How To Use WordPress Widgets – Part 2

🏔 **wptrainingmanual.com**/wordpress-tutorials/use-widgets-2
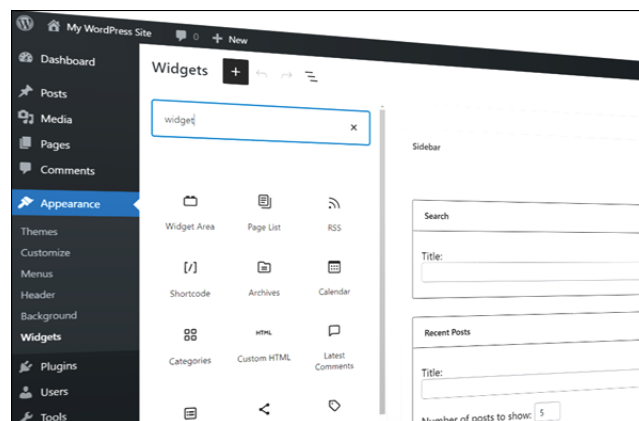
In part 2 of this tutorial series on using widgets, you will learn how to add commonly used widgets to your sidebar, header, or footer.

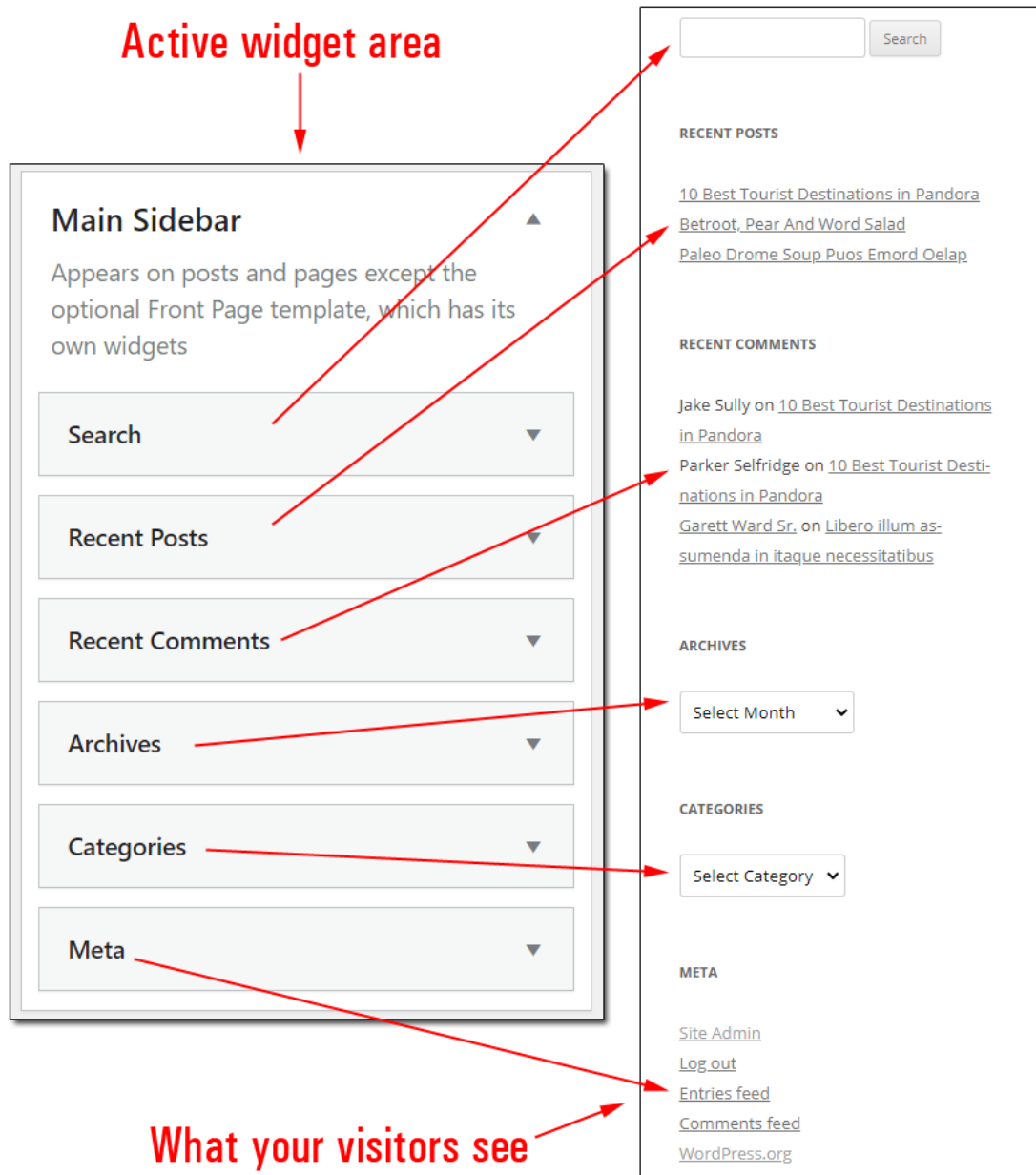This tutorial covers:

For additional tutorials, go here:

Default Widgets

As explained in **Part 1**, WordPress includes many default widgets.

These widgets allow you to add useful functions and features to widgetized areas of your site like displaying a search box, archives, calendar, RSS feed, categories, tags, pages, latest posts, latest comments, custom menus, etc.

Add useful functions to your site using widgets.

The block-based widget editor provides great flexibility, as it allows you to add any type of block available to your widget areas.
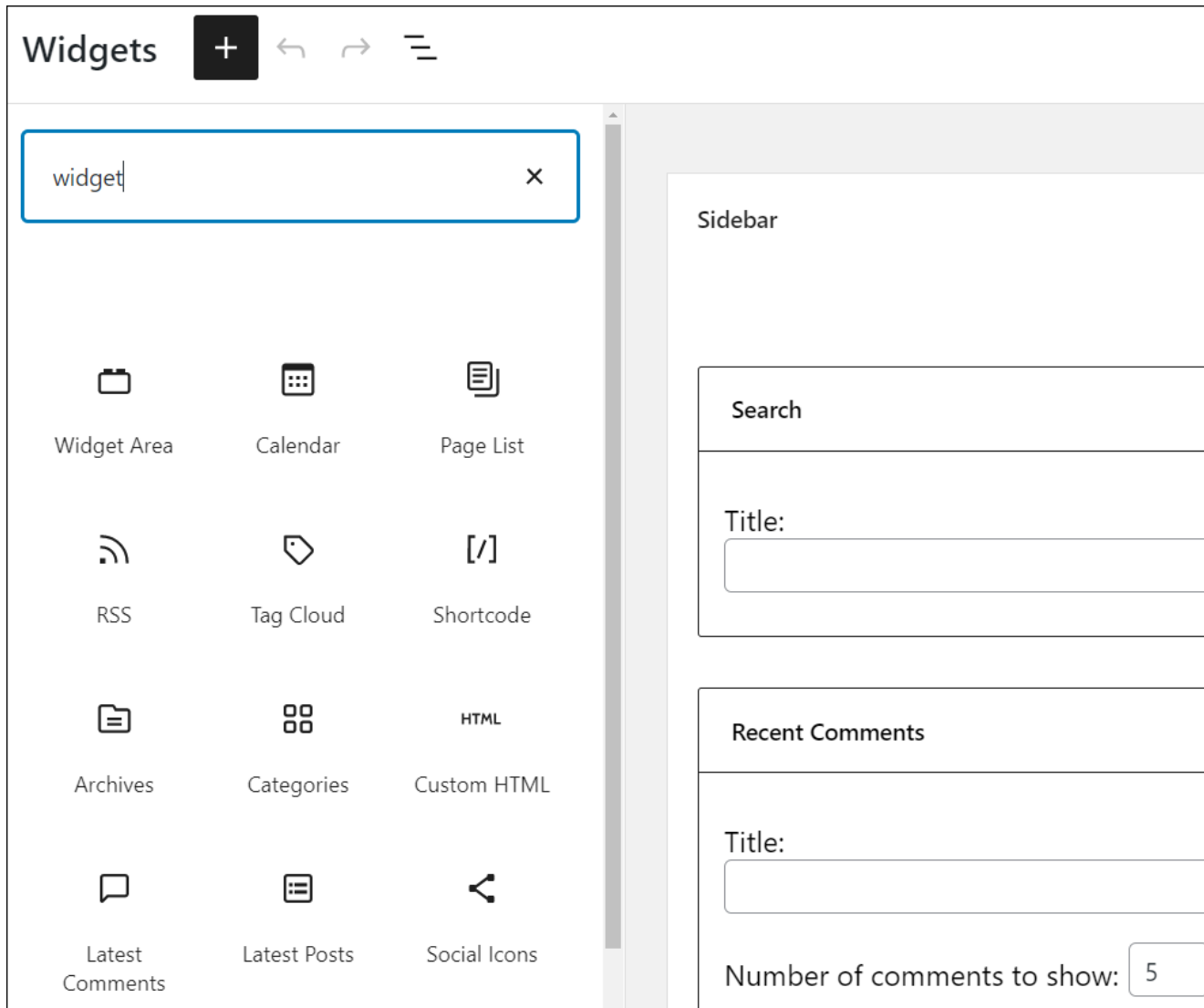
Block-based widget editor.

In this tutorial, we will use the Classic Widgets editor and refer to the related blocks you can use to add the same functionality.

Commonly Used WordPress Widgets

We'll add the following widgets to a site:

- A **text box** containing some text.
- A **clickable image** linking visitors to your contact page.
- A **post categories** section with a drop-down menu.
- A section to display your **latest posts**.
- A section to display your **latest post comments**.
- A list of your site's **pages**.
- A **custom menu** widget with links to useful resources.
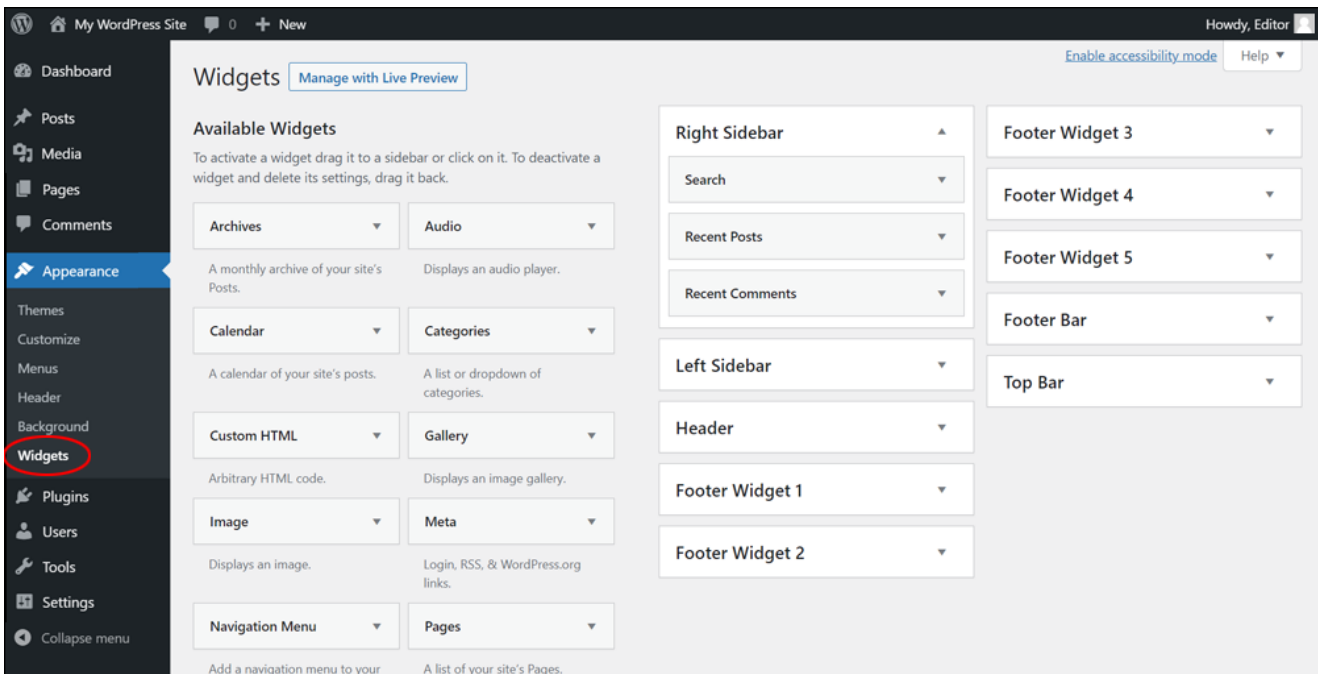- A **video**.
- An **audio file**.

- A list of clickable tags using a **tag cloud**.
- **Post archives**.

To access the Widgets screen, go to **Appearance > Widgets**.
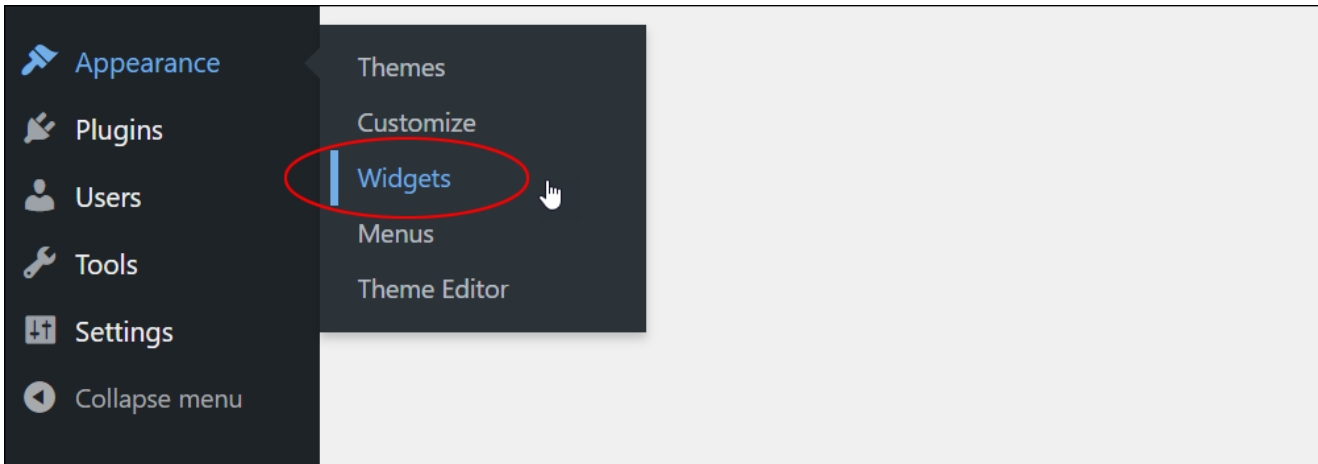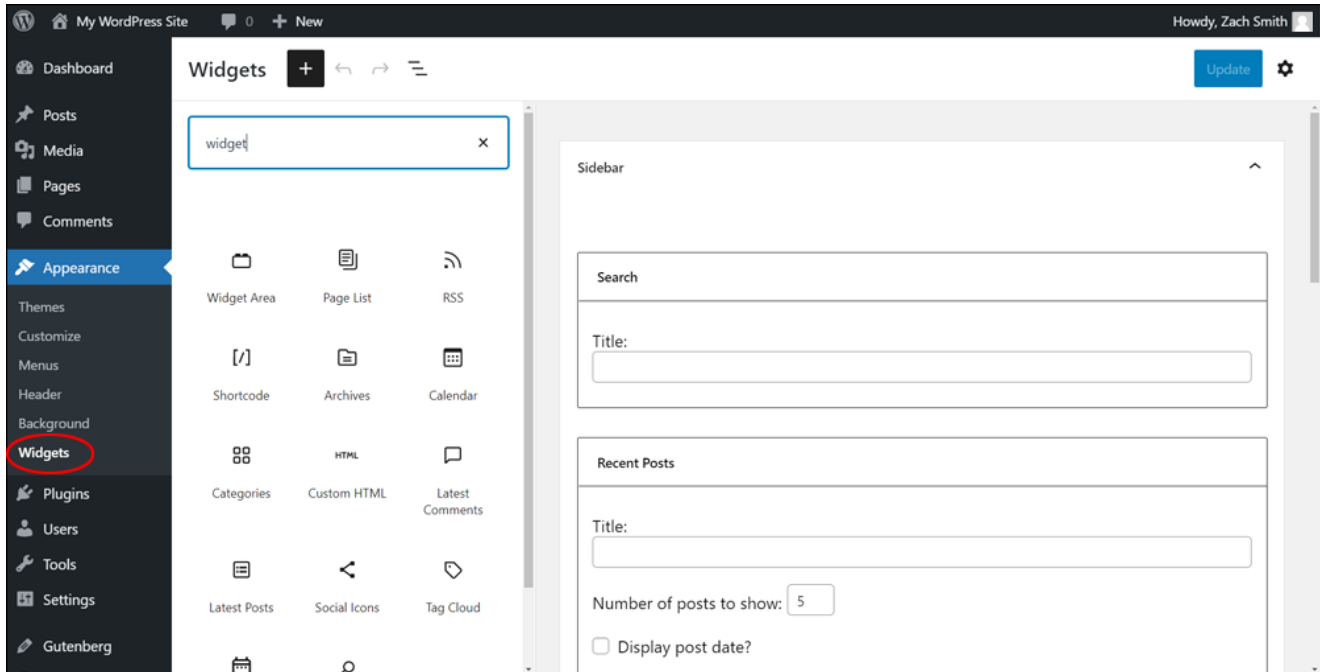

Go to Widgets.

