

Linux / Unix: Find And List All Hidden Files Recursively

last updated January 5, 2018 in [BASH Shell](#), [Commands](#), [Linux](#), [UNIX](#)

I am a new Unix system shell user. I need to find and list all hidden files including directories on a Linux or Unix-like system. How can I recursively list all hidden files and directories? How do I save result in a text file?

UNIX

You need to use the `find` command to list all hidden files recursively on a Linux or Unix like systems. . You can also use the `ls` command to list hidden files.



What is a hidden file in Linux or Unix?

In the Unix and Linux based system, a hidden file is nothing but file name that starts

with a "." (period). You can not see hidden files with the ls command.

View hidden files with the ls command

You can pass the -a options to the ls command to see hidden file:

```
ls -a
```

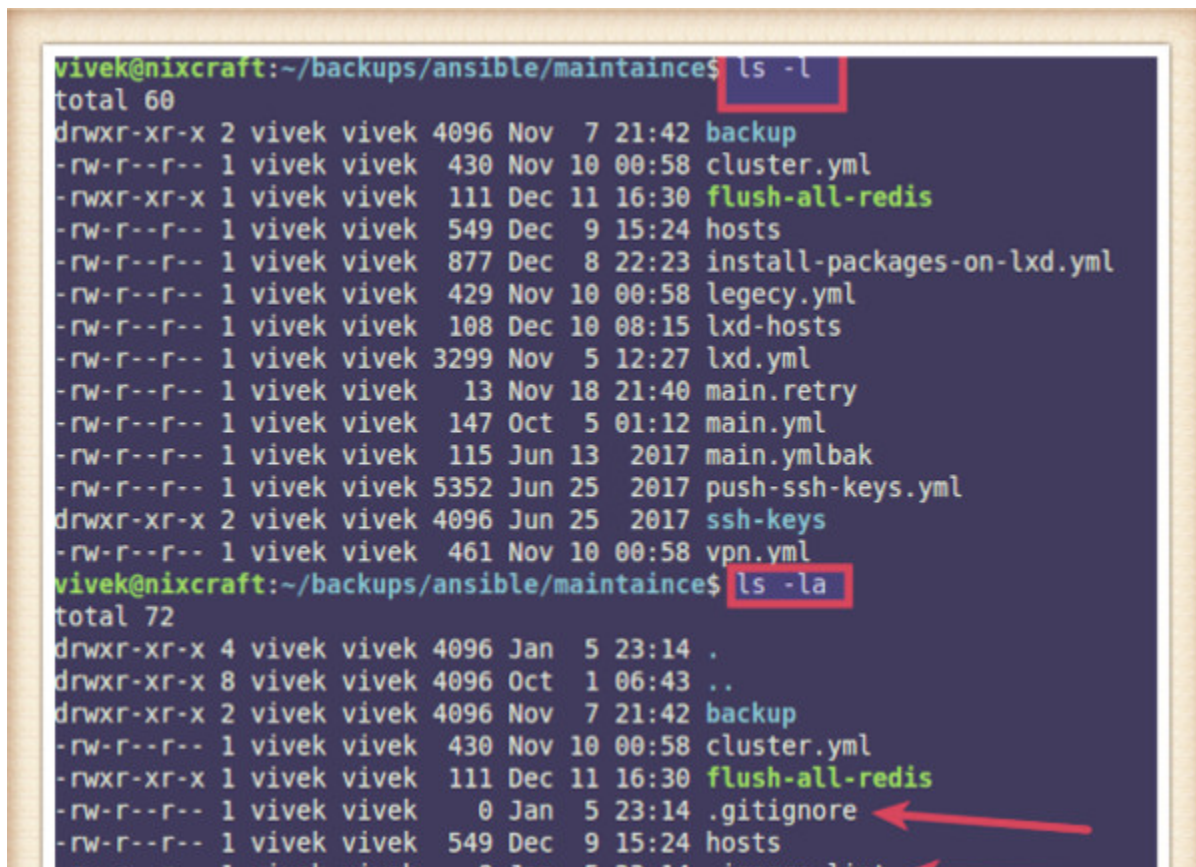
OR

```
ls -al
```

OR

```
ls -al | more
```

Sample outputs:



The image shows a terminal window with two command-line outputs. The first output is the result of the `ls -l` command, which lists files and directories with their permissions, owner, group, size, and modification date. The second output is the result of the `ls -la` command, which lists the same files and directories but also includes hidden files, indicated by a leading dot. A red arrow points to the `.gitignore` file in the second output.

```
vivek@nixcraft:~/backups/ansible/maintainence$ ls -l
total 60
drwxr-xr-x 2 vivek vivek 4096 Nov  7 21:42 backup
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek  430 Nov 10 00:58 cluster.yml
-rwxr-xr-x 1 vivek vivek  111 Dec 11 16:30 flush-all-redis
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek  549 Dec  9 15:24 hosts
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek  877 Dec  8 22:23 install-packages-on-lxd.yml
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek  429 Nov 10 00:58 legecy.yml
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek  108 Dec 10 08:15 lxd-hosts
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 3299 Nov  5 12:27 lxd.yml
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek   13 Nov 18 21:40 main.retry
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek  147 Oct  5 01:12 main.yml
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek  115 Jun 13  2017 main.ymlbak
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 5352 Jun 25  2017 push-ssh-keys.yml
drwxr-xr-x 2 vivek vivek 4096 Jun 25  2017 ssh-keys
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek  461 Nov 10 00:58 vpn.yml
vivek@nixcraft:~/backups/ansible/maintainence$ ls -la
total 72
drwxr-xr-x 4 vivek vivek 4096 Jan  5 23:14 .
drwxr-xr-x 8 vivek vivek 4096 Oct  1 06:43 ..
drwxr-xr-x 2 vivek vivek 4096 Nov  7 21:42 backup
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek  430 Nov 10 00:58 cluster.yml
-rwxr-xr-x 1 vivek vivek  111 Dec 11 16:30 flush-all-redis
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek    0 Jan  5 23:14 .gitignore
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek  549 Dec  9 15:24 hosts
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek    0 Jan  5 23:14 ignore-list
```

```

-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 8 Jan 5 23:14 .ignore-list
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 877 Dec 8 22:23 install-packages-on-lxd.yml
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 429 Nov 10 00:58 legecy.yml
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 108 Dec 10 08:15 lxd-hosts
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 3299 Nov 5 12:27 lxd.yml
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 13 Nov 18 21:40 main.retry
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 147 Oct 5 01:12 main.yml
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 115 Jun 13 2017 main.ymlbak
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 5352 Jun 25 2017 push-ssh-keys.yml
drwxr-xr-x 2 vivek vivek 4096 Jun 25 2017 ssh-keys
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 461 Nov 10 00:58 vpn.yml
vivek@nixcraft:~/backups/ansible/maintaince$

```

Fig.01: Use ls command to see hidden files

I have two hidden files in the current directory. Let us run the following ls command to see all hidden files in the current directory:

```

$ ls -d .[!~]*
$ ls -l -d .[!~]*

```

Sample outputs:

```

drwxr-x--- 2 vivek vivek 4096 Dec 9 11:23 .android
drwx----- 4 vivek vivek 4096 Oct 20 06:56 .ansible
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 96 Nov 6 14:13 .backup.conf
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 57 Nov 8 12:31 .bash_aliases
-rw----- 1 vivek vivek 56819 Jan 5 20:54 .bash_history
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 220 Oct 14 03:03 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 4529 Jan 4 23:06 .bashrc
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 4165 Jan 4 23:06 .bashrc.backup
drwx----- 37 vivek vivek 4096 Dec 26 00:32 .cache
drwxr-xr-x 3 vivek vivek 4096 Oct 18 19:12 .cert
....
..
drwx----- 4 vivek vivek 4096 Nov 9 19:16 .thunderbird
drwxr-xr-x 4 vivek vivek 4096 Nov 6 14:31 .vim
-rw----- 1 vivek vivek 28383 Jan 5 20:31 .viminfo
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 801 Jan 3 14:16 .vimrc
-rw-rw-r-- 1 vivek vivek 383 Dec 2 16:44 .wget-hsts
-rw----- 1 vivek vivek 54 Oct 18 13:57 .Xauthority
-rw-r--r-- 1 vivek vivek 39811 Nov 28 00:47 .zcompdump

