Transfer a Valheim world without losing the original

Prepare the world and a recovery copy

Transfer the world separately from the Valheim program files. Before changing anything, note the source game build, whether it uses mods, the selected world name and the destination server build. Keep the original world available but offline during the move. Running both copies invites players to build progress in two different places.

Ask players to leave, stop the source normally and wait until its process has exited. Download a complete copy of the selected world data and keep an untouched copy outside the game server. Include metadata and associated files, not just the largest file. Record the copy date, total size and file count so an interrupted upload is easier to detect.

Find the active save location

Valheim can use a custom save directory through `-savedir`. Check the running configuration before assuming a default location. On a personal Windows installation, the usual save root is `%USERPROFILE%/AppData/LocalLow/IronGate/Valheim`; use the game’s world-management controls to make a local copy if the world is stored in Steam Cloud. Do not edit synchronising cloud files while the game is open.

For builds using paired saves, retain both `WorldName.db` and `WorldName.fwl` from the same stopped save. If your installed build uses a different directory-based layout, copy its complete world dataset instead. Do not flatten folders or assume that an older two-file tutorial describes every build. Ask support to identify the destination save directory if it is outside your visible file area.

Upload and select the existing world

Stop the destination before uploading through the file manager or SFTP. Keep any destination world in a separate backup rather than overwriting it. Upload into the active world-save location, preserving folder structure and filename case. Compare transferred sizes with the local copy and check that files are not nested inside an extra archive folder.

Set the startup world selection to the existing world identifier. Valheim’s dedicated-server argument is `-world`; this is distinct from the public server name. A spelling mismatch can create an empty world. If your hosting configuration does not expose this selection, give support the exact world identifier rather than renaming internal files experimentally.

Verify before inviting everyone back

Start once and read the log for the selected world and successful server connection. Join with a compatible client, visit a familiar building and check terrain, containers and progression. A character inventory alone is not proof that the correct world loaded because characters and worlds are separate saves.

If the world is new or incomplete, stop immediately and compare the selected name, save root and upload structure. Preserve the failed attempt for diagnosis. Roll back using the untouched source copy and its matching game/mod versions. Keep the old server offline until the owner confirms the transferred world is correct; only then resume ordinary play.

Related guides

- Create and verify a game-server backup
- Check Valheim crossplay and connection ports

Further reading

- Valheim dedicated-server guide

Looking for another game? Browse game server setup and troubleshooting guides.

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