This will bring up the Widgets screen on your browser.

Classic Widgets screen.

If your site uses the block-based Widgets editor, your screen will look like the screenshot below.
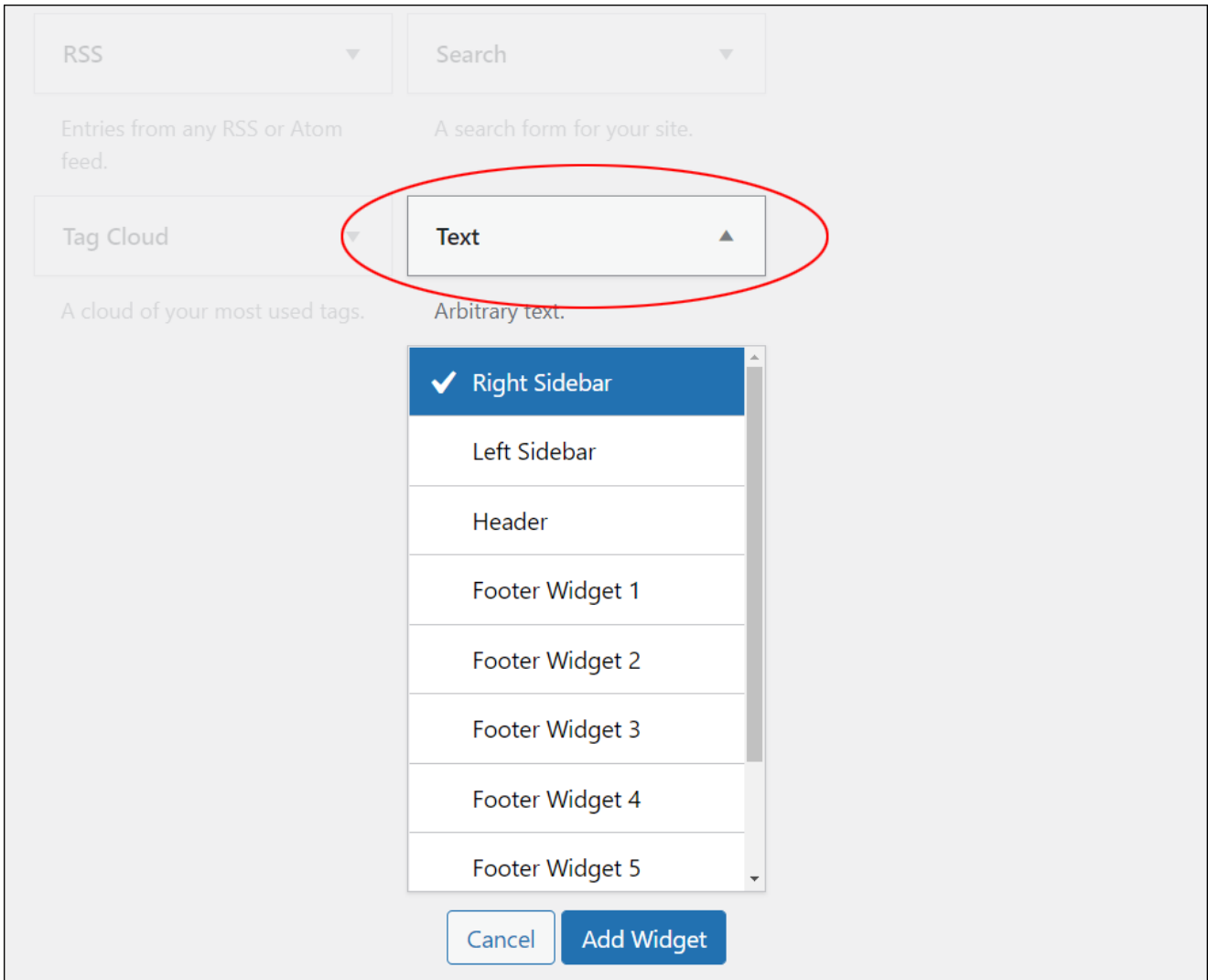
Block-based Widgets screen.

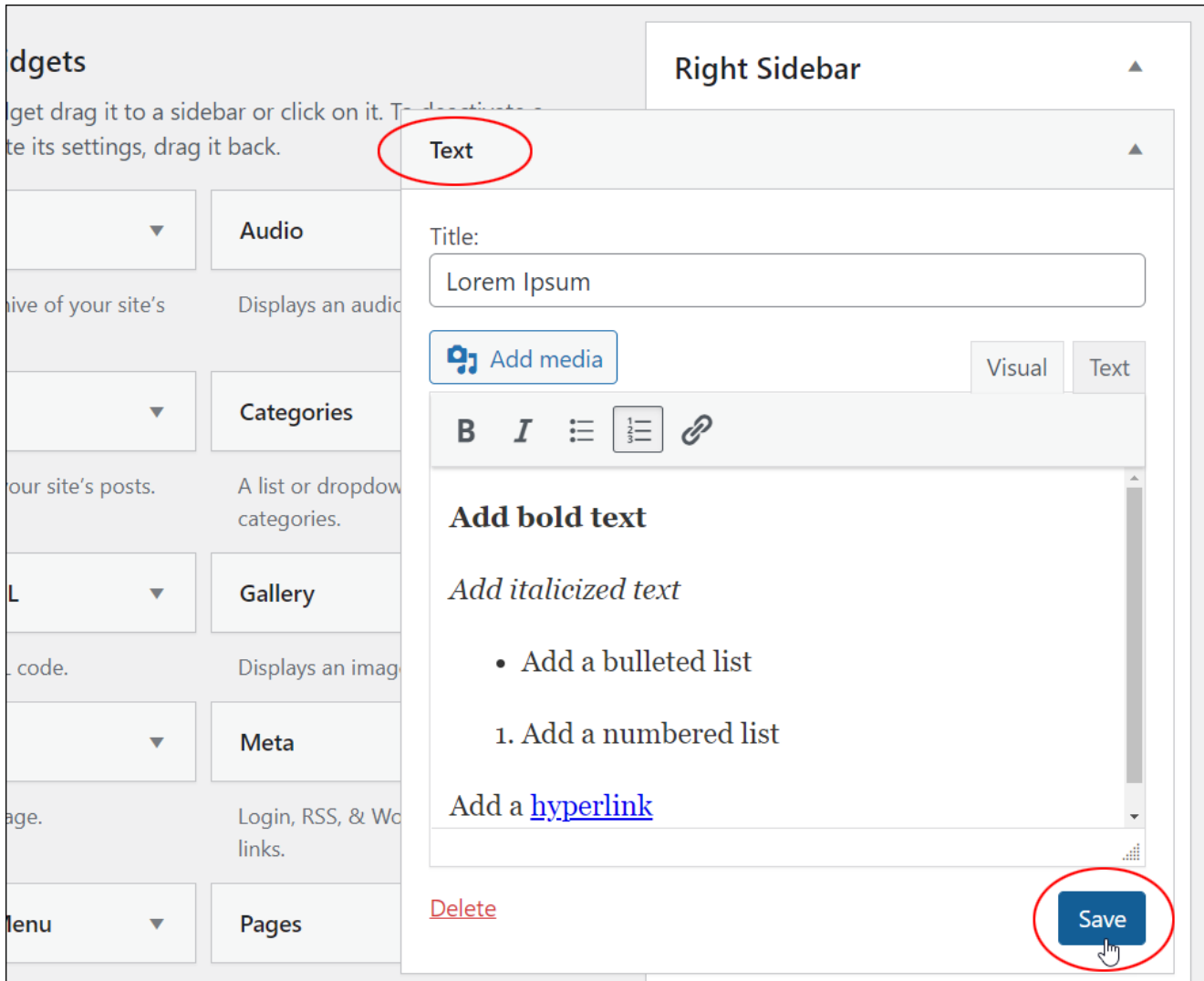Let's start adding some widgets.

Add Text

You can add text to a sidebar, header, or footer area using the **Text** widget.

Select the Text widget from the Available Widgets section and either drag and drop it into a widget area or click to select and add it to a location.
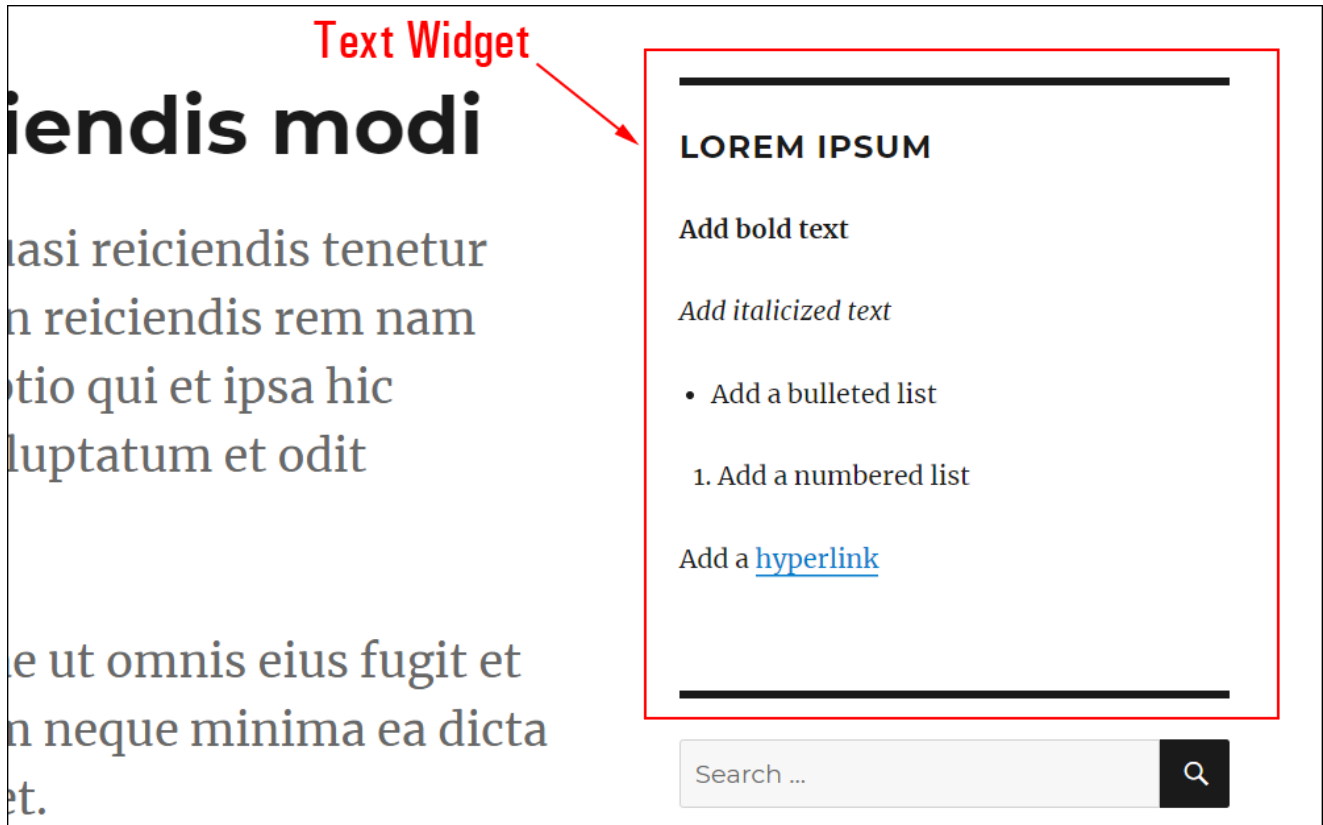
Text widget.

The text widget has rich text editing capabilities.

The Text widget has a rich text editor.

You can quickly and easily format text using bold and italics, create bullet or numbered lists and insert links into your text.

Text Widget

LOREM IPSUM

Add bold text

Add italicized text

- Add a bulleted list

1. Add a numbered list

Add a hyperlink

Search ...

Format text easily with the text widget.

You can add just about anything you want using a text widget, especially when using the Text tab or the Insert Media button.

