

09-15-2019, Beginners/Mac Basics SIG

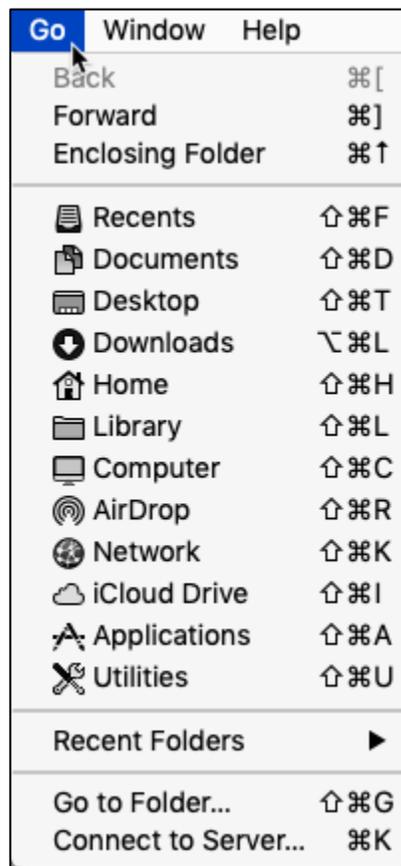
The Finder's "Go" Menu

Note: This discussion is based on MacOS, 10.14.6 (Mojave). Some illustrations may differ when using other versions of macOS or OS X. Most illustrations are from screenshots on my iMac.

In this Mac Basics presentation, we'll discuss using the Finder's **Go** menu to access files on your Mac. As the name implies, the Go menu is used to "go" to certain folders. Although you can use the Finder to get to a folder containing your desired files without ever having to look at the Go menu, you may find that it can be handy.

There are many ways to access a file on your Mac. Among these are maneuvering through the hierarchy of files in a Finder window, using the Finder's search feature, searching with Spotlight, and accessing a desired folder that you kept in the Sidebar.

The Go menu provides quick cursor/pointer or keyboard shortcut to a fixed set of folders in which you can locate your file. Here's what it looks like:



Go Menu

What it Does

Selecting an item in the **Go** menu changes the location of the active Finder window (or tab in the window) to point to another location.

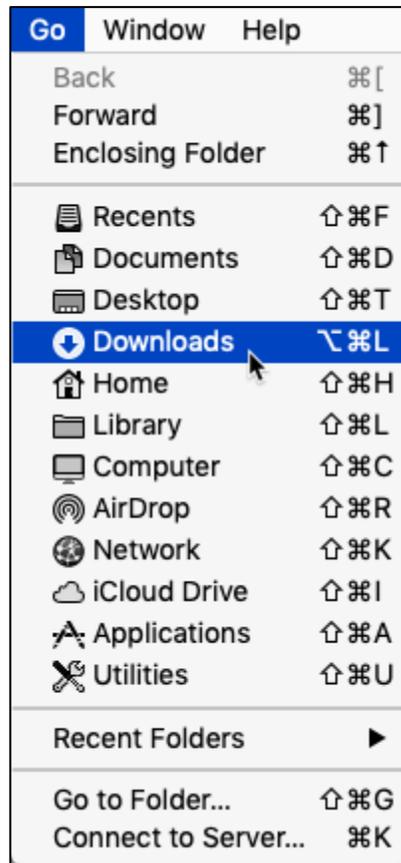
Note: This action will also open a *new Finder window* if one isn't open at the time.

Notice that the various **Go** menu items also have equivalent keyboard shortcuts. You may find that using some of them is more convenient than selecting a menu item.

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Example. If want to go to your Downloads folder, simply select [Downloads](#) from the [Go](#) menu, and the location of the current Finder window (or tab) changes to that folder. Alternatively, you can use the keyboard shortcut: [Option \(⌥\) + Command \(⌘\) + L](#). Then you can choose a file found there.



Go Menu – Downloads Folder Selected

Documents and Desktop Items

These are sensitive to whether or not you're using [iCloud Drive](#) with [Desktop and Documents](#) turned on. (This option moves the files in these folders to iCloud in order to make them available on other devices connected to your iCloud account.)

