iDB How to transfer files using Bluetooth on Mac and Windows PC
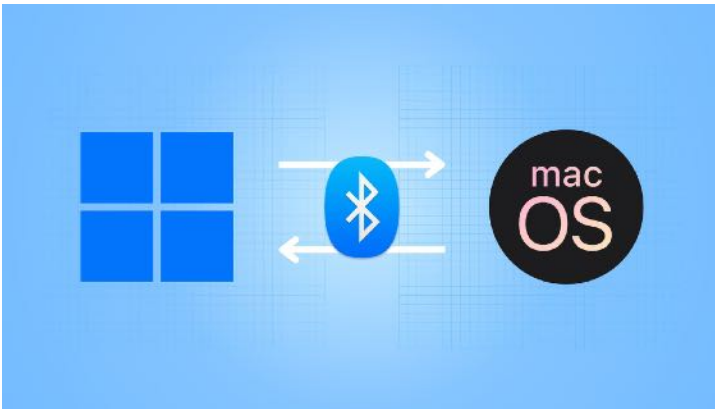
Ankur Thakur · January 10, 2025

Learn how to transfer photos, documents, audio, video, and other files between your Mac and a Windows computer using a Bluetooth connection.

I don't often transfer large files between my Mac and Windows PC, so I haven't set up cloud transfer or re-formatted a thumb drive to work with both Mac and PC.

I use Bluetooth to send and receive files between these two systems for one-off media transfers, and it has served me fine.
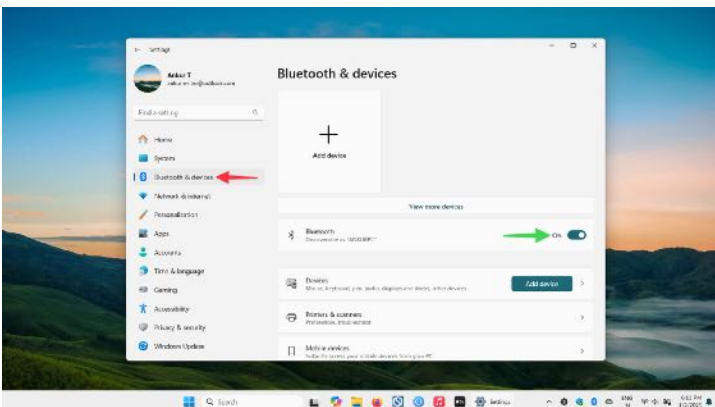
But before you begin, I should let you know that the main downside of Bluetooth transfer is the **super slow speed**.

Another specific limitation with Bluetooth transfer on Windows 11 and Windows 10 is that you must dig into computer settings each time you want to receive a file from a previously paired device. In comparison, my Android phone and Mac are always ready to receive files via Bluetooth from trusted devices, making it a seamless experience.

Because of these two downsides, you may want to use Bluetooth transfer as little as possible between your Mac and Windows PC. But all things considered, Bluetooth protocol is still fine for sharing a couple of wallpapers, screenshots, PDFs, and other small files.
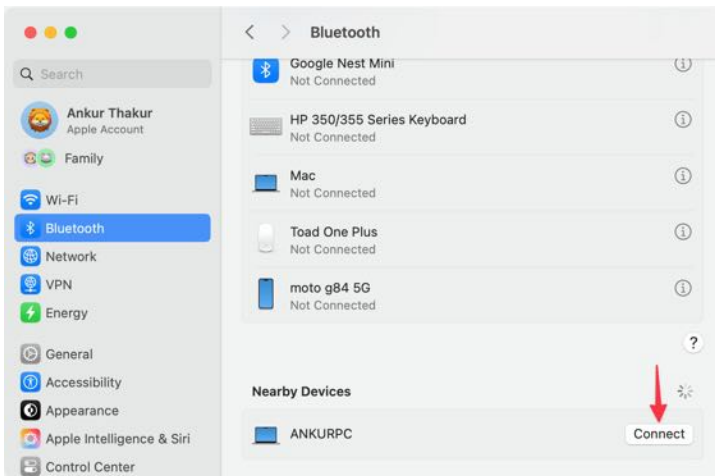
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Send files from Mac to Windows PC
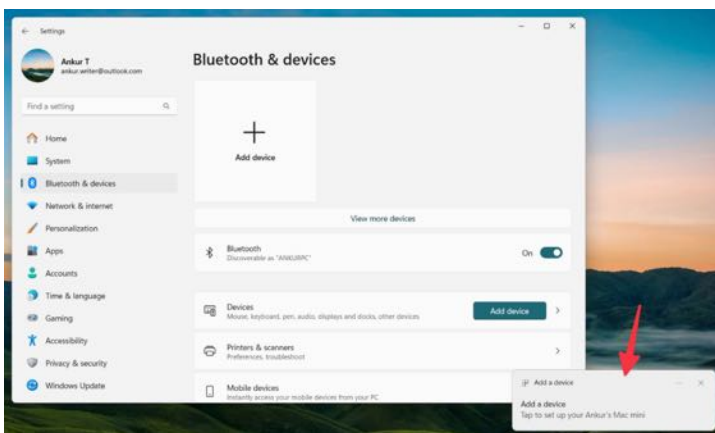
1) Open **Settings** on your Windows PC. You can launch it directly by pressing the *Windows + I* keys.