For example, you can add:

- Single lines, sentences, paragraphs, or snippets of text
- Comments, notices, quotes, event announcements
- Email and contact details
- Lists
- Tips
- Images, videos, and other media
- Forms
- Messages
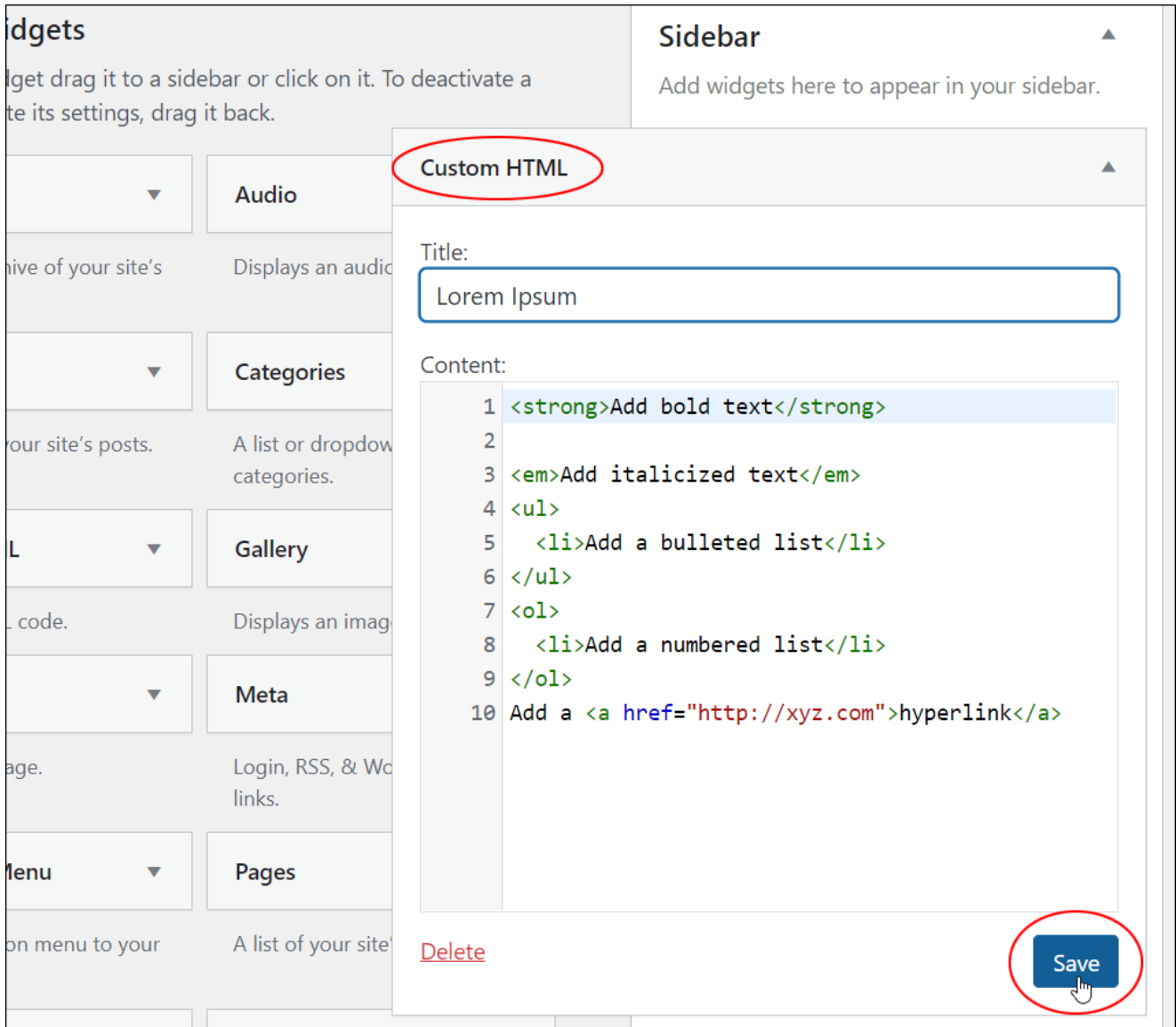- And more!

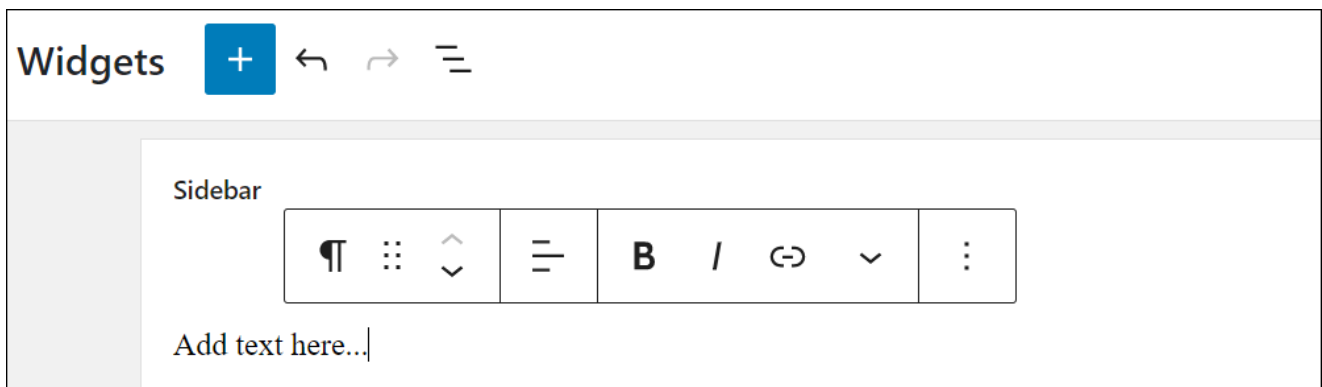Paste HTML into the Text tab.

If adding scripts or HTML-formatted content, we recommend using the **Custom HTML** widget instead.

Custom HTML widget.

If you are using the block-based Widgets editor, there are several blocks you can choose from, including:

Add text to a Sidebar widget area using a Paragraph block.

Add A Clickable Image

Let's add a clickable image so visitors can contact you for help and support.

Make sure you have:

1. Created or sourced your image.
2. Uploaded this image to your site's server or cloud storage location.
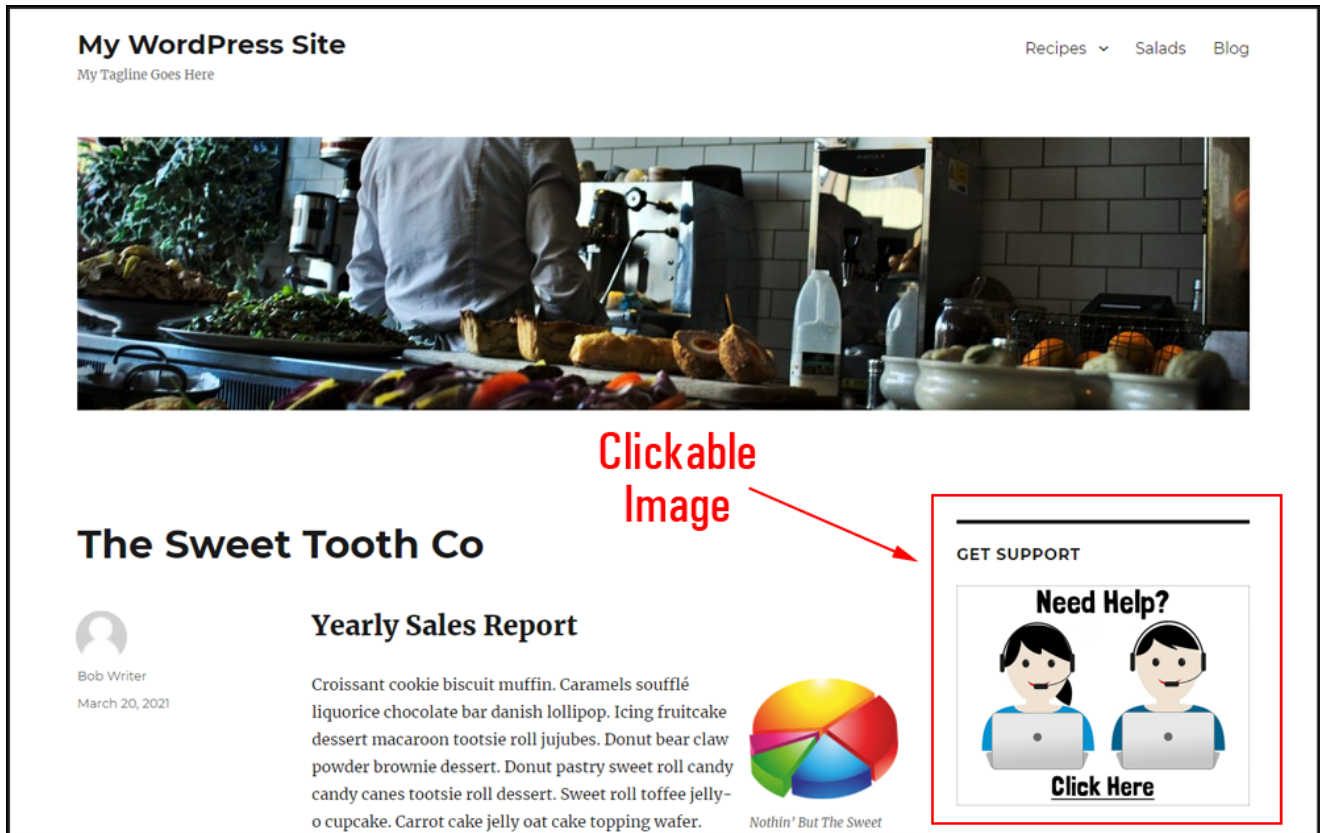3. Created a destination page to link the image to (e.g. a 'Contact Us' page)

If you need help with these steps, see the tutorials below:

Here's the image we will use for this example…

Let's add this image to our sidebar and link it to our Contact Us page.

We'll set up the clickable image to display at the top of the sidebar like in the screenshot shown below.

Our sidebar image widget.

Step 1 – Upload your image.

Upload the image to your server and write down the URL pointing to your server's image location.

For example:
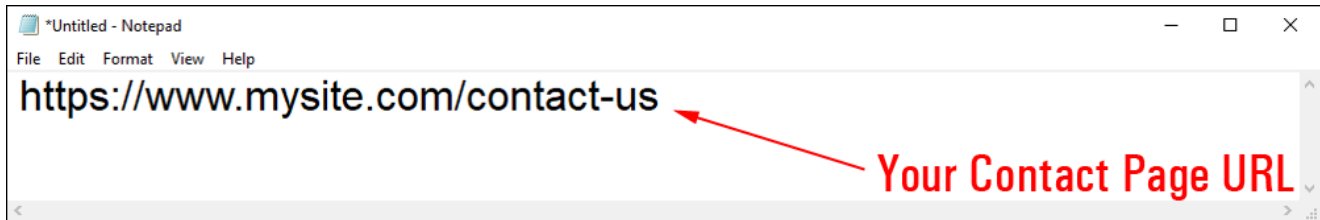
```
http://www.yourdomain.com/images/support.png
```

You will need this information in *Step 3.*

Step 2 – Add your destination page.

For visitors to go to your contact page when they click on the image, you should already have created a contact page, or an existing destination page (e.g. a helpdesk).

We will link your image to this URL in *Step 3.*

Your Contact Page URL.

Step 3 – Link your image to your destination page.

If you're not a technically minded person, don't worry…this sounds more technical than it really is.

In simple terms, we need to add an instruction for our site to link our image with our destination URL (e.g. Contact page).
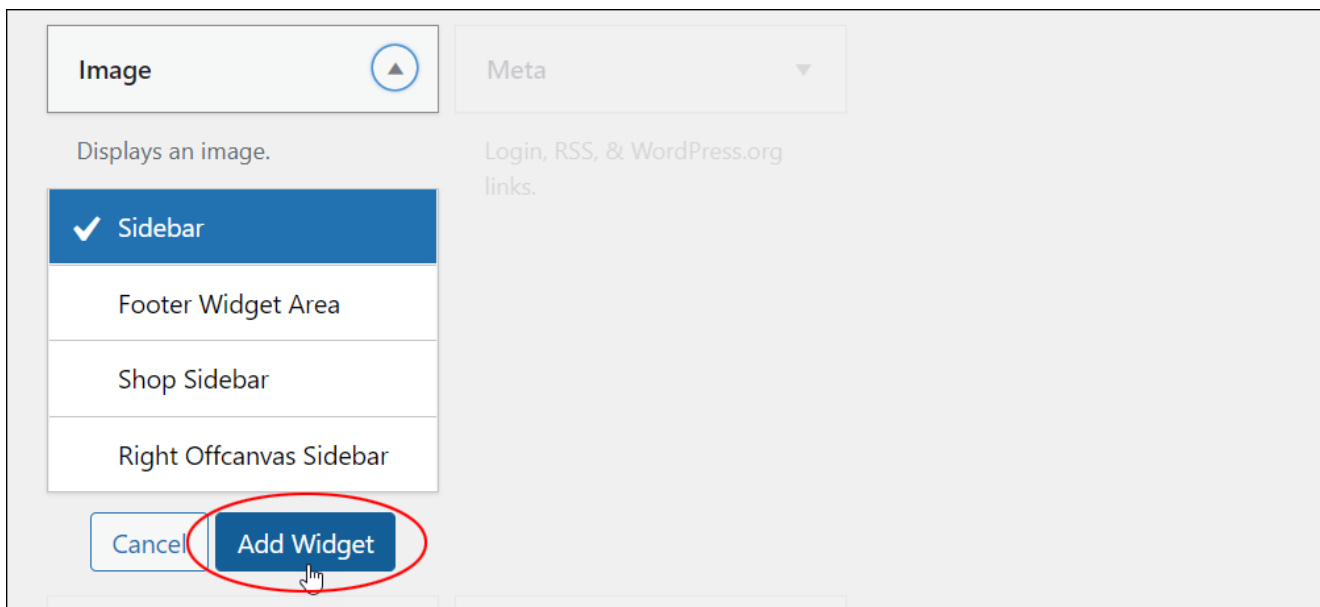
There are a couple of ways to do this:

1. Use an **Image widget** (easiest method)
2. Use a **Text widget** (you just need to add the linking instructions in HTML format. Note: you could also use the **Custom HTML** widget.)

Let's go through both methods.

Use An Image Widget

In the Widgets screen, select and add an image widget to the sidebar area.

Select the Image widget and click on the Add Widget button to add the widget to your sidebar.

After adding the Image widget to your sidebar area, expand the widget and click on the Add Image link.
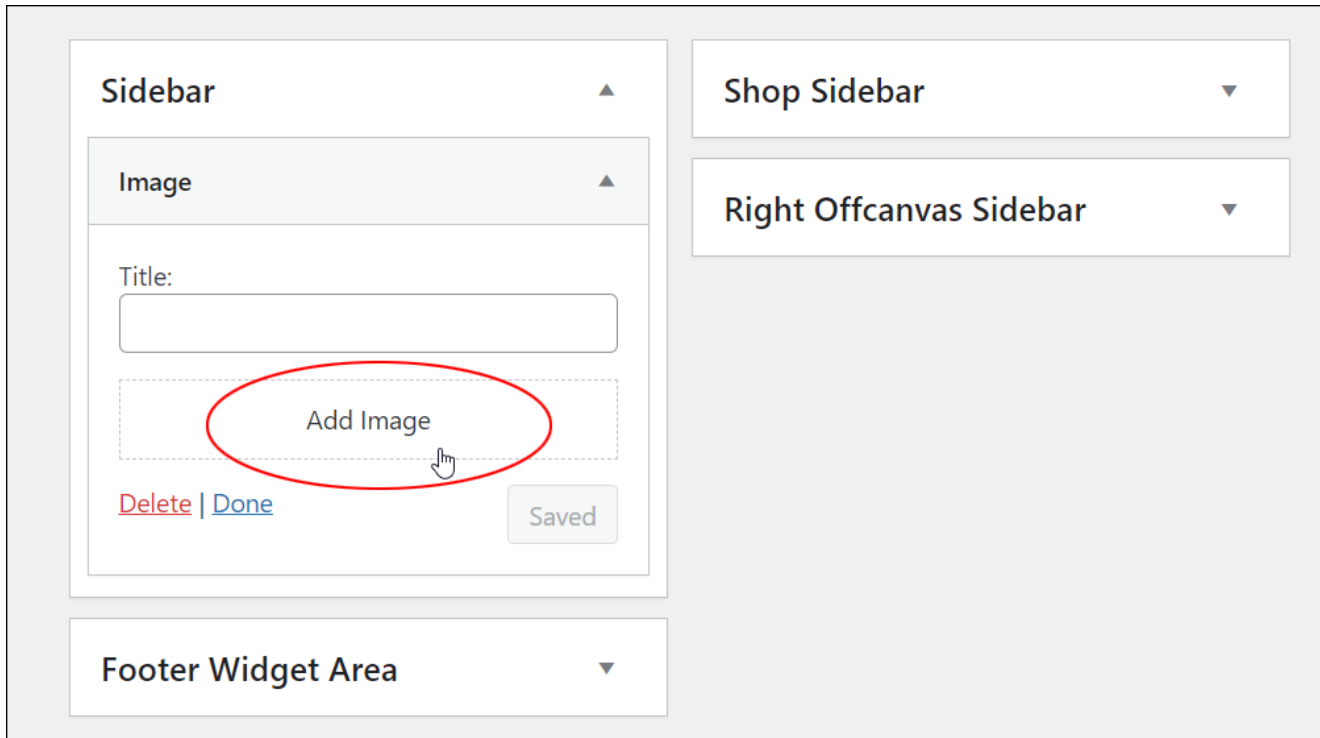
Click on the Add Image link.

