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MongoDB on a VPS: install it, lock it down, and why not to expose it

Databases

CODE

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VERSION

v2026.10.15

COUNTRY · LANGUAGE

Angola · English

Interweb Angola

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MongoDB on a VPS: install it, lock it down, and why not to expose it

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The short answer: MongoDB is a database that stores documents (like JSON) instead of tables. It is not part of cPanel's database tools, so you run it on a **VPS**. The rule that matters most: **never leave it open to the internet**. Many unprotected MongoDB servers have been wiped and held to ransom by whoever found them.

➞ The simplest way: a container

If you already use Docker (see **Running Docker on a VPS safely**), the official image gives a clean install that is easy to remove:

```
docker run -d --name mongo --restart unless-stopped \
-p 127.0.0.1:27017:27017 \
-v mongo-data:/data/db \
-e MONGO_INITDB_ROOT_USERNAME=admin \
-e MONGO_INITDB_ROOT_PASSWORD=A-STRONG-PASSWORD \
mongo
```

Part	What it is for
-p 127.0.0.1:27017:27017	The most important. Publishes the port on the VPS itself only. Without <code>127.0.0.1</code> , Docker opens it to the world, even with the firewall on.
-v mongo-data:/data/db	Keeps the data in a volume, so you do not lose it when the container is recreated. See Docker volumes or bind mounts .
MONGO_INITDB_ROOT_*	Creates the administrator user and switches authentication on. Use a long password; see A strong password and a password manager .

Use a numbered version instead of `mongo` alone, so an update does not catch you by surprise (the list is on the image's page on Docker Hub).

🔄 Installed on the system

Without Docker, MongoDB is installed from MongoDB's own repository for your Ubuntu or Debian version. Package and key names change with versions, so **follow the official installation guide** rather than copying old commands. Either way, after installing:

- 1 **Switch authentication on** (the "authorization" option in MongoDB's configuration file) and create the administrator user.
- 2 **Leave it listening on 127.0.0.1 only** (the "bindIp" option), unless you really must connect it to another machine.
- 3 **Close port 27017** in the firewall. See **Setting up the ufw firewall on Ubuntu** and **Ports and firewall on a VPS**.

🔍 How the application connects

An application on the same VPS connects with an address like `mongodb://admin:PASSWORD@127.0.0.1:27017/my-database?authSource=admin`. Keep it in the application's configuration file, outside the code: see **Keeping passwords out of your code**. To look at the data from your computer, use an **SSH tunnel** instead of opening the port: `ssh -L 27017:127.0.0.1:27017 user@VPS-IP`, and connect to `localhost`.

❓ Backups

Use `mongodump` to make the copy: `mongodump --uri="mongodb://..." --gzip --archive=/backups/mongo.gz`; and `mongorestore` to put it back: `mongorestore --uri="mongodb://..." --gzip --archive=/backups/mongo.gz`. Run it from cron and send the copy off the server: see **Off-site backups**. And test the restore, not only the copy.

- !** **If your MongoDB was ever open to the internet,** treat it as compromised: change all passwords, check for data that is missing or extra, and restore from a clean copy. See **Keeping your VPS secure**.

🗣️ NEED A HAND?

Want help deciding whether MongoDB suits your application, or locking it down? Open a ticket saying what you will store.

 **Open a support ticket** →

SEE ALSO[Keeping your VPS or dedicated server secure: the six that matter](#)[Running Docker on a VPS safely: the precautions that matter](#)[Ports and firewall on a VPS: why your app is not reachable](#)[Off-site backups: sending a copy to cloud storage, an S3 bucket or Google Drive](#)**interweb****Interweb Angola**

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