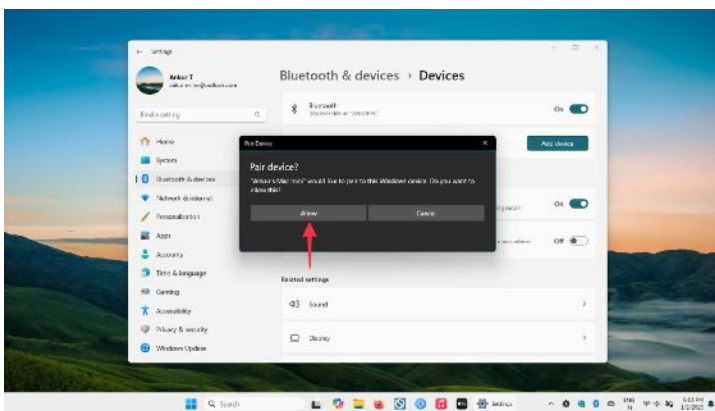**2)** Select **Bluetooth & devices** and make sure **Bluetooth** is activated.

3) Open **System Settings** on your Mac and select **Bluetooth**.
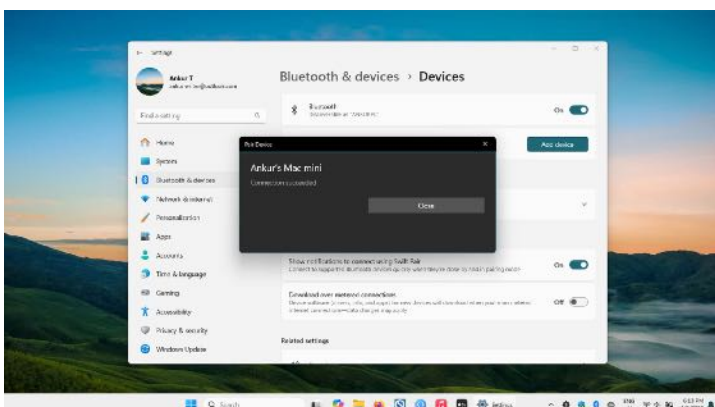
4) Scroll down to the *Nearby Devices* section, and you should see your Windows PC here. Click the **Connect** button next to your PC name.
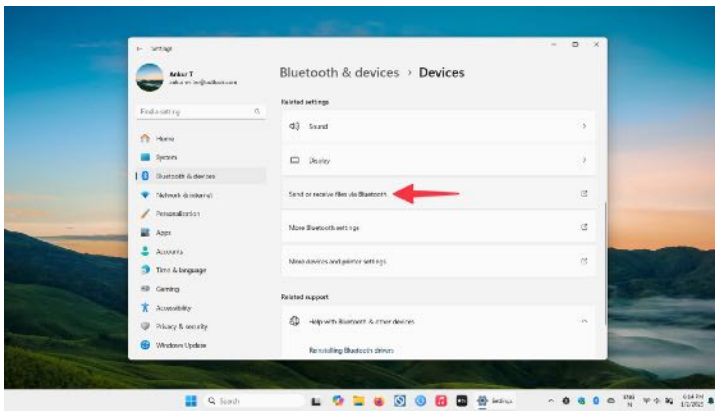
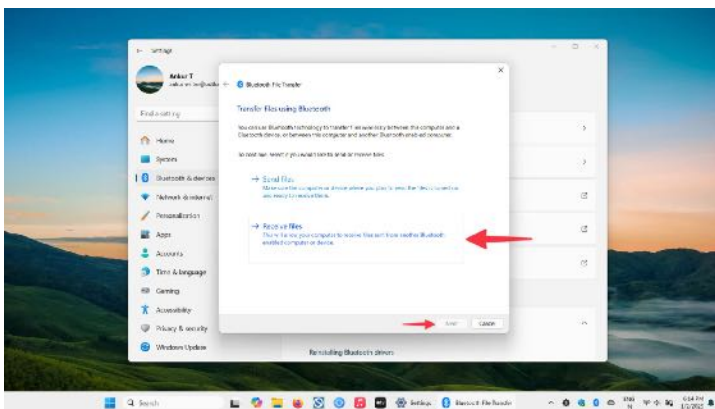**5)** You should now get an alert on your Windows computer. Click it.