Select the image from your **Media Library** (either upload it or use the Insert from URL feature) and click on the **Add to Widget** button.
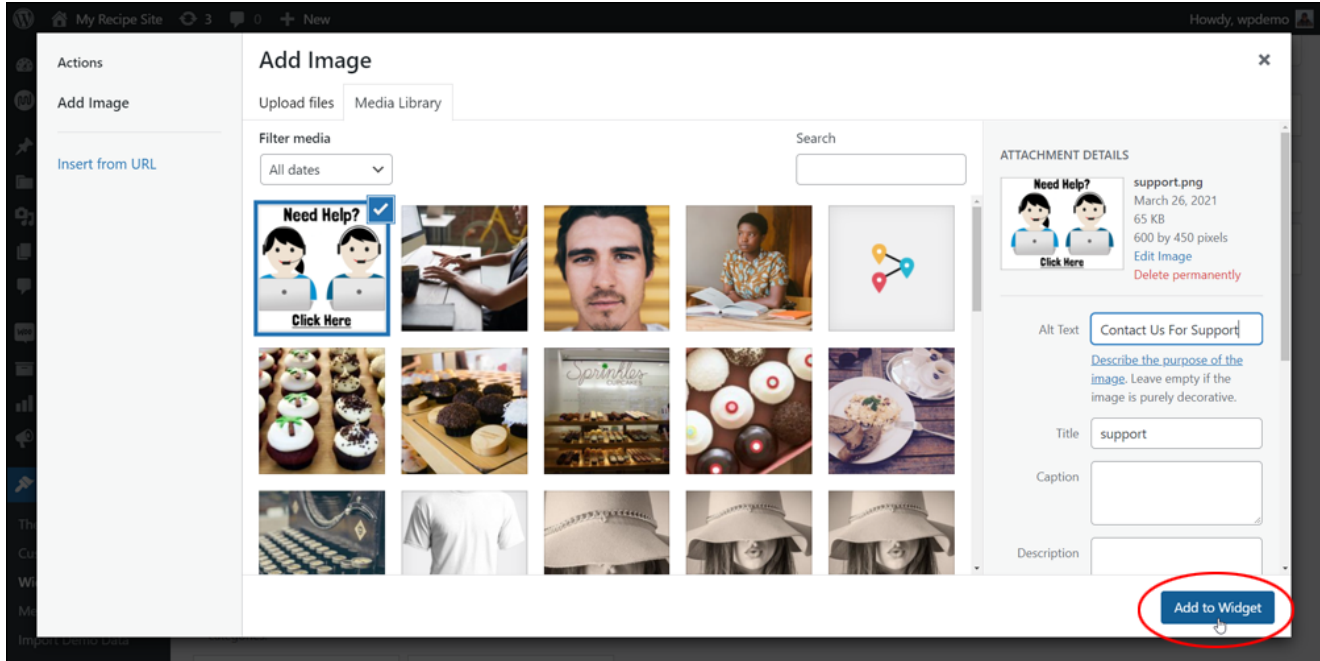
Select your image.

Complete the following steps:

- Add a title to your widget (e.g. "Get Support"),
- Insert the URL to your contact page (see Step #2)

- Click the **Save** button when done.

You're almost done…

Finally, preview and test the clickable image on your site to make sure it works and sends visitors to the correct destination URL.

GET SUPPORT

Need Help?

Click Here

Congratulations! You have added a clickable image to your sidebar.

If you want to link your image to an external URL or replace your clickable image, use the 'Edit Image' or 'Replace Image' buttons.

in Tokyo, pet food in London,

you find in your neighborhood?
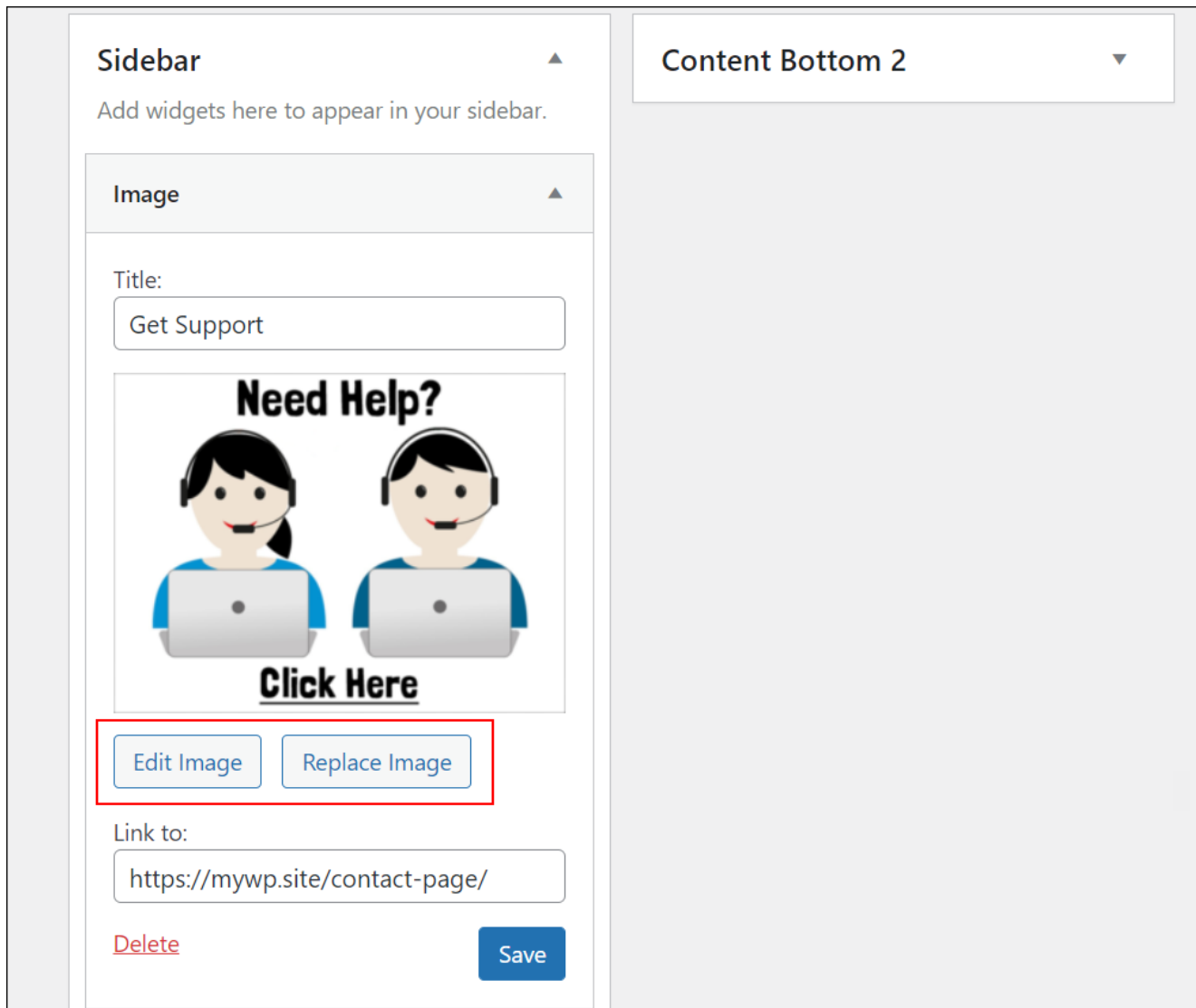
You can easily edit or replace your clickable image.

To learn more about using these image functions, see this tutorial: **How To Add And Format Images In WordPress**

If you are using the block-based Widgets editor, see this tutorial: **Image block**

Use A Text Widget
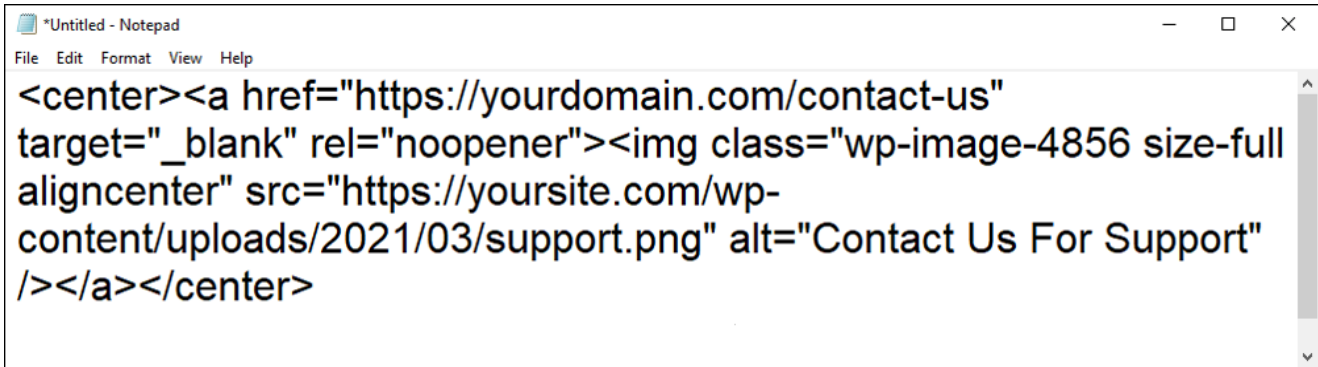
As stated earlier, we recommend using the **Custom HTML widget** for adding HTML code.

For this example, however, we'll stick with the **Text widget** as it will help you understand the basic concept.

Also, if you plan to add a clickable image using a text widget, we recommend writing the instruction code for adding a clickable image in a plain text file.

We'll then copy and paste the code into the text widget.

Your code should look something like this…
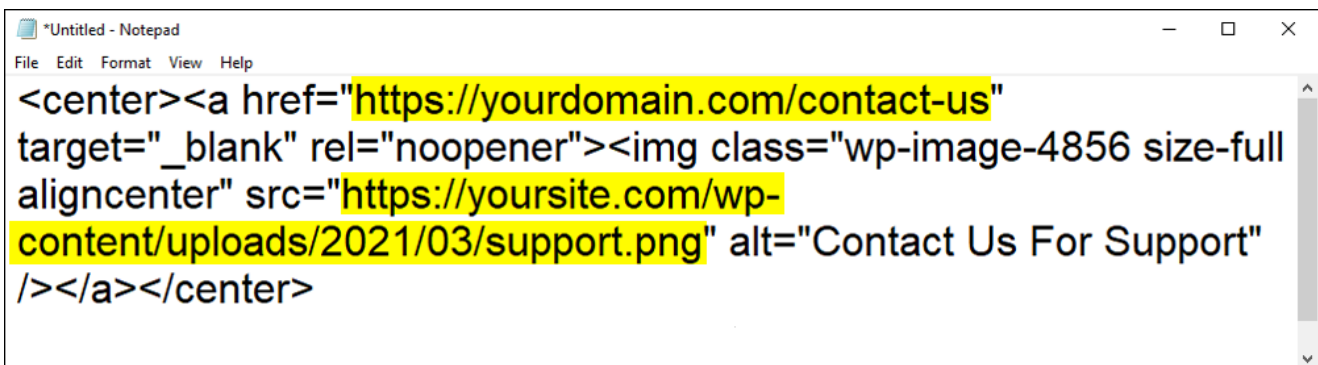
Notes:

- Replace `https://yourdomain.com/contact-us` in the above code with the URL of your contact page location.
- Replace the above image URL with the URL of your server's image location.
- Test your clickable image URLs (e.g. your contact page) to make sure you have the correct URLs, or your clickable image won't work.

The image below shows the sections that need to be replaced with your contact page and image URL details.

Replace the highlighted sections with your actual details.

Replace the above URLs and copy all this code to your clipboard.

If you need help understanding HTML code, see this tutorial: **A Basic Guide to HTML**

Also, see the "Tips" section of this tutorial for additional information and shortcuts to creating HTML code you can add to widgets.

With the code copied to your clipboard, go back to your Widgets screen.

Let's add a Text widget to the sidebar location where you want your clickable image to appear.

In the *Available Widgets* area, select the Text widget.
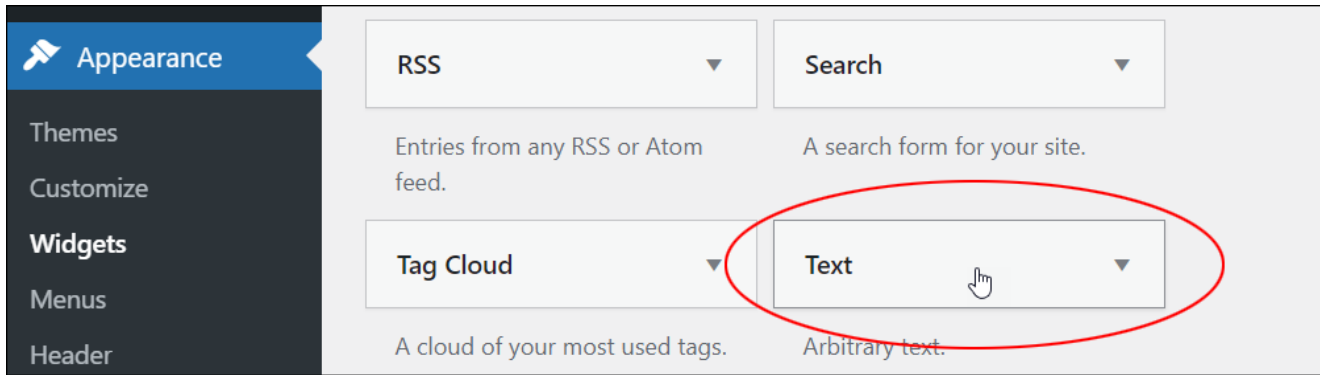
Text widget.

