Configure an ARK Survival Evolved server and verify the first connection

ARK: Survival Evolved and ARK: Survival Ascended are separate games. Start by checking the installed server title and your client edition. An Ascended map name, mod instruction or crossplay assumption is not a reliable setup instruction for Evolved.

1. Record the existing deployment

Open your game service and record its public address, assigned game port, server build and selected map. Check whether it already contains a world before changing anything. For an existing community, arrange a maintenance window and keep a completed backup of the saved data and configuration. Do not use reinstall or create a replacement world just to rename the server.

If you are joining from a different storefront or console, confirm that the actual dedicated-server deployment supports that platform combination. The fact that two products share the ARK name does not establish compatibility.

2. Identify the configuration in use

For standard Linux Evolved installations, the INI directory is `ShooterGame/Saved/Config/LinuxServer/`; Windows uses `WindowsServer` in the corresponding location. Your panel template may generate these files or supply launch options, so check its existing startup values before editing a second copy.

Stop the game normally before editing configuration and wait for it to finish. Download the current file first. Most basic settings belong in `GameUserSettings.ini`, while more advanced gameplay settings can belong in `Game.ini`. Keep the existing sections and unrelated values intact.

3. Change only the intended identity settings

A minimal name example in `GameUserSettings.ini` is:

```
[SessionSettings]
SessionName=CloudExa Evolved Community
```

Change the existing entry rather than adding competing copies. The join password and administrator password are different settings: `ServerPassword` and `ServerAdminPassword` under `[ServerSettings]`. Use distinct private values and do not include them in screenshots. Renaming the advertised session is not a request to change its map.

4. Check the assigned port set

Evolved's reference defaults are UDP 7777 for gameplay, its associated UDP peer port at game port plus one, and UDP 27015 for Steam queries. Optional RCON is a separate TCP endpoint. These are reference defaults, not permission to claim unassigned ports. Use the actual allocations and template mappings supplied for your service. Ask support if the required companion allocation is missing; do not guess another customer's port.

5. Start and verify

Start the game once and watch for startup errors before asking players to join. Test with a compatible ordinary player account using the supplied connection details. Confirm the displayed name, intended map and password behaviour. A server-browser listing alone does not prove the world finished loading.

If old settings reappear, compare the edited file with the running template's configuration source. Restore only the changed values if the test fails. Send support the server ID, build, allocated ports and redacted startup error; preserve the world while the configuration source is checked.

Related CloudExa guides

- Protect game files before changing settings
- Follow the game connection checks

Official references

- ARK Official Community Wiki: dedicated server setup
- ARK Official Community Wiki: server configuration

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