6) Make sure the number on your PC screen matches the number on your Mac screen, then hit **Yes** or **Allow** to finish pairing. Note that you may not always see a random number before pairing the devices via Bluetooth.

You have now paired both desktops over Bluetooth. You won't have to repeat the above steps again in the future when you want to transfer files unless you manually forget or remove the devices in Bluetooth settings.
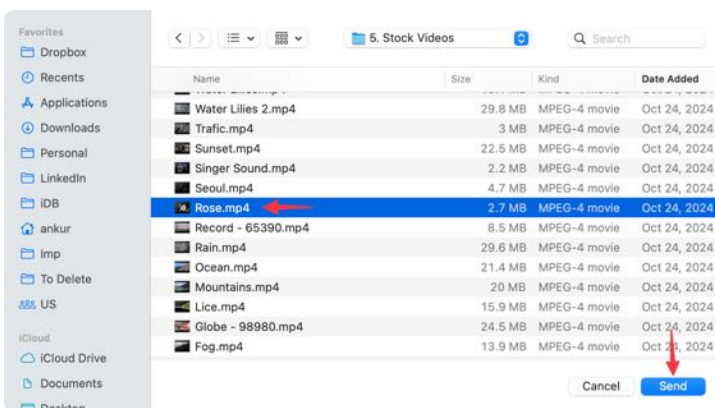
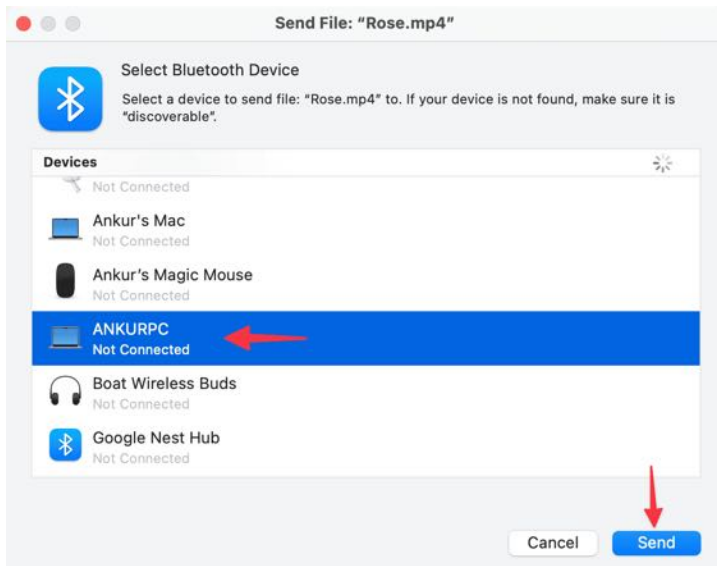**7)** Now scroll down in your Windows PC Bluetooth settings and click **Send or receive files via Bluetooth**.
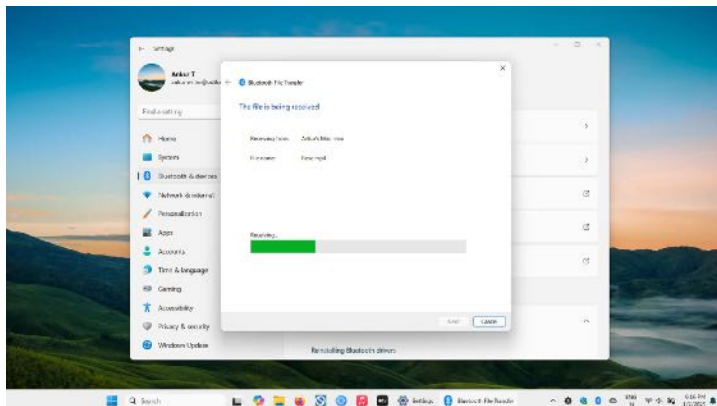