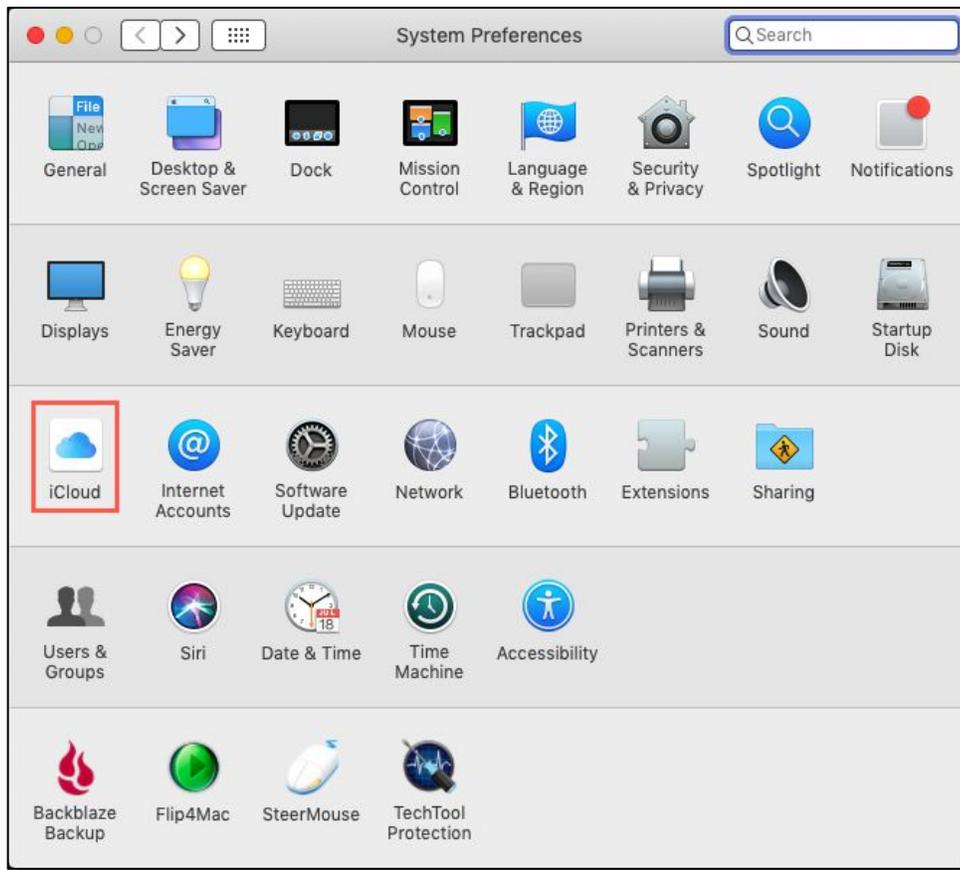
Side Note. You can move the contents of the Desktop and the Documents folder to iCloud drive as follows:

- Go to the [iCloud](#) system preference.
- Check the [iCloud Drive](#) item.
- Click the [Options](#) button next to iCloud Drive which will trigger a dropdown menu.
- In the dropdown menu, check the [Desktop & Documents Folders](#).

(See the illustrations on the next page.)

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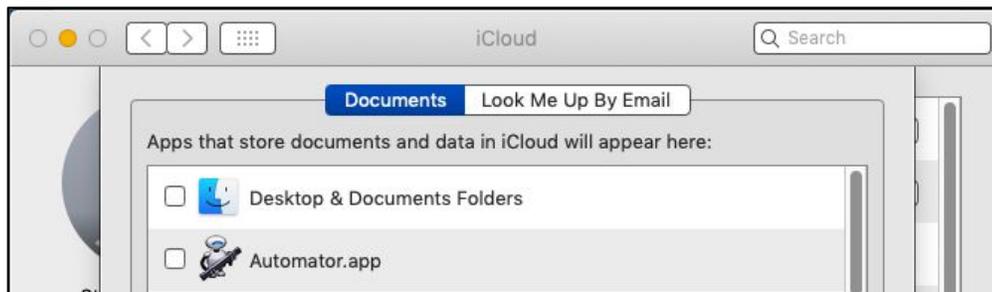
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iCloud System Preference



iCloud Drive and Options... Button



iCloud Drive – Desktop & Documents Folders Option

Note: If you're not using iCloud Drive for these folders, then selecting Documents or Desktop in the Go menu will take you to them in your Home folder. If you're using iCloud Drive, then it will take you to those locations in iCloud Drive.