Select *Sidebar* and click the 'Add Widget' button or drag the widget to the *Active Widgets* section and release it at the top of the *Sidebar widget area*.
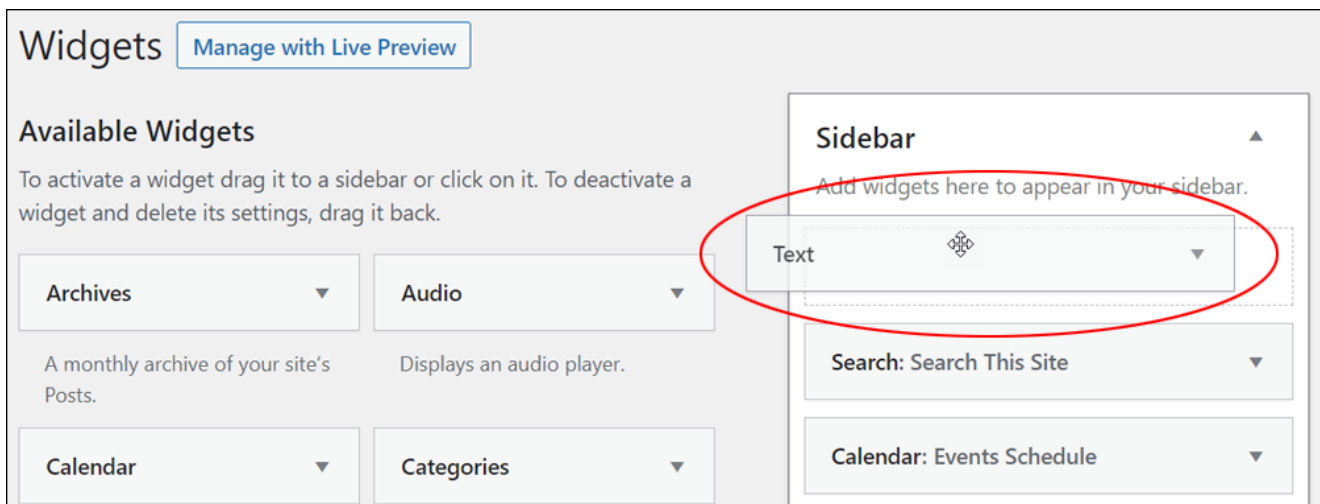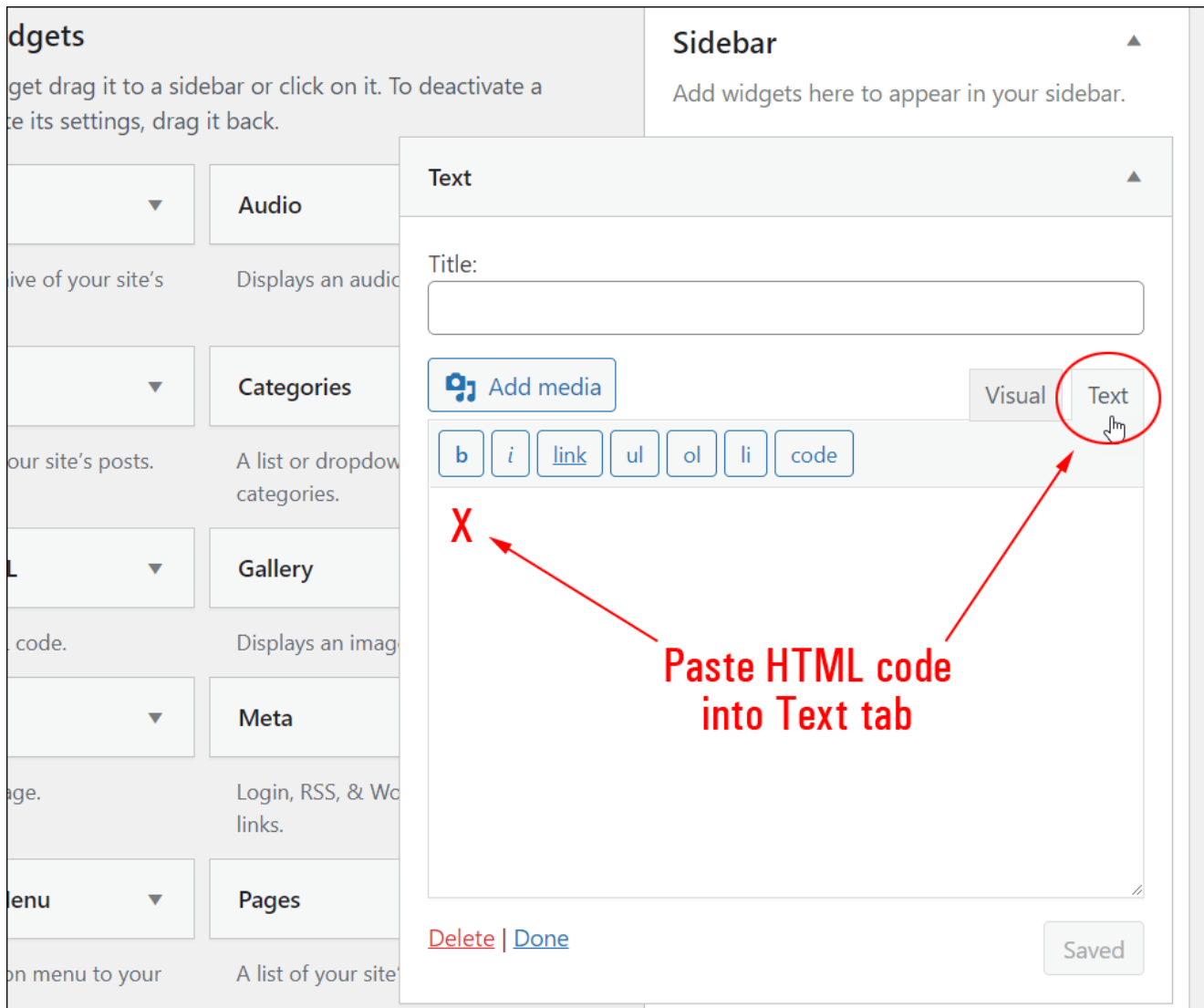

Add the Text widget to the top of the Sidebar widget area.

Next, let's configure the text widget's settings.

Click on the *Text* widget title bar to expand the widget. We'll paste the code with the graphic image and link to your contact page from your clipboard into the text widget's content area.

Make sure you have the Text tab selected.

Paste the HTML code from your clipboard into the Text tab content area.

Do the following:

1. Add a title to your widget if you want (e.g. "Need Help?", "Get Support", etc.) – *optional*.
2. Paste the code with your links into the Text tab's content area.
3. Click the **Save** button when done.

HTML code for clickable image added to a Text widget.

The last step is to visit your site, refresh your browser, and make sure everything's working ok.

If all links have been added correctly, clicking on the image in your sidebar should take you to the correct destination.

Test your clickable image to make sure it's working correctly.

Useful Tips:

Adding `target="_blank"` to the destination URL code opens the destination page in a new window when visitors click on the image (so they don't leave the page they're currently visiting).

Adding this code opens the destination link in a new window.

Remove this code if you don't want the link to open in a new window (i.e. visitors will leave the page they're on and go to the destination page.)

Additional Tips:

- If you don't want your clickable image to be centered in your sidebar, delete the `<center>` and `</center>` tags from the beginning and end of the line of code. The image will align to its default settings (normally left-aligned).
- You can link the image to any destination URL you like (e.g. any external or external link, helpdesk or contact form page, support forum, FAQ section, etc.)
- You can also change the destination link anytime by replacing the link in the text widget's content.

Now that you know how to set up a text widget containing a clickable support button, let's configure a widget to display your *Post Categories.*

Add A Post Categories Widget

The **Categories** widget displays on your sidebar by default.

If the Categories widget has already been added to your widget area (normally the sidebar), all you need to do is position it where you want it to display using drag and drop or by clicking on the widget's 'move' links.
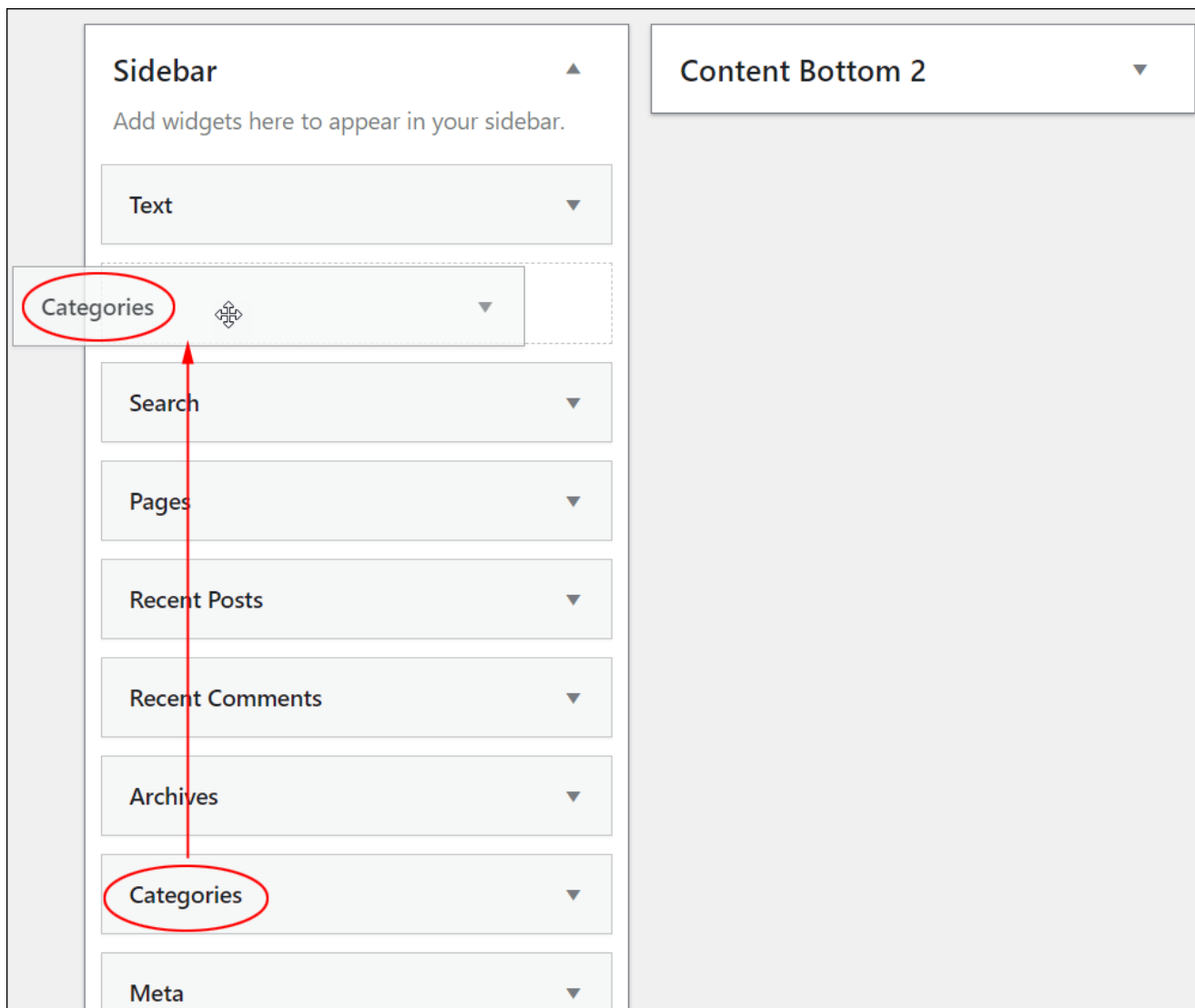
Reposition your Categories widgets.

If you can't see the Categories widget on your active widgets area, use drag and drop or select and click on the 'Add Widget' button to add it to your sidebar (or footer, header, etc.) from your Available widgets section.

Set up your Post Categories before adding the *Categories* widget to display a list of categories on your site using the widget.

If you need help setting up post categories, see this tutorial: **How To Use Post Categories In WordPress**

Post Categories screen.

Configure your **Categories** widget as follows:

- In **Title**: leave as is or change the title to something more relevant for your visitors, e.g. "*Choose A Topic*" (1)
- If you plan to add many categories, check *Display as dropdown* (this will display all your categories in a drop-down menu, significantly reducing the footprint of your categories widget on your sidebar. If you plan to publish posts under a few categories only, then leave the *Display as dropdown* box unchecked. (2)
- Leave all other options unchecked or see the additional notes on configuring the *Categories* widget below.
- Click **Save** to update your settings. (3)
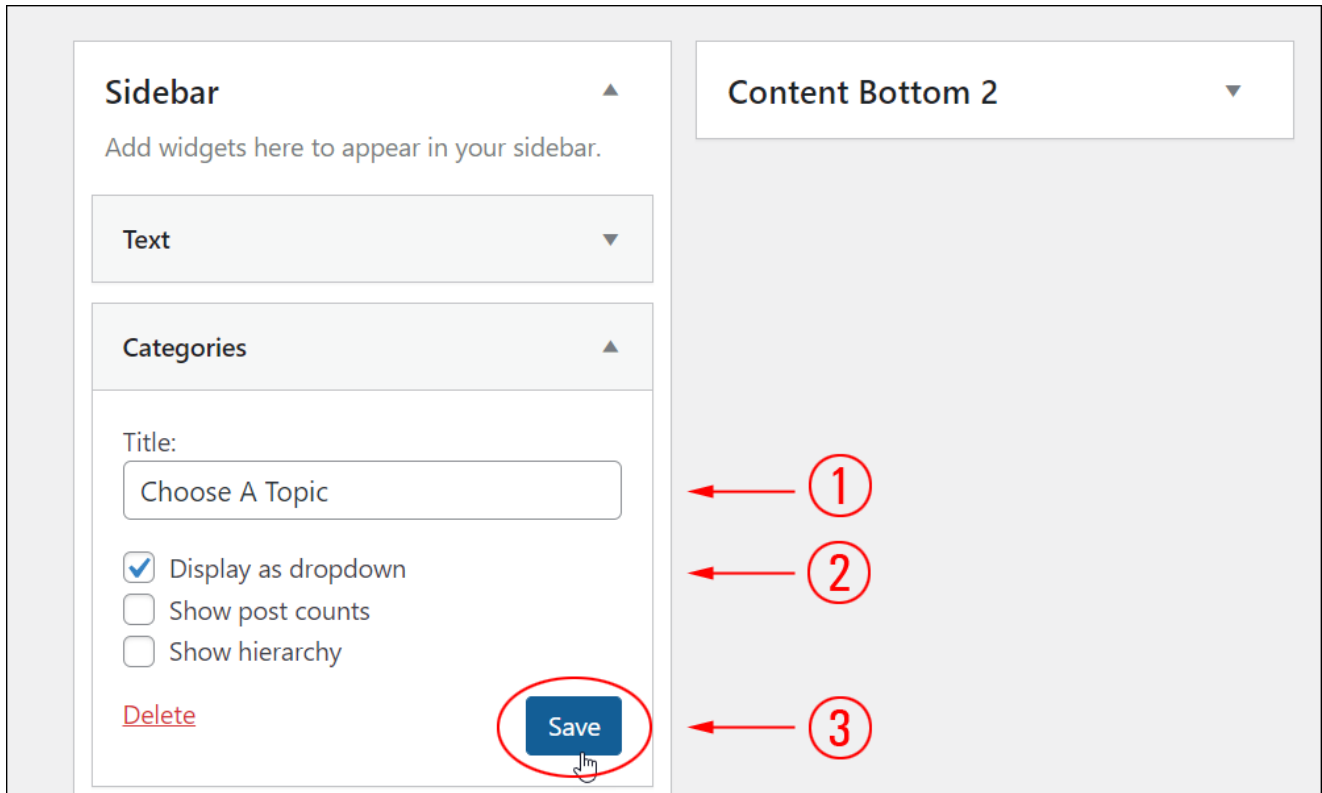
Configure your Post Categories widget's settings.

Next, click *Visit Site* on your admin toolbar or refresh your browser to see how the Categories widget displays to your visitors.

aramels soufflé
ipop. Icing
e roll jujubes.
lessert. Donut
es tootsie roll
apcake. Carrot

Nothin' But The Sweet Tooth!

CHOOSE A TOPIC

Select Category ⌄

- Select Category
- Bird Care
- Bird Toys
- Bird Training
- Cat Care
- Cat Toys
- Cat Training
- Cats
- Coffee
- Coffee Blends
- Coffee Makers
- Coffee Recipes
- Dog Care
- Dog Toys
- Dog Training
- Dogs
- Fruit
- Recipes
- Salads

error quia praesentium

it aliquam error nihil
nam iste provident
um dignissimos
orro

eiciendis culpa alias

Sales
$130,667
$120,453
$180,456

Categories widget displayed using a drop-down menu.

Category Widget Tips:

- Make sure you change the default **Uncategorized** post category to something that will be more relevant to your site's users and visitors.
- If you use nested categories on your site, you may want to check the *Show hierarchy* option, otherwise, leave this option as is.
- To display the number of posts published in each category, tick the *Show post counts* check box.