8) Click **Receive files**.

9) Next, open the built-in **Bluetooth File Exchange app** on your Mac by locating it in the *Other* folder of Launchpad or by searching for it in Spotlight.
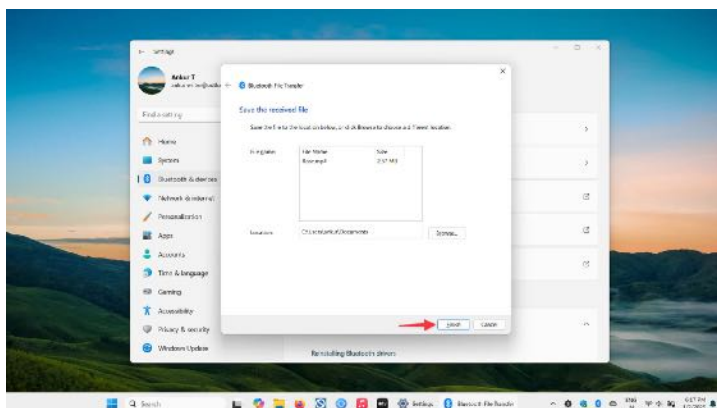

10) Select the files you want to send to your PC from the Finder interface and hit the **Send** button.

11) Choose your Windows PC from the list of devices and click **Send**.

12) Your Windows PC will start receiving the file, and after the transfer finishes, it will show a "Save the received file" window.
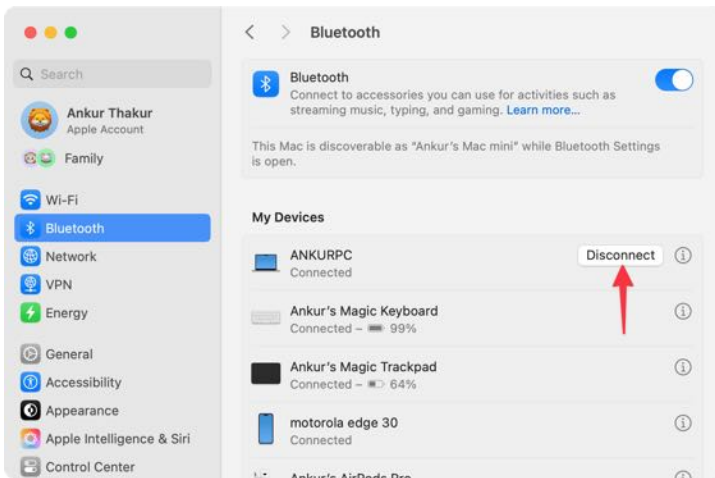