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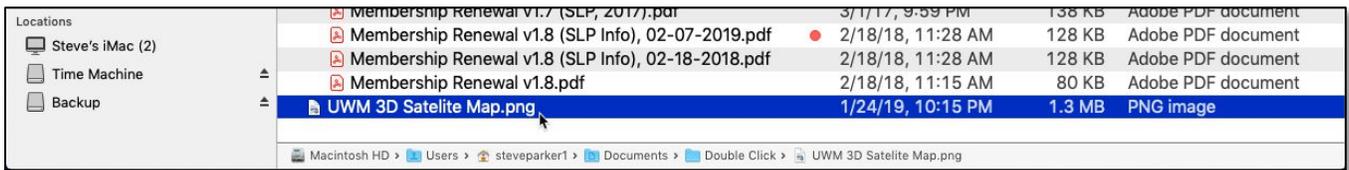
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Go Menu - Folders

As noted earlier, the [Go](#) menu provides access to a lot of folders. Let's take a look at them. They're found in the second group of items under the [Go](#) menu. We'll look at the other groups later.

Recents. [Keyboard shortcut: Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + F] [Recents](#) can be a handy way to access a file rather than searching for where you saved it. The [Recents](#) folder isn't actually a location on your drive. It's basically the results of a search that shows the most recent files you've accessed.

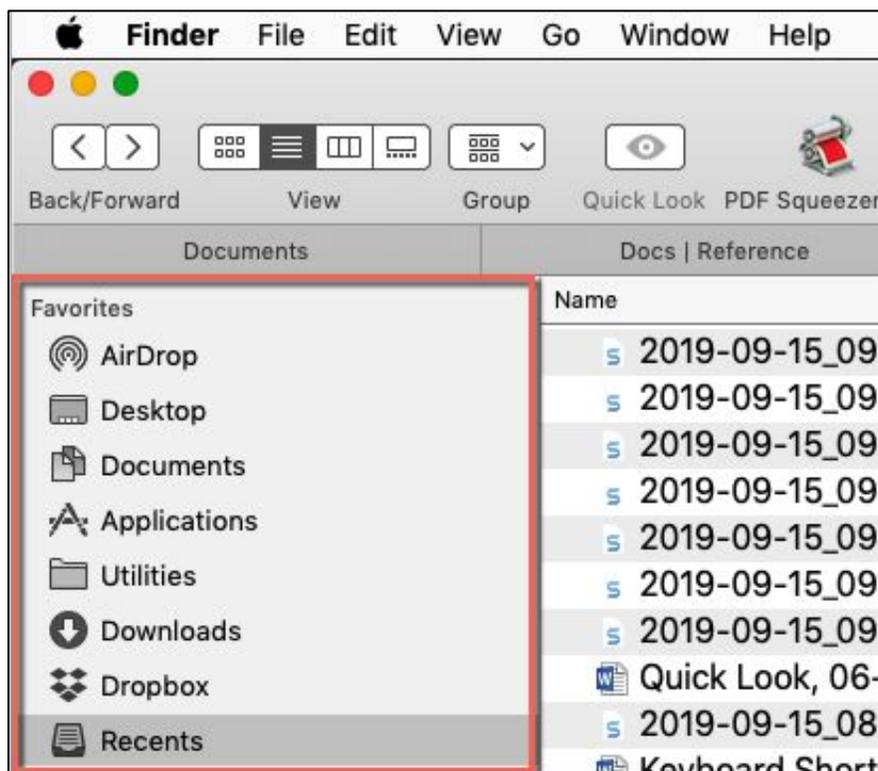
You can see a selected file's location by examining the [Path Bar](#) at the bottom of the window. Turn on the Path Bar by selecting it in the Finder's View menu.



Path Bar (Bottom of Finder Window)

Choosing [Recents](#) from the [Go](#) menu opens the current Finder window or tab with a list your "recent" files, initially sorted by date with the most recently-accessed ones at the top. I noted "recent" in quotes because on my iMac Recents had hundreds of files dating as far back as early 2018. Your mileage may vary.

[Recents](#) is probably listed in the Finder's Sidebar, so you can access it here as well. If not, you can enable it under Finder preferences.



Sidebar

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The Finder's "Go" Menu

Documents. [Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + D] Opens the current Finder window or tab to display the contents of the Documents folder.

You can also open this folder by selecting it in the Sidebar. Even if you remove it from the Sidebar, it will still be available under the **Go** menu (as will other folders even if they're removed from the Sidebar).

Desktop. [Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + T] Opens the current Finder window or tab to show what's on the **Desktop** (also available in the Sidebar).