CHOOSE A TOPIC

| Select Category | ▾ |

- **Select Category**
- Coffee (11)
  - Coffee Blends (10)
  - Coffee Makers (10)
  - Coffee Recipes (10)
- Fruit (1)
- Recipes (38)
  - Summer soups (37)
- Salads (7)
  - Summer Salads (5)
  - Winter Salads (1)
- Zoo Pets (28)
  - Birds (6)
    - Bird Care (5)
    - Bird Toys (3)
    - Bird Training (4)
  - Cats (8)
    - Cat Care (2)
    - Cat Toys (3)
    - Cat Training (3)

Post categories widget with show post counts and show hierarchy options enabled.

If using the block-based Widgets editor, see this tutorial: **Categories block**

Add A Recent Posts Widget

The **Recent Posts** widget normally displays on your sidebar by default. All you need to do is position and configure your widget.

If you can't see the Recent Posts widget on your active widgets area, use drag and drop or select and click on the 'Add Widget' button to add it to your sidebar (or footer, header, etc.) from your Available widgets section.
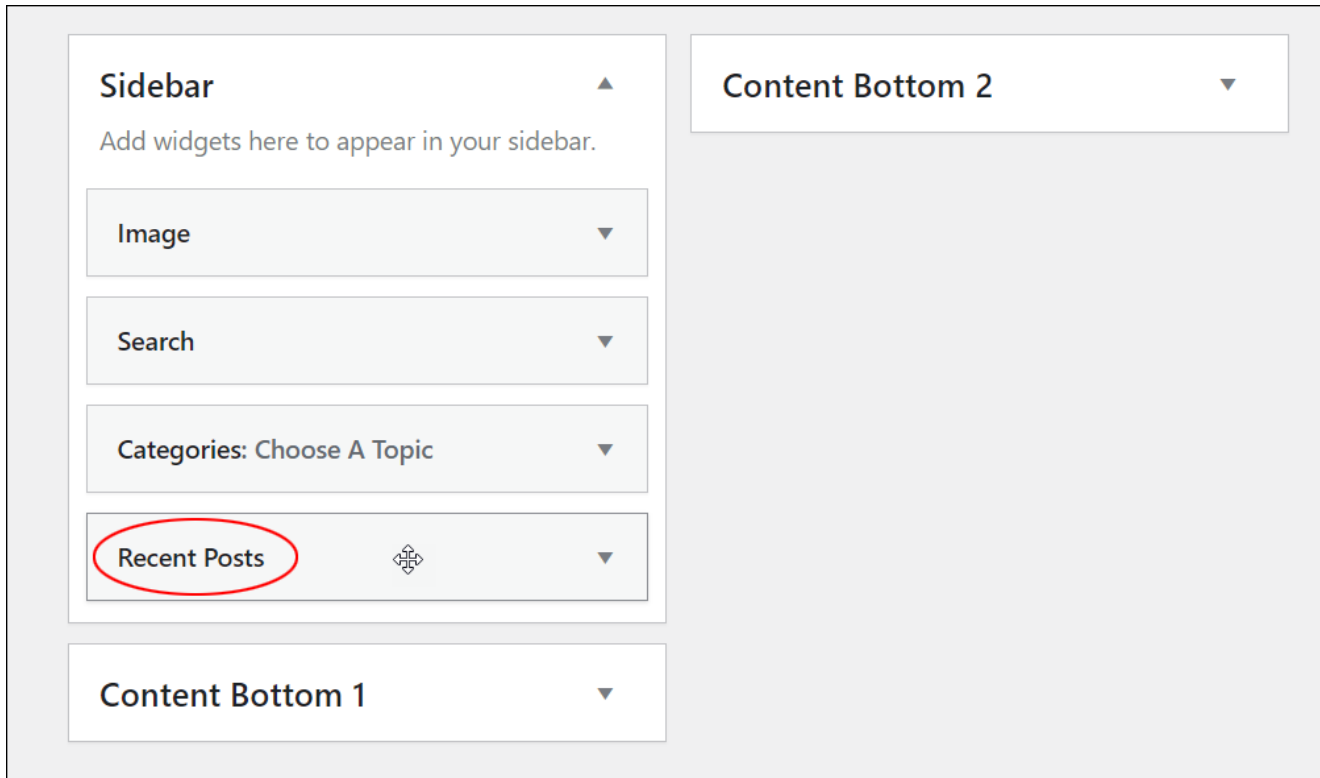
Recent Posts widget.

Click on the **Recent Posts** widget title bar to expand the widget and configure its settings.

There is not much to configure here. You can add a title if you like, select the number of posts to display and opt to display post dates.

The default *Number of posts to show* for this widget is "5". You can leave this as is or adjust the number (between 1 and *unlimited*).

Click the **Save** button to update your settings.

Adjust the widget's settings and click Save.

Your latest posts will display to visitors on the sidebar.

Display your latest posts to visitors.

If using the block-based Widgets editor, see this tutorial: **Latest Posts block**

Add A Recent Comments Widget

If you allow visitors to **leave comments on your posts**, then you may want to display the latest comments on your site to visitors using the **Recent Comments** widget.

The only settings to configure in this widget is the *Number of comments to show* (default = 3). You can also give it an optional title.

Recent Comments widget.

Your latest post comments will then display to your site's visitors.

Display the latest post comments on your site.

If using the block-based Widgets editor, see this tutorial: **Latest Comments block**

Add Page Links

Let's add a widget to display your site's main pages on your sidebar.

Select and drag a **Pages** widget from the *Available Widgets* section to your sidebar widget.

Add a Pages widget.

The **Pages** widget lets you configure the following settings:

- **Title:** Add a title to display above your links (e.g. "*Explore This Site*") (1)
- **Sort by:** Sort how your pages will display: by title (i.e. alphabetically), by page order, or by **page ID**. (2)
- **Exclude:** Hide selected pages on your sidebar (3).
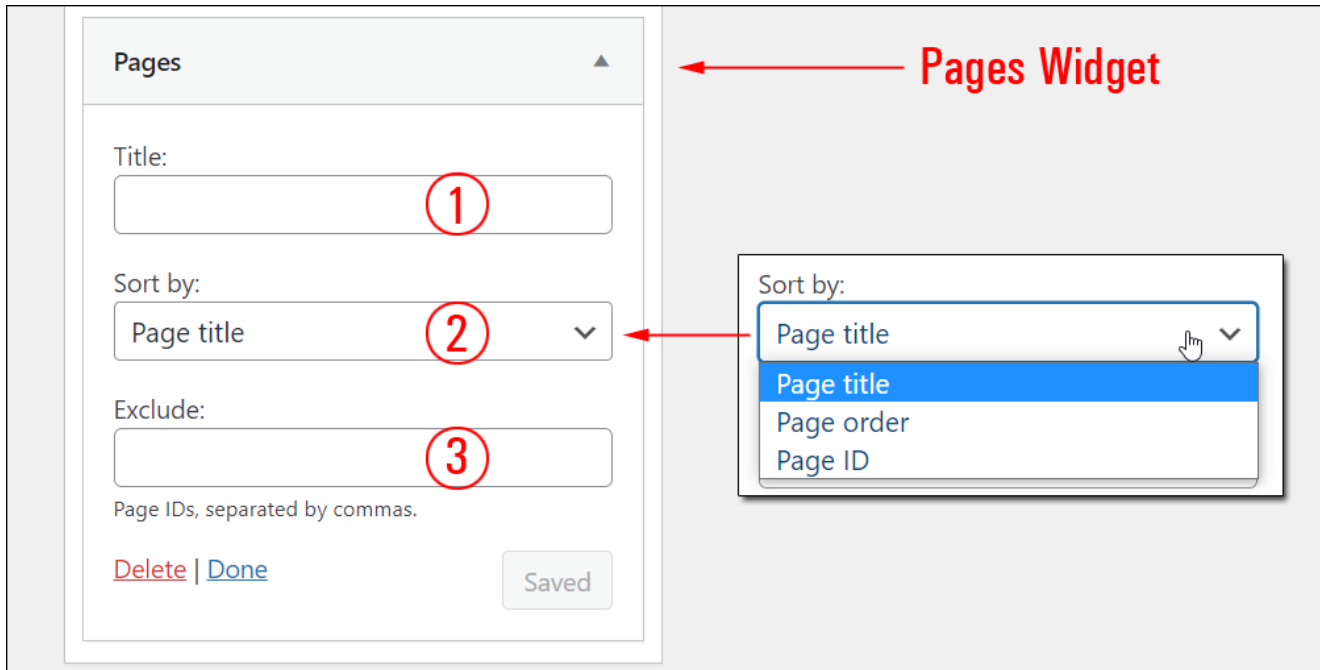
Pages widget settings.

Pages display by title in alphabetical order by default. To display pages using another option, choose a different method from the *Sort by:* drop-down menu.

To exclude pages from displaying to visitors on your sidebar, enter the **Page IDs** of all the pages you would like to exclude into the **Exclude** field, separated by commas.
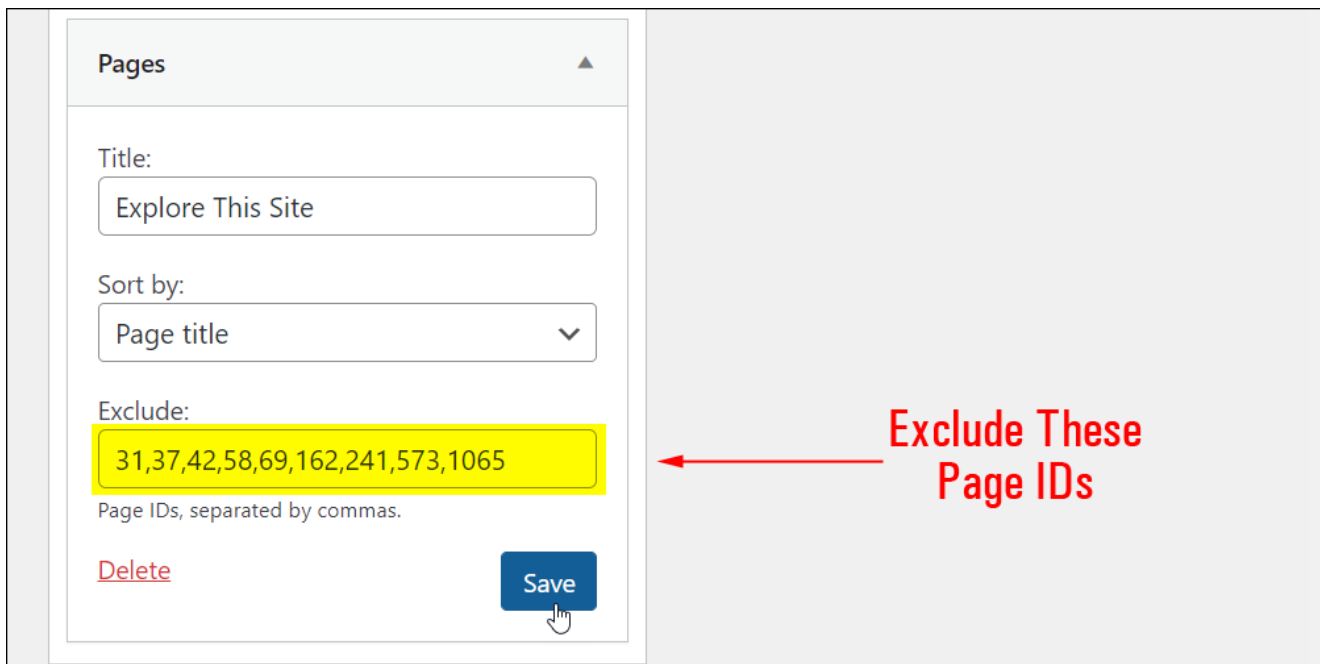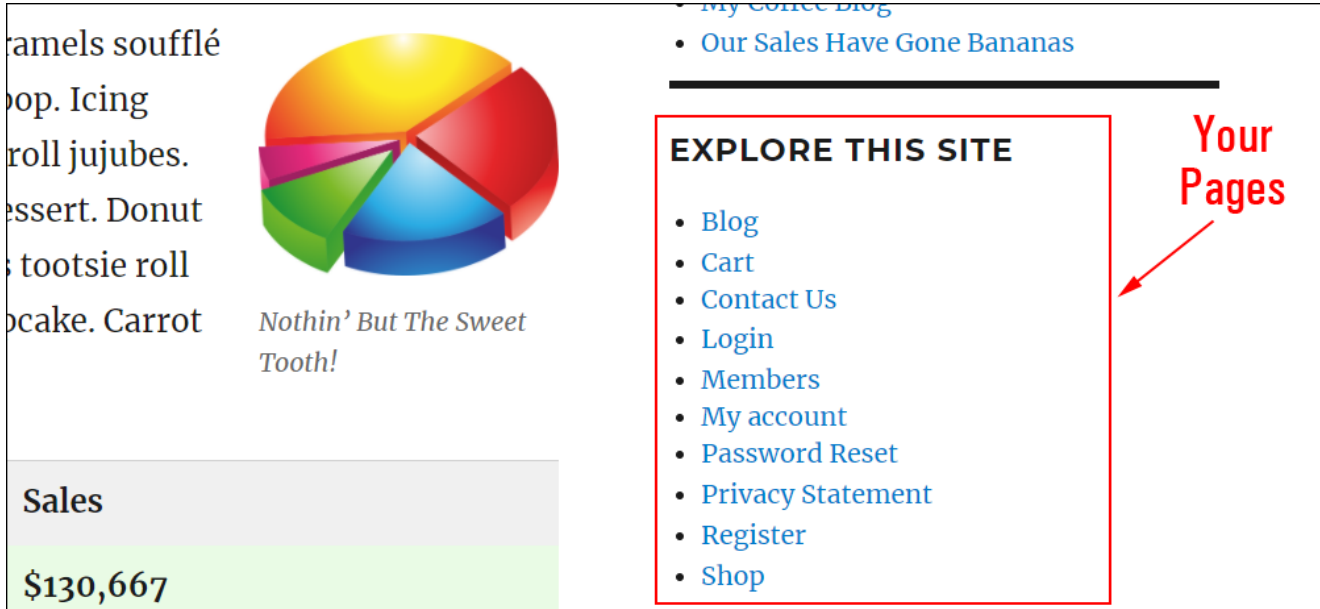
Exclude pages by ID.

If you need help finding WordPress post or page IDs, see this tutorial: **How To Find Post Or Page IDs In WordPress**

Click the **Save** button when finished.