13) Click **Finish** to save the file in the location shown, or click **Browse** to select another location and save it there.
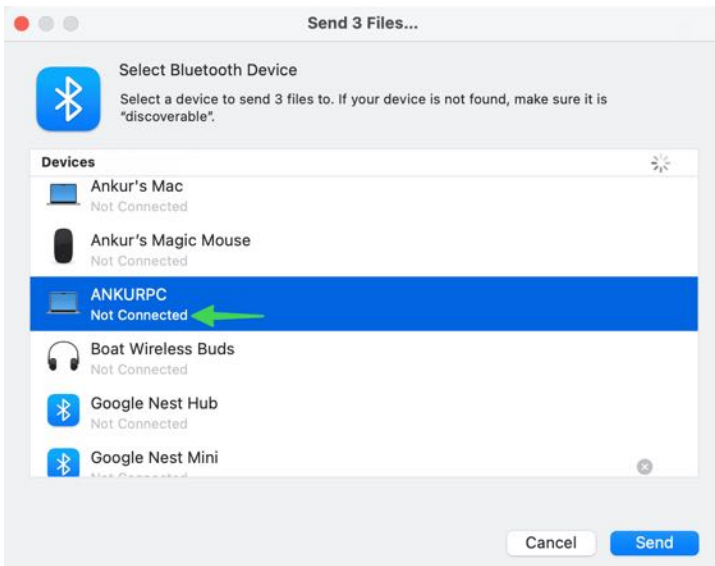
If you can't send the file

You may face an issue where your Mac will get stuck on the "**Connecting to the device**" or "**The device does not have the necessary services**" screen. If this happens:
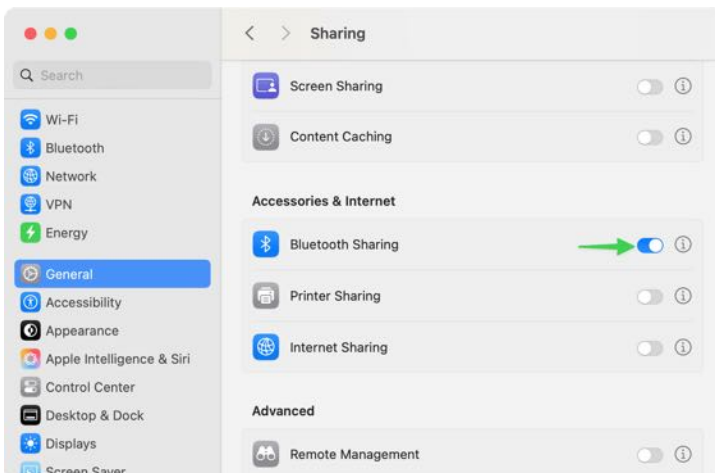
1) Go to your Mac's Bluetooth settings, and if it says "*Connected*" under your PC name, hit the **Disconnect** button there. Remember, we don't want to forget the device; but just disconnect it.
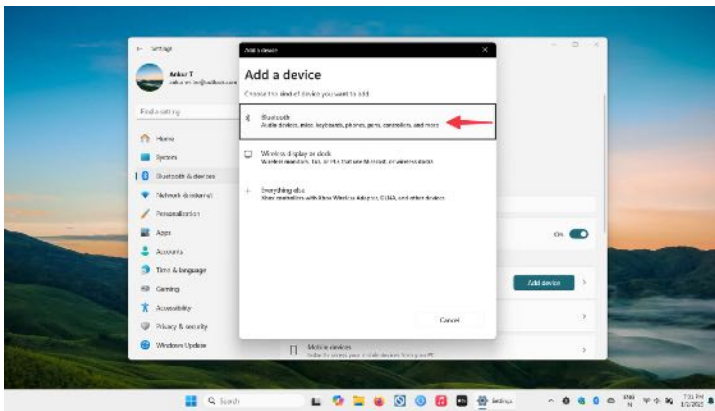

2) Now reopen the Bluetooth File Exchange app and try sending the file again to your PC that says "**Not connected**" under its name. Based on my repeated testing and experience, I can assure you that the file transfer will start, provided you have clicked **Receive Files** on your Windows PC (Steps 7 and 8 above).

Send files from Windows PC to Mac

If you have already paired your Mac and PC, skip directly to step 5 below. Otherwise, follow the initial steps to pair both computers.
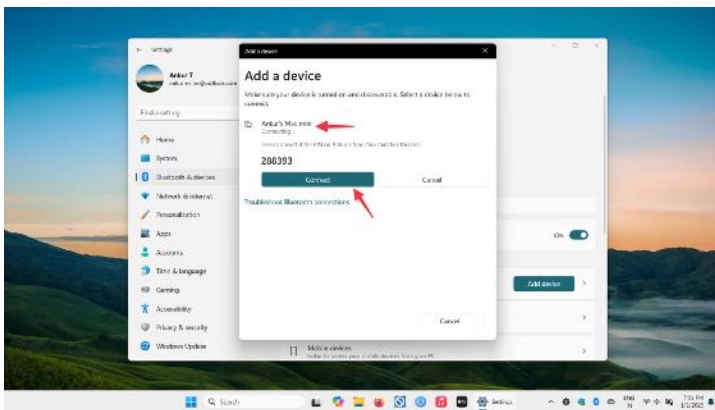

