
```

```
# Datetime object
millenium_turn = datetime.datetime(2000, 1, 1, 0, 0, 0) #datetime.datetime(2000, 1, 1, 0, 0)
```

Arithmetic operations for these objects are only supported within same datatype and performing simple arithmetic with instances of different types will result in a `TypeError`.

```
# subtraction of noon from today
noon-today
Traceback (most recent call last):
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>
TypeError: unsupported operand type(s) for -: 'datetime.time' and 'datetime.date'
However, it is straightforward to convert between types.

# Do this instead
print('Time since the millenium at midnight: ',
      datetime.datetime(today.year, today.month, today.day) - millenium_turn)

# Or this
print('Time since the millenium at noon: ',
      datetime.datetime.combine(today, noon) - millenium_turn)
```

Section 5.5: Switching between time zones

To switch between time zones, you need datetime objects that are timezone-aware.

```
from datetime import datetime
from dateutil import tz

utc = tz.tzutc()
local = tz.tzlocal()

utc_now = datetime.utcnow()
utc_now # Not timezone-aware.

utc_now = utc_now.replace(tzinfo=utc)
utc_now # Timezone-aware.

local_now = utc_now.astimezone(local)
local_now # Converted to local time.
```

Section 5.6: Simple date arithmetic

Dates don't exist in isolation. It is common that you will need to find the amount of time between dates or determine what the date will be tomorrow. This can be accomplished using [timedelta](#) objects

```
import datetime

today = datetime.date.today()
print('Today:', today)

yesterday = today - datetime.timedelta(days=1)
print('Yesterday:', yesterday)

tomorrow = today + datetime.timedelta(days=1)
print('Tomorrow:', tomorrow)

print('Time between tomorrow and yesterday:', tomorrow - yesterday)
```

This will produce results similar to:

```
Today: 2016-04-15
Yesterday: 2016-04-14
Tomorrow: 2016-04-16
Difference between tomorrow and yesterday: 2 days, 0:00:00
```

Section 5.7: Converting timestamp to datetime

The `datetime` module can convert a POSIX timestamp to a ITC `datetime` object.

The Epoch is January 1st, 1970 midnight.

```
import time
from datetime import datetime
seconds_since_epoch=time.time() #1469182681.709

utc_date=datetime.utcfromtimestamp(seconds_since_epoch) #datetime.datetime(2016, 7, 22, 10, 18, 1, 709000)
```

Section 5.8: Subtracting months from a date accurately

Using the `calendar` module

```
import calendar
from datetime import date

def monthdelta(date, delta):
    m, y = (date.month+delta) % 12, date.year + ((date.month)+delta-1) // 12
    if not m: m = 12
    d = min(date.day, calendar.monthrange(y, m)[1])
    return date.replace(day=d, month=m, year=y)

next_month = monthdelta(date.today(), 1) #datetime.date(2016, 10, 23)
```

Using the `dateutil` module

```
import datetime
import dateutil.relativedelta

d = datetime.datetime.strptime("2013-03-31", "%Y-%m-%d")
d2 = d - dateutil.relativedelta.relativedelta(months=1) #datetime.datetime(2013, 2, 28, 0, 0)
```

Section 5.9: Parsing an arbitrary ISO 8601 timestamp with minimal libraries

Python has only limited support for parsing ISO 8601 timestamps. For `strptime` you need to know exactly what format it is in. As a complication the stringification of a `datetime` is an ISO 8601 timestamp, with space as a separator and 6 digit fraction:

```
str(datetime.datetime(2016, 7, 22, 9, 25, 59, 555555))
# '2016-07-22 09:25:59.555555'
```

but if the fraction is 0, no fractional part is output

```
str(datetime.datetime(2016, 7, 22, 9, 25, 59, 0))
# '2016-07-22 09:25:59'
```

But these 2 forms need a *different* format for `strptime`. Furthermore, `strptime` does not support at all parsing minute timezones that have a:in it, thus `2016-07-22 09:25:59+0300` can be parsed, but the standard format `2016-07-22 09:25:59+03:00` cannot.

There is a [single-file](#) library called [iso8601](#) which properly parses ISO 8601 timestamps and only them.

It supports fractions and timezones, and the T separator all with a single function:

```
import iso8601
iso8601.parse_date('2016-07-22 09:25:59')
# datetime.datetime(2016, 7, 22, 9, 25, 59, tzinfo=<iso8601.Utc>)
iso8601.parse_date('2016-07-22 09:25:59+03:00')
# datetime.datetime(2016, 7, 22, 9, 25, 59, tzinfo=<FixedOffset '+03:00' ...>)
iso8601.parse_date('2016-07-22 09:25:59Z')
# datetime.datetime(2016, 7, 22, 9, 25, 59, tzinfo=<iso8601.Utc>)
iso8601.parse_date('2016-07-22T09:25:59.000111+03:00')
# datetime.datetime(2016, 7, 22, 9, 25, 59, 111, tzinfo=<FixedOffset '+03:00' ...>)
```

If no timezone is set, `iso8601.parse_date` defaults to UTC. The default zone can be changed with `default_timezone` keyword argument. Notably, if this is `None` instead of the default, then those timestamps that do not have an explicit timezone are returned as naive datetimes instead:

```
iso8601.parse_date('2016-07-22T09:25:59', default_timezone=None)
# datetime.datetime(2016, 7, 22, 9, 25, 59)
iso8601.parse_date('2016-07-22T09:25:59Z', default_timezone=None)
# datetime.datetime(2016, 7, 22, 9, 25, 59, tzinfo=<iso8601.Utc>)
```

Section 5.10: Get an ISO 8601 timestamp

Without timezone, with microseconds

```
from datetime import datetime

datetime.now().isoformat()
# Out: '2016-07-31T23:08:20.886783'
```

With timezone, with microseconds

```
from datetime import datetime
from dateutil.tz import tzlocal

datetime.now(tzlocal()).isoformat()
# Out: '2016-07-31T23:09:43.535074-07:00'
```

With timezone, without microseconds

```
from datetime import datetime
from dateutil.tz import tzlocal

datetime.now(tzlocal()).replace(microsecond=0).isoformat()
# Out: '2016-07-31T23:10:30-07:00'
```

See [ISO 8601](#) for more information about the ISO 8601 format.

Section 5.11: Parsing a string with a short time zone name into

a timezone aware datetime object

Using the [dateutil](#) library as in the previous example on parsing timezone-aware timestamps, it is also possible to parse timestamps with a specified "short" time zone name.

For dates formatted with short time zone names or abbreviations, which are generally ambiguous (e.g. CST, which could be Central Standard Time, China Standard Time, Cuba Standard Time, etc - more can be found [here](#)) or not necessarily available in a standard database, it is necessary to specify a mapping between time zone abbreviation and tzinfo object.

```
from dateutil import tz
from dateutil.parser import parse

ET = tz.gettz('US/Eastern')
CT = tz.gettz('US/Central')
MT = tz.gettz('US/Mountain')
PT = tz.gettz('US/Pacific')

us_tzinfos = {'CST': CT, 'CDT': CT,
              'EST': ET, 'EDT': ET,
              'MST': MT, 'MDT': MT,
              'PST': PT, 'PDT': PT}

dt_est = parse('2014-01-02 04:00:00 EST', tzinfos=us_tzinfos)
dt_pst = parse('2016-03-11 16:00:00 PST', tzinfos=us_tzinfos)
```

After running this:

```
dt_est
# datetime.datetime(2014, 1, 2, 4, 0, tzinfo=tzfile('/usr/share/zoneinfo/US/Eastern'))
dt_pst
# datetime.datetime(2016, 3, 11, 16, 0, tzinfo=tzfile('/usr/share/zoneinfo/US/Pacific'))
```

It is worth noting that if using a pytz time zone with this method, it will *not* be properly localized:

```
from dateutil.parser import parse
import pytz

EST = pytz.timezone('America/New_York')
dt = parse('2014-02-03 09:17:00 EST', tzinfos={'EST': EST})
```

This simply attaches the pytz time zone to the datetime:

```
dt.tzinfo # Will be in Local Mean Time!
# <DstTzInfo 'America/New_York' LMT-1 day, 19:04:00 STD>
```

If using this method, you should probably re-localize the naive portion of the datetime after parsing:

```
dt_fixed = dt.tzinfo.localize(dt.replace(tzinfo=None))
dt_fixed.tzinfo # Now it's EST.
# <DstTzInfo 'America/New_York' EST-1 day, 19:00:00 STD>
```

Section 5.12: Fuzzy datetime parsing (extracting datetime out of a text)

It is possible to extract a date out of a text using the [dateutil parser](#) in a "fuzzy" mode, where components of the

string not recognized as being part of a date are ignored.

```
from dateutil.parser import parse

dt = parse("Today is January 1, 2047 at 8:21:00AM", fuzzy=True)
print(dt)
```

dt is now a *datetime* object and you would see `datetime.datetime(2047, 1, 1, 8, 21)` printed.

Section 5.13: Iterate over dates

Sometimes you want to iterate over a range of dates from a start date to some end date. You can do it using *datetime* library and *timedelta* object:

```
import datetime

# The size of each step in days
day_delta = datetime.timedelta(days=1)

start_date = datetime.date.today()
end_date = start_date + 7*day_delta

for i in range((end_date - start_date).days):
    print(start_date + i*day_delta)
```

Which produces:

```
2016-07-21
2016-07-22
2016-07-23
2016-07-24
2016-07-25
2016-07-26
2016-07-27
```