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SQLite or MySQL: which one fits a small project

Engines & Performance

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SQLite or MySQL: which one fits a small project

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The short answer: **SQLite** fits a small application with few users writing at the same time and nobody from outside needing the database. **MySQL (here, MariaDB)** fits anything that is a website with several visitors, dashboards, plugins and growth. If in doubt, and it is a site to publish, use the account's MariaDB: it comes ready, with phpMyAdmin and the daily copies.

The difference that decides

MariaDB is a **server**: an always-on service, with users and passwords, that applications connect to. SQLite is a **library**: the database is a single file, and the program itself reads and writes it. There is no service, no user, no port.

	SQLite	MariaDB / MySQL
How it is stored	One file in the application folder	In a service on the server, managed from cPanel
Simultaneous writes	One at a time: requests wait their turn	Many at once, that is what it exists for
Users and privileges	None: whoever reads the file reads everything	Users with privileges per database
Access from another machine	None	Possible, through an SSH tunnel
Installing and maintaining	Nothing to install	Already on the server; you create it in cPanel
Backup	Copy the file, with the application stopped	Export, plus the account's daily copies
Who uses it out of the box	Small tools, prototypes, tests	WordPress, shops, most CMSs

When SQLite is the right choice

1. An internal tool or a prototype, with a handful of users.
2. A program that reads a lot and writes little: a catalogue, a contact list, a reporting tool.
3. Tests and development, so you do not depend on a server.
4. A Python application, where the `sqlite3` module already ships with the language.

When you should go to MariaDB

When the site has forms, accounts, a cart or a dashboard that several people write to at once; when WordPress, Joomla or any CMS demands it (they ask for MySQL or MariaDB); when another machine needs to talk to the data. You can migrate later: export the tables from SQLite and import them into MariaDB, but the differences in column types force you to review the file, so decide early.

The SQLite file must not sit in the public folder.
If the `.sqlite` or `.db` is inside `public_html`, anyone who guesses the name downloads it, with everything in it. Keep it in a folder outside the public one, with permissions only your account can read.

In PHP,
the `sqlite3` extension comes switched on; `pdo_sqlite` exists and is switched on in **Select PHP Version**, in the extensions list. Check your version's list before writing the code. For comparing with PostgreSQL, when the project grows: **PostgreSQL or MySQL: which one for your project**.

NEED A HAND?

Not sure which fits your project? Describe it in two lines and we will tell you what fits on your account.

Open a support ticket →

Where to see it in your account

Every hosting plan includes unlimited databases, so the account's MariaDB will not run out on you, whichever plan you have. You create one in cPanel under **MySQL Databases**: create the database, create a user and give that user privileges on it. To see how many you already have, open the **Statistics** panel in the cPanel sidebar, which lists the databases in use together with the files, e-mail accounts and space of the account. phpMyAdmin, mentioned above, is reached from the same cPanel.

SEE ALSO

- **MySQL or MariaDB: which one runs here, and does it matter**
- **PostgreSQL or MySQL: which one for your project**
- **Creating databases and using phpMyAdmin**
- **Connecting to MySQL from PHP: mysqli and PDO, with a working example**

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