1) Launch Mac's **System Settings**, click **Bluetooth**, and make sure it's on. Next, head to **General** > **Sharing** and ensure **Bluetooth Sharing** is enabled.
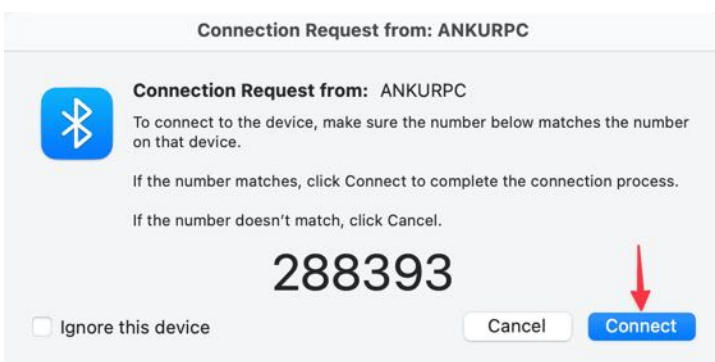
2) Open **Settings** on your Windows PC and select **Bluetooth & devices**.
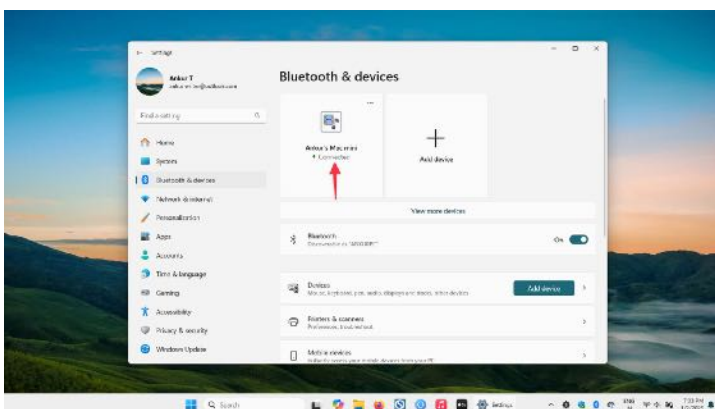
3) Make sure **Bluetooth** is on, and click **Add device** (plus button) at the top, followed by **Bluetooth**.

4) Select your Mac, and you will get an alert on your Apple computer. Make sure the numbers on your Mac and PC screens match and hit the **Connect** button in both places.
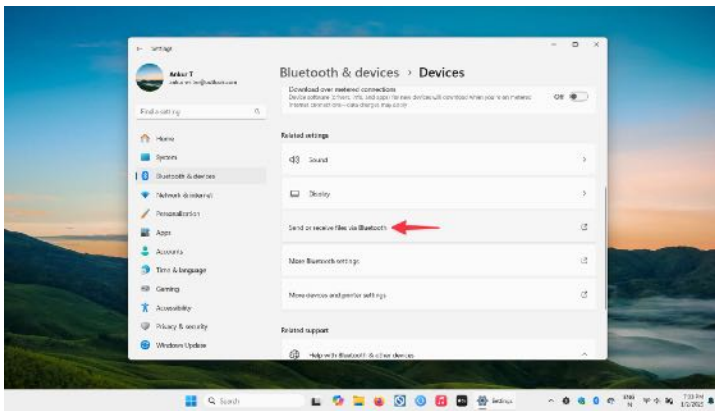