Downloads. [Option (⌥) + Command (⌘) + L] Opens the current Finder window or tab to display the contents of the **Downloads** folder (also available in the Sidebar).

Home. [Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + H] Opens the current Finder window or tab to show your **Home** folder (also available in the Sidebar).

Library. Your *User Library* folder (not the system Library folder) is not normally displayed in the Go menu. You can display it temporarily by using the **Option** key. Hold down the **Option** key and your user **Library** folder appears as a menu item.

It's unlikely that you'll need to access the user **Library** folder very often unless you're a very experienced/pro user of the macOS and need to do some troubleshooting. For example, a lot of applications store configuration information here (such as Application Support).

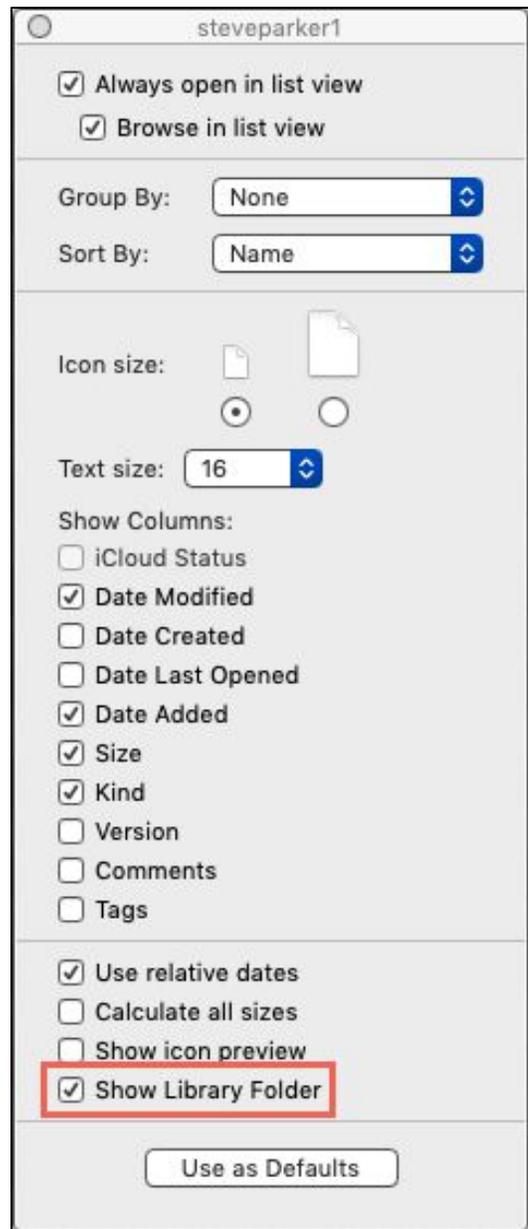
Note: Should you want to have your user Library **Folder** be added to the **Go** menu permanently, follow these steps:

- Open your **Home** folder as shown above.
- Go to the Finder's **View** menu, and select **Show View Options**. (It doesn't matter which view type (Icon, List, Columns, or Gallery) that you're using.)
- You can also use the keyboard shortcut: **Command (⌘) + J**.
- The **View Options** window will then be displayed. Its layout will look slightly different depending on the view type chosen. Here, I've used the **List** view. (See the illustrations on the next page.)
- Check the box next to **Show Library Folder**.
- The Library Folder will now be displayed in the Go menu along with its keyboard shortcut: **Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + L**.

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Finder View Menu



View Options

Computer. [Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + C] Opens the current Finder window or tab to show all the storage devices connected to your computer.

Airdrop. [Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + R] Opens the current Finder window to open up the [AirDrop](#) window so you're ready to receive a file from someone or another of your devices. [AirDrop](#) is likely also available in the Sidebar.

Network. [Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + K] Opens the current Finder window or tab to show the devices, such as your printer, connected to your local network.

iCloud Drive. [Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + I] Opens the current Finder window or tab to your [iCloud Drive](#) so you can access any files stored there such as your Desktop folder and Documents folder if you've elected to store them here. You also have access to other specific [iCloud Drive](#) folders if you have set them up.

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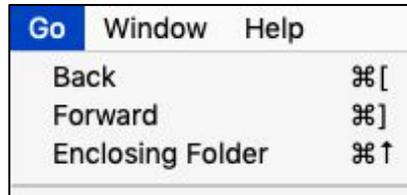
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Applications. [Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + A] Opens the current Finder window or tab to show your [Applications](#) folder (also available in the Sidebar).