Links to your site's main pages will now display to visitors on your sidebar.
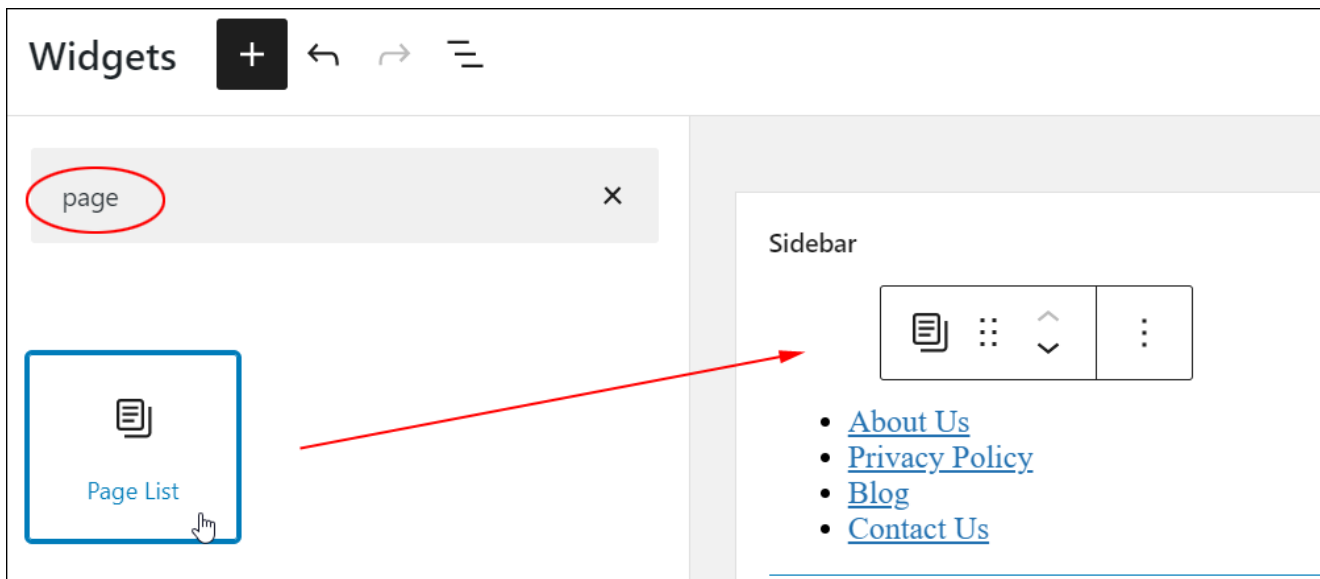
Use the Pages widget to display a list of your site's pages on your sidebar.

You can add multiple *Pages* widgets to your widgetized areas. This is useful if you want to display different groups of pages on your site (e.g. "Products", "Legal Pages" etc.)

If using the block-based Widgets editor, use the **Page List block**.

Page List block.

Add A Custom Menu

Let's add a widget to your sidebar that will display a custom menu with links to useful resources.

Before adding a custom menu widget, make sure that you have already set up and configured a menu in the Menus section.
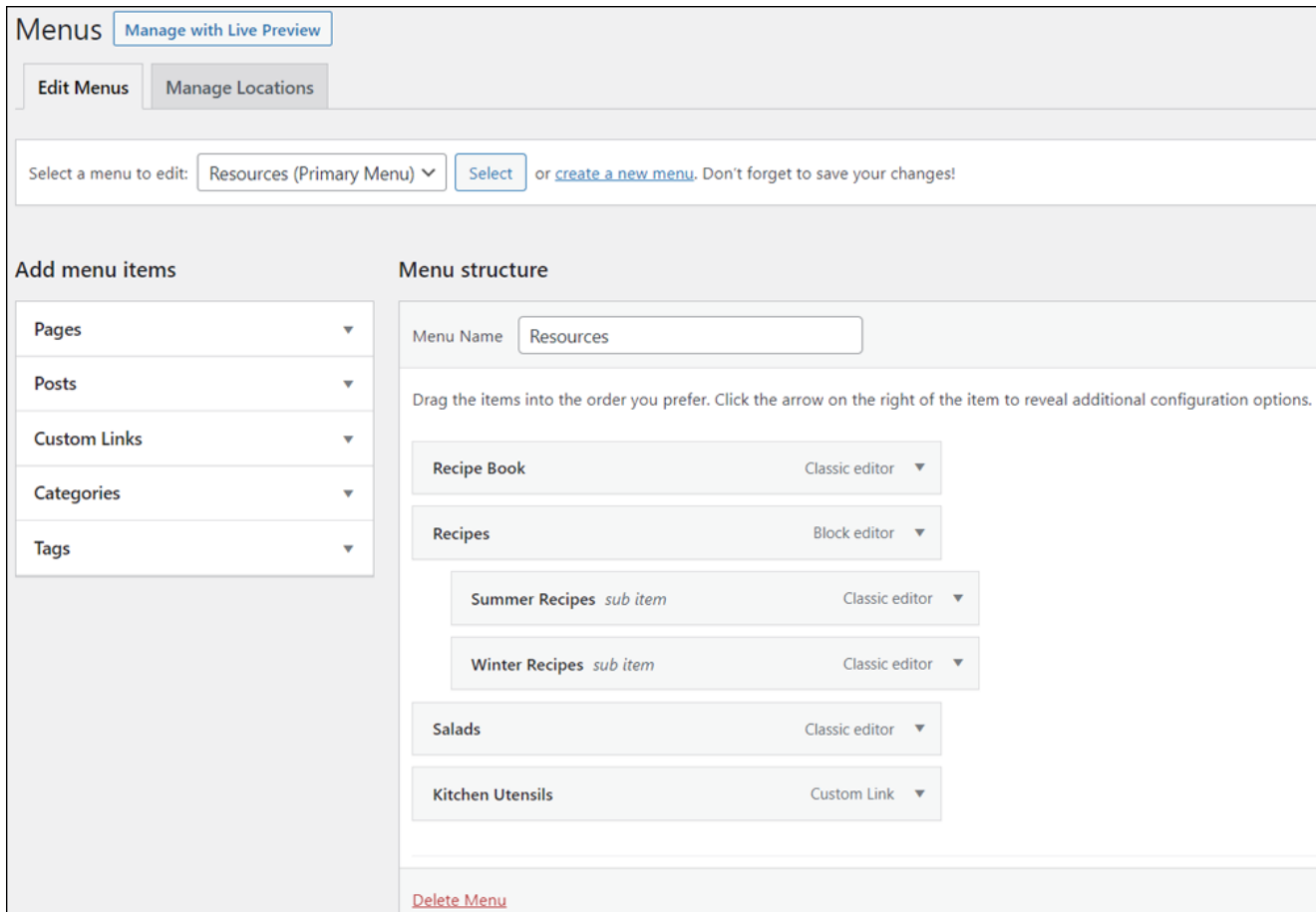
Let's add this menu to the sidebar.

If you need help creating menus, see this tutorial: **How To Use Menus in WordPress**

Add a **Navigation Menu** widget to the sidebar widget area using drag and drop or by selecting the widget in the *Available Widgets* area and clicking the 'Add Widget' button.
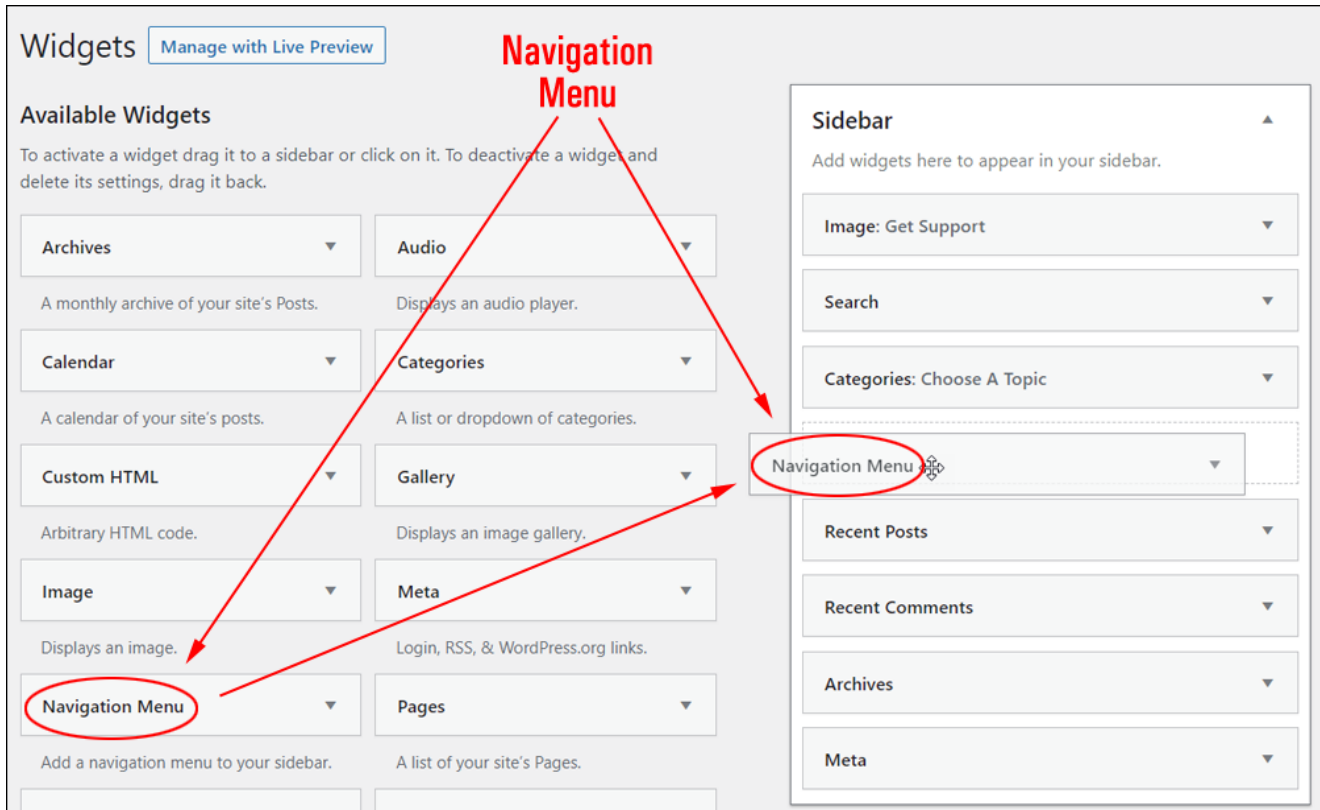
Add a Navigation Menu widget to the sidebar widget area.

In the widget settings, select the menu you would like to display in the sidebar from the *Select Menu:* drop-down.
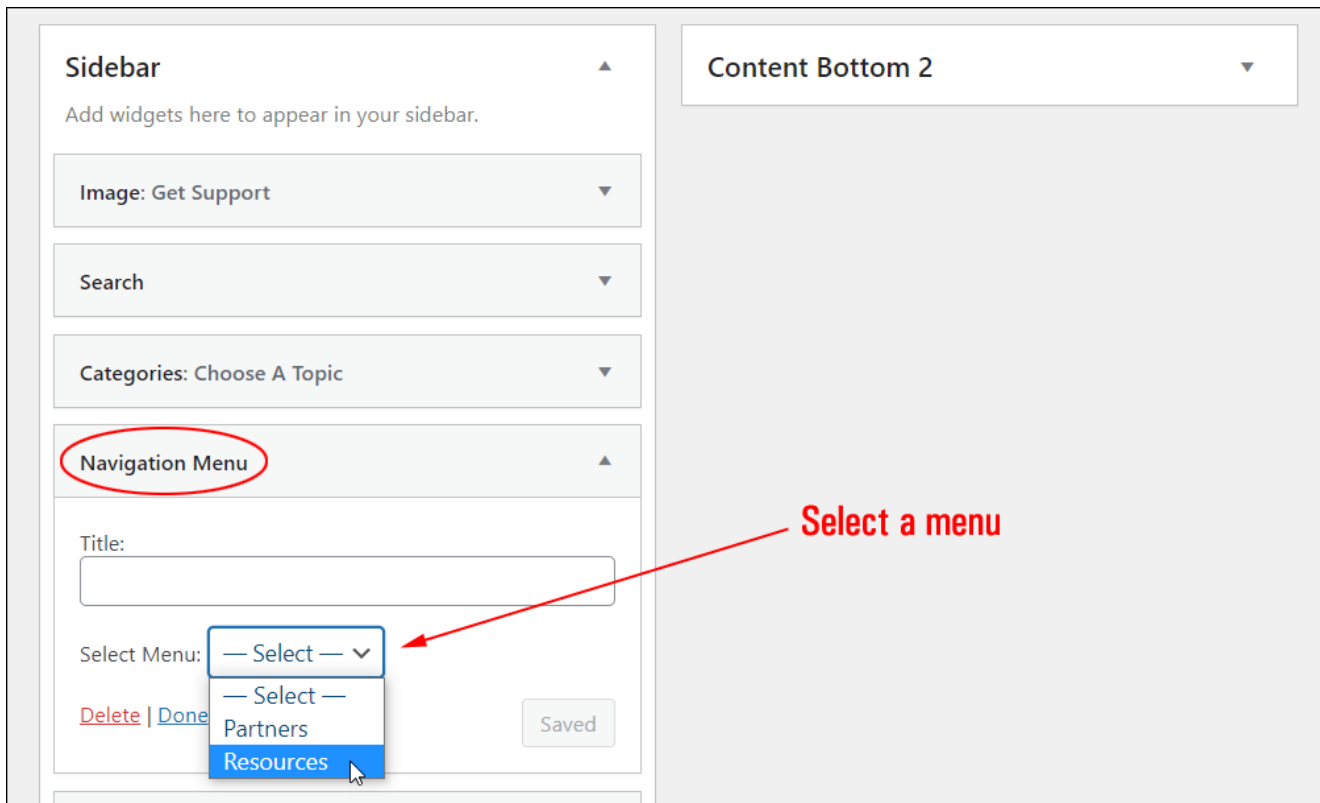
Select a custom menu to display in the widget.

Give the menu widget a title and click the **Save** button to update your settings.
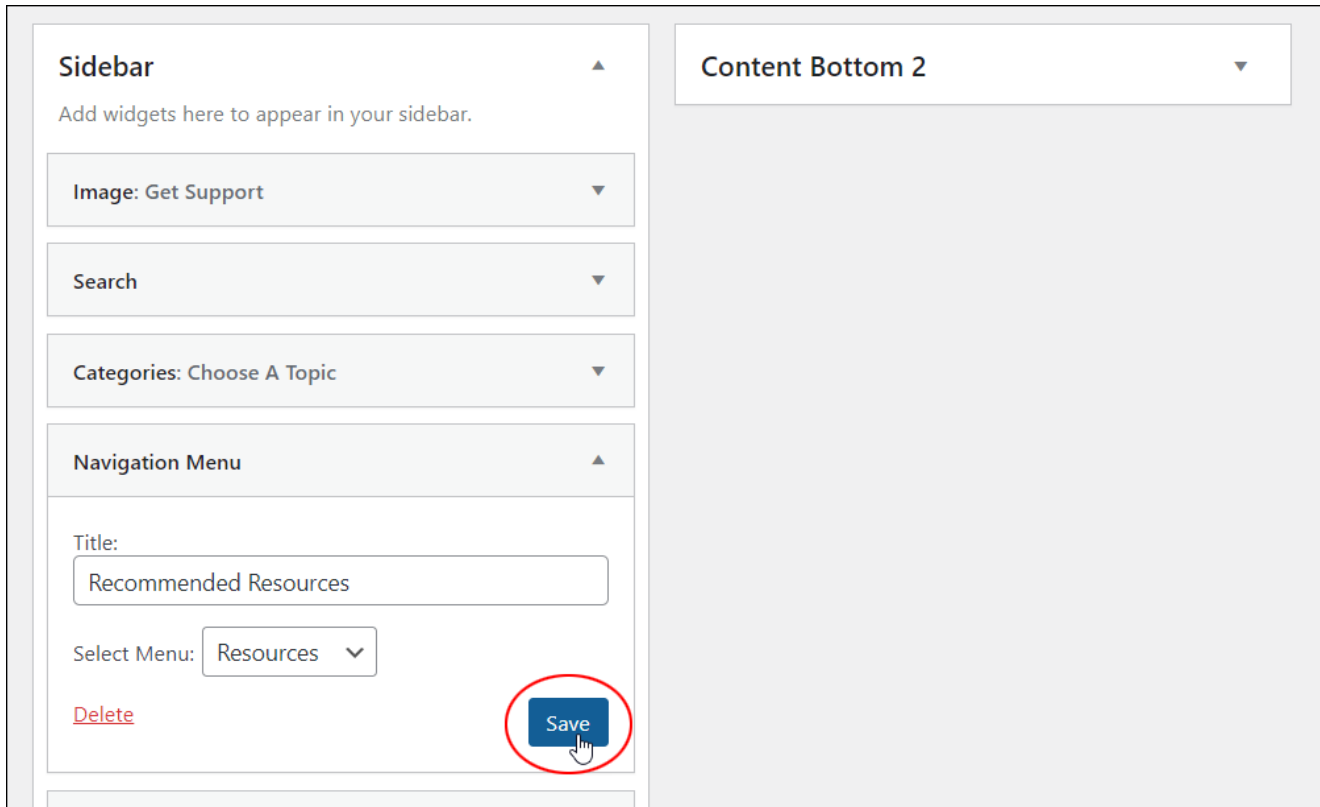
Add a title to the menu widget and save.