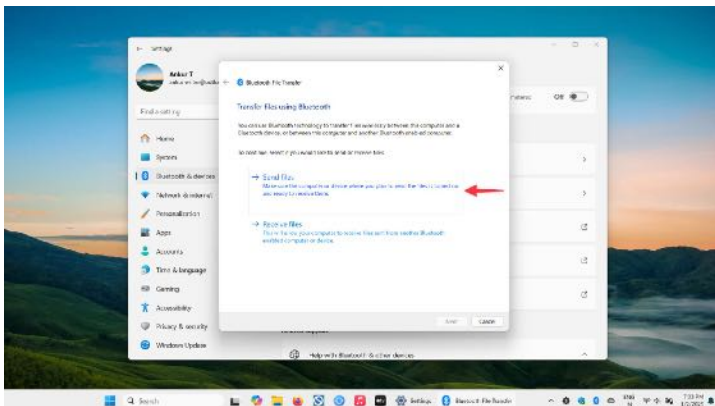Above, we have a Windows screenshot, and here's how it looks on Mac:

5) With the computers paired, click your **Mac's name** at the top of the Bluetooth settings on your PC. Note that in some cases, your Mac's name may appear different as *Bluetooth LE Device with random numbers*.
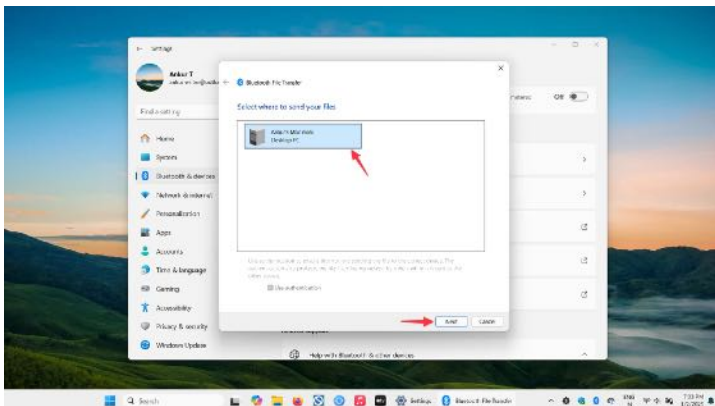
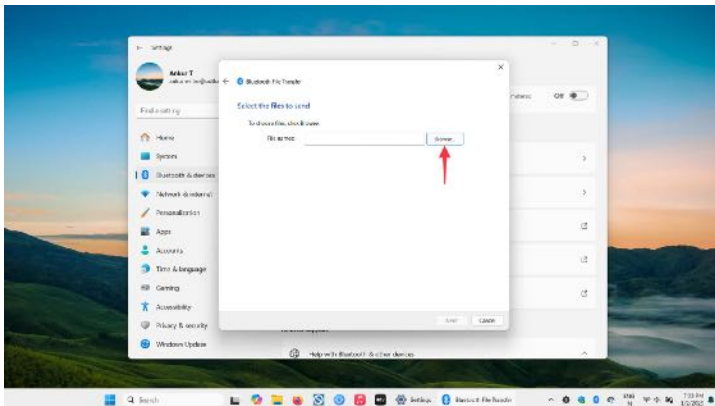**6)** Scroll down and click **Send or receive files via Bluetooth**.
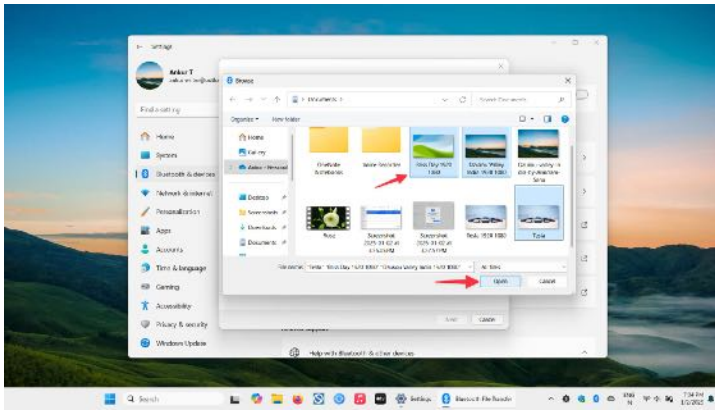

7) Click **Send files**.