```

Recursively list all hidden files and directories on Linux/Unix

The basic syntax is as follows:

```
find /dir/to/search/ -name ".*" -print
```

OR

```
find /dir/to/search/ -name ".*" -ls
```

Search only hidden files:

```
find /dir/to/search/ -type f -iname ".*" -ls
```

Search only hidden directories:

```
find /dir/to/search/ -type d -iname ".*" -ls
```

Use find command as follows:

```
find /dir/to/search -path '*/.*' -print
```

```
find /dir/to/search -path '*/.*' -ls
```

In this example, search \$HOME for all hidden files and dirs:

```
find $HOME -name ".*" -ls
```

Sample outputs:

```
6553607    4 -rw-r--r--    1 admi    admi          100 Sep 22  2004 ./.
```

```
6553664    4 -rw-----    1 admi    admi        1024 Nov 17 04:40 ./rnc
6553604    4 -rw-r--r--    1 admi    admi          18 May 20 2009 ./bas
6553665    4 drwx-----    2 admi    admi       4096 Dec 18 2012 ./gnu
6553671    0 -rw-----    1 admi    admi          0 Dec 18 2012 ./gnu
6553669    0 -rw-----    1 admi    admi          0 Dec 18 2012 ./gnu
6553673    4 -rw-----    1 admi    admi        899 Dec 18 2012 ./gnu
6553667    8 -rw-----    1 admi    admi       7856 Dec 18 2012 ./gnu
6553668    4 -rw-----    1 admi    admi       1200 Dec 18 2012 ./gnu
6553602   20 -rw-----    1 admi    admi      17462 Apr  7 10:55 ./bas
6553610    4 drwx-----    3 admi    admi       4096 Jan 16 2013 ./cor
6553660    4 drwx-----    2 admi    admi       4096 Jan 16 2013 ./cor
6553681    4 -rw-r--r--    1 admi    admi        597 Apr 11 2013 ./cor
6553723   12 -rw-----    1 admi    admi       9629 Mar 30 23:56 ./vir
6553615    4 drwxr-xr-x    3 admi    admi       4096 Nov 29 2012 ./ori
```

To save the results to a file called foo.txt, use a redirection as follows:

```
## save result to a special file called foo.txt ##
find $HOME/projects/ -name ".*" -ls > foo.txt
cat foo.txt
```

See find(1) command man page for more information.

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The author is the creator of nixCraft and a seasoned sysadmin, DevOps engineer, and a trainer for the Linux operating system/Unix shell scripting. Get the **latest tutorials on SysAdmin, Linux/Unix and open source topics via [RSS/XML feed](#) or [weekly email newsletter](#).**

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 5 comment

Vinoth April 8, 2014 at 5:15 am

Please try below with ls command.

```
ls -lRa > List.txt
```

Chris F.A. Johnson April 8, 2014 at 8:05 pm

There is no point to using `-iname` since there are no alpha characters to match, and since it is non-standard, it will only work with GNU find.

daniel andrade April 10, 2014 at 2:51 pm

```
find . -name ._* -print0 | xargs -0 rm -f
```

to remove all hidden files recursively! :D

beware June 16, 2015 at 3:11 pm

@daniel andrade

Why would you ever remove all hidden files recursively?

rrrrrrrrrrrrrr November 9, 2016 at 8:48 pm

directions unclear, my computer gave me a message to press alt + f4

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