Utilities. [Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + U] Opens the current Finder window or tab to show your [Utilities](#) folder.

Go Menu – Back & Forward

At the top of the [Go](#) menu is a small group containing [Back](#) and [Forward](#) menu items. (See the image on the next page.)



Go Menu (Top Group) – Back & Forward Buttons

They also have keyboard shortcuts using the square brackets keys:

- Back: Command (⌘) + [
- Forward: Command (⌘) +]

Use them in the Finder as if you were in a browser window. You can move back or forward through the locations that you were looking at in the Finder.

Go Menu – Enclosing Folder

The small group at the top of the [Go](#) menu also has an [Enclosing Folder](#) menu item. [Command (⌘) + ↑] For example, if you were in a folder located inside the Documents folder, you could choose Enclosing Folder to go up a level to the Documents folder.

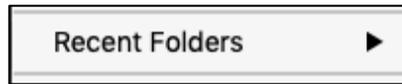
Hold the [Shift](#) key down and [Enclosing Folder](#) menu item changes to [Select Startup Disk](#). [Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + ↑] Depending on how your Mac is configured, this will likely take you to the hard drive on your Mac's Desktop.



Go Menu (Top Group) – Select Startup Disk

Go Menu – Recent Folders

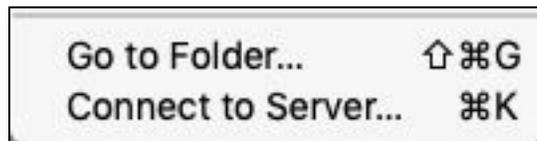
The third group has only one menu item ([Recent Folders](#)). Here so you can jump to one of the last several folders that you were using.



Go Menu – Recent Folders

Go Menu – Go to Folder... and Connect to Server...

The bottom group has these two menu items.



Go Menu (Bottom Group) – Go to Folder... & Connect to Server...

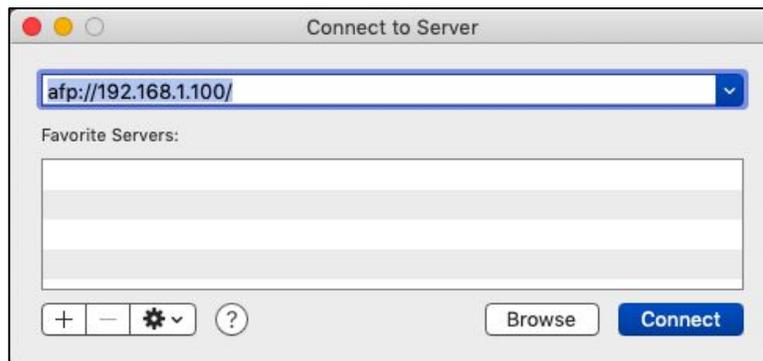
Go to Folder... [Shift (⇧) + Command (⌘) + G] Selecting this item brings up a little field so you can go to any location on your drive. Simply type in its path and click the [Go](#) button. Initially, it shows the last path that was there.



Go Menu – Go to Folder

This is probably a feature used by very experiences/pro users, but it can be handy. If you use this option a few times, you'll develop a list of past locations in the dropdown menu at the end of the entry field.

Connect to Server... [Command (⌘) + K] This gives you the ability to type a server address and access that server (another "pro" feature). Clicking the [Browse](#) button will jump to browsing the devices on your local network.



Go Menu – Connect to Server

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Summary

- The **Go** menu gives you a quick way to switch to useful locations in the Finder to select files. Many of these locations may also be available in the Sidebar if you use it, so the **Go** menu offers another way to access them, even if they've been removed from the Sidebar.
- The **Go** menu has several predetermined locations such as the Documents folder, the Downloads folder, and the Applications folder.
- One of the handiest of these locations is **Recents** that opens a list of recently-accessed files so you don't have to remember where they were located.
- You can also select **AirDrop** and **iCloud Drive** in the **Go** menu.
- Other menu items offer the ability to move **Back** and **Forward** from your current location in the Finder to locations that you've been before.

Next Presentation

For the next presentation, we'll take a look another macOS feature.

Have a favorite Mac Tip or utility? Please feel free to pass it along, and I'll see if I can work it into a future presentation.

If you have any suggestions for presentation topics, including macOS utilities, please contact me at slp4668@gmail.com.

-Steve Parker

Credit: Using the Mac Finder Go Menu

<https://macmost.com/using-the-mac-finder-go-menu.html>