8) Click your Mac on the "Select where to send your files" screen and hit **Next**.
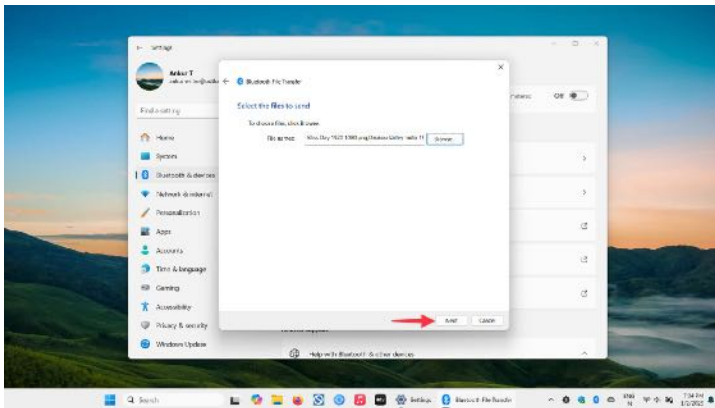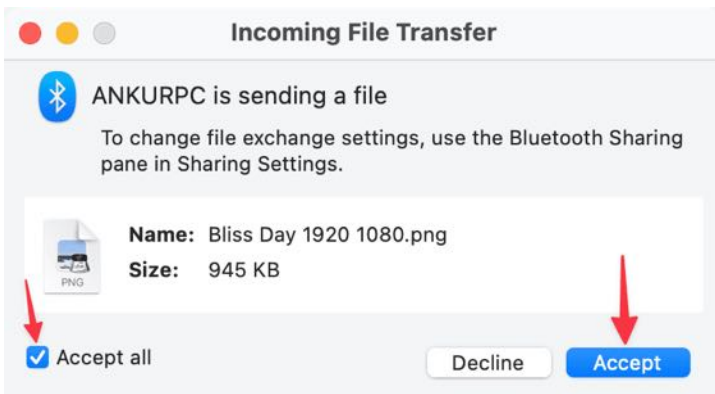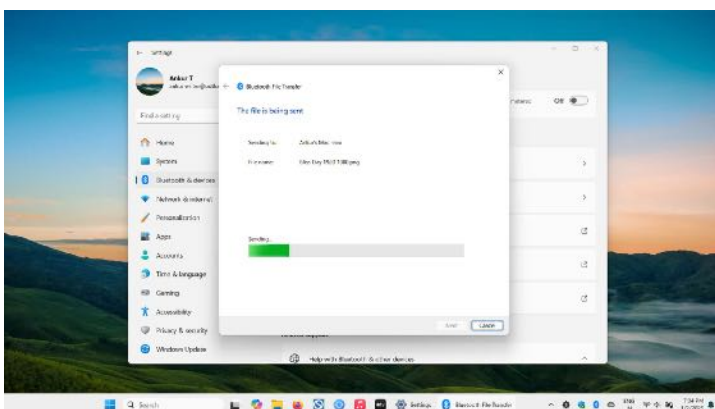

9) Click **Browse**.

10) Select what you want to send from File Explorer, and then click **Open**.

11) Now, click **Next**.

12) Hit **Accept** on your Mac to receive the incoming Bluetooth file transfer request.

Your PC will start sending the files to your Mac. Once the transfer is successful, you'll find these files in your Mac's **Downloads** folder.

About setting Windows PC to automatically receive files over Bluetooth

Unlike Mac and Android phones, your Windows PC can't permanently stay in Bluetooth file-receiving mode for security reasons. You'll have to go to PC Settings > Bluetooth & devices > Devices > Send or receive files via Bluetooth and click **Receive files** every time!

If Bluetooth file transfer fails on Mac and PC

Do the following if the Bluetooth connection fails or you can't send and receive files wirelessly:

- Close and reopen settings on your Mac and Windows PC.
- Forget both computers from Settings/System Settings and pair them again.
- Restart both computers.
- Update Bluetooth drivers on your Windows PC by going to **Settings** > **Windows Update** > **Check for Updates**. Next, click **Advanced options** > **Optional updates** to check if an update is available for your computer's Bluetooth.

Alternatives if the problem continues

In case you still can't get Bluetooth transfer to work, please consider sending the files via a thumb drive, WhatsApp, email, Sharedrop, or a cloud service like OneDrive, Google Drive, Dropbox, or iCloud Drive.

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