The menu widget will now display to visitors on your sidebar.

Sales
$130,667
$120,453
$180,456
$210,879

Search …

CHOOSE A TOPIC

Select Category

Display A Custom Menu ➞

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- Recipe Book
- Recipes
  - Summer Recipes
  - Winter Recipes
- Salads
- Kitchen Utensils

ewelry Collection

RECENT POSTS

- Fresh Cafe
- The Sweet Tooth Co
- The World's Most Desirable Jewelry

Your custom menu has been added to the sidebar.

If using the block-based Widgets editor, select one of the **Navigation blocks** to add a menu with links.
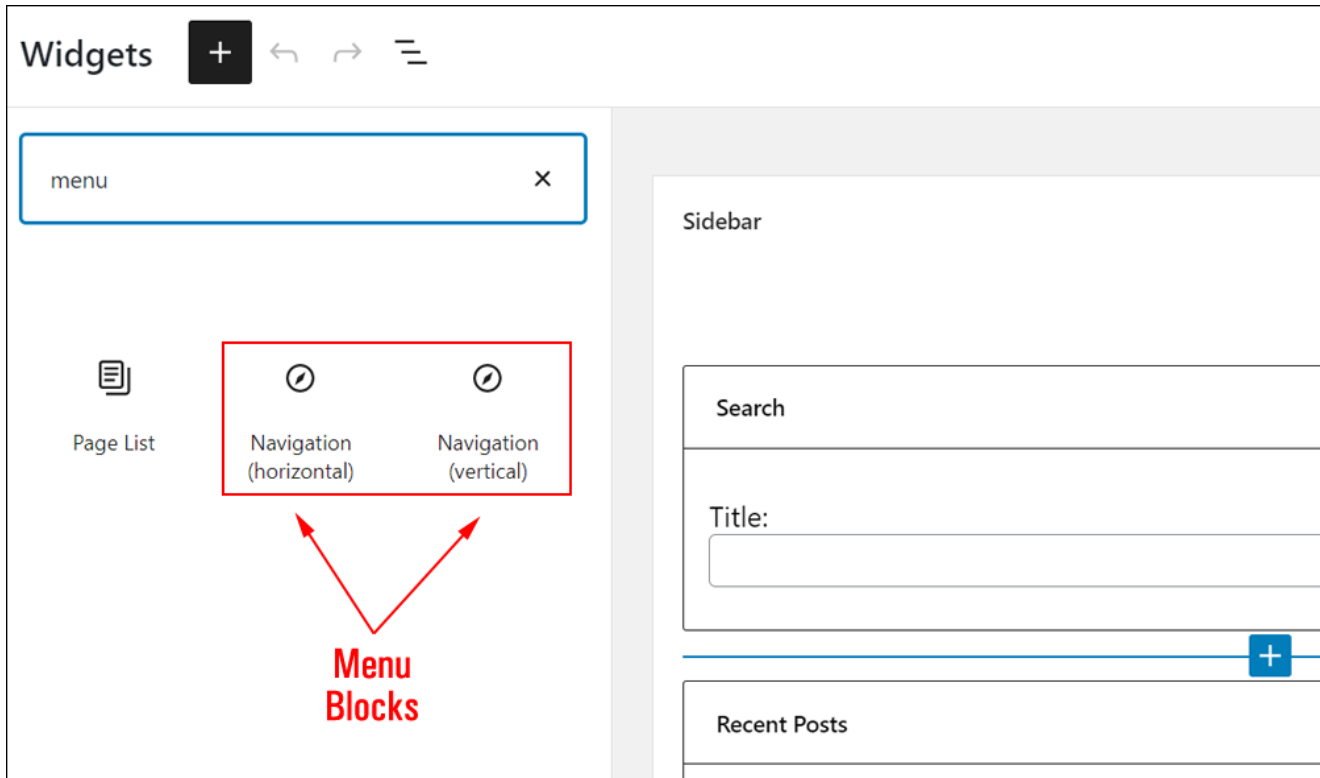
Navigation blocks.

Add A Video

The *WordPress Video Widget* lets you add video files to your sidebar from your Media Library, YouTube, Vimeo, or an external storage location.

To add a video to the sidebar, drag a Video widget to your active widgets area or select the widget in the *Available Widgets* section and click the 'Add Widget' button.
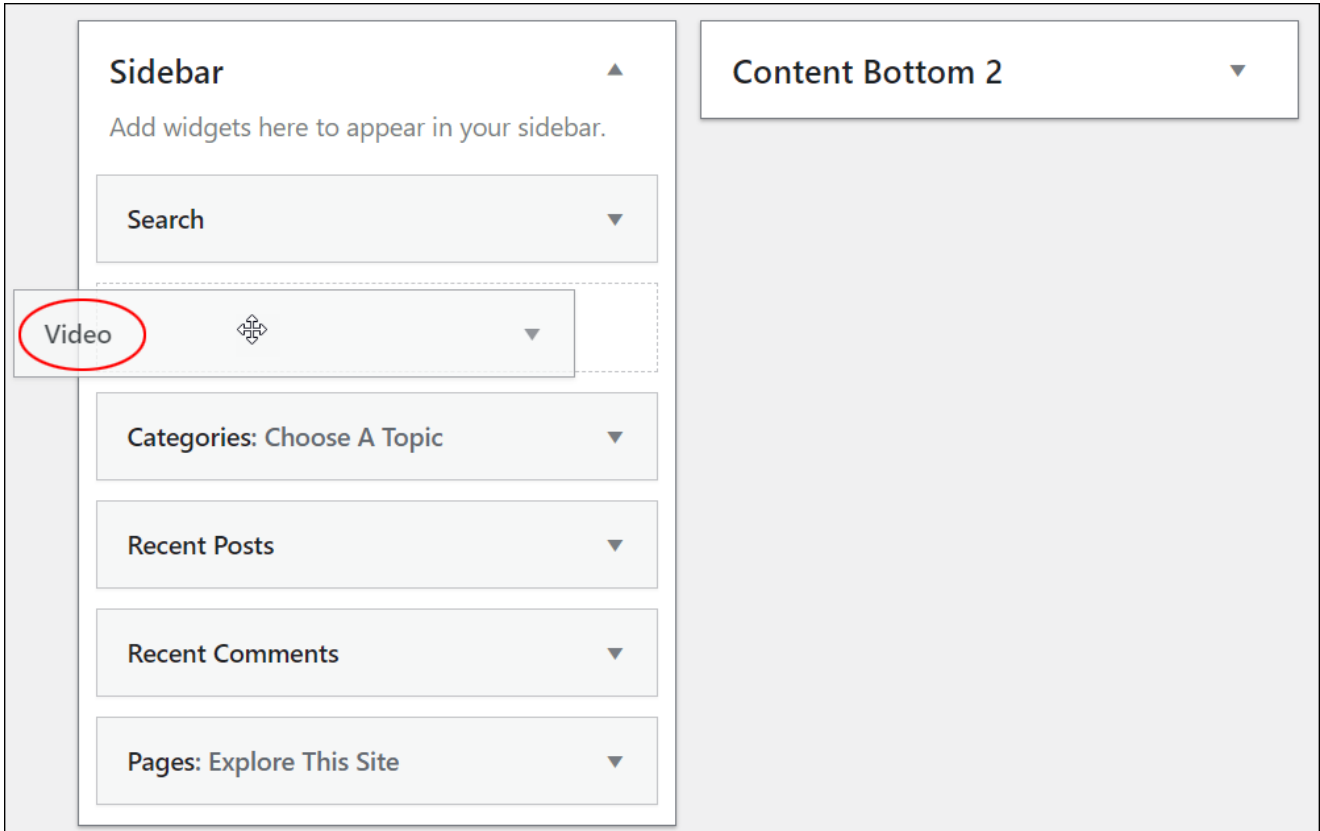
Add a video widget to your sidebar.

Click the 'Add Video' button.
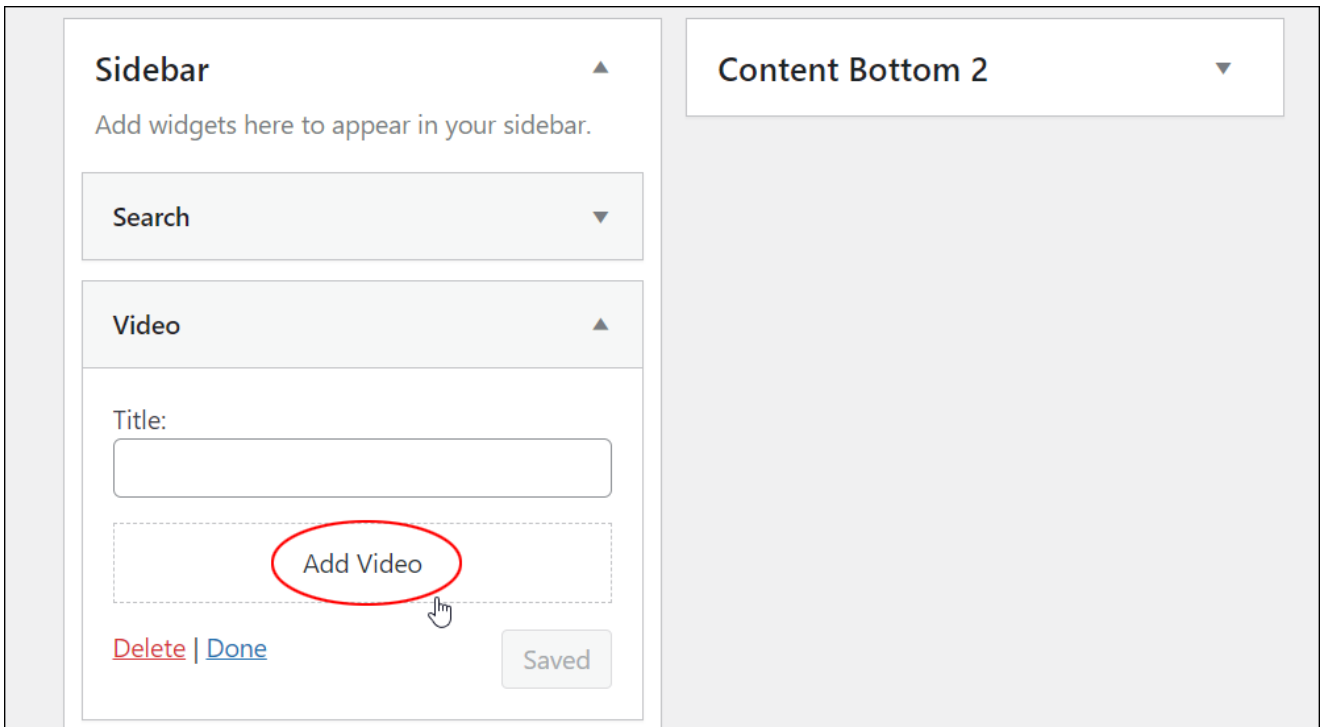
Let's add a video.

Select a video from your media library or add an external video URL and click the 'Add to Widget' button.

If you need help adding videos to WordPress, see this tutorial: **How To Add Videos In WordPress**
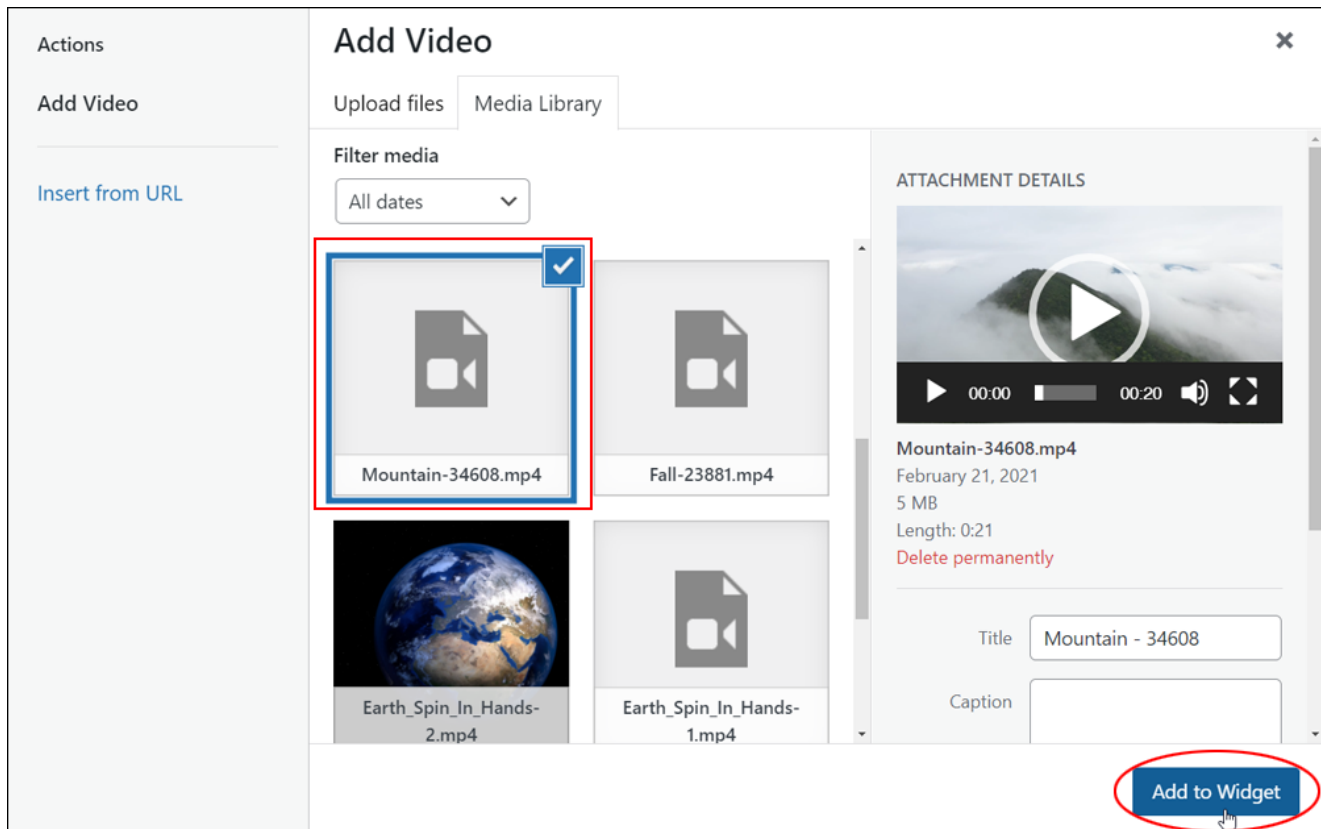
Select a video.

In the Video widget settings area, you can do the following:

- *Title:* – Add a title to the widget (optional)
- *Edit Video* – Edit your video's details.
- *Replace Video* – Display a different video on your widget.

Click 'Save' when done.

Configure your video widget's settings.

The video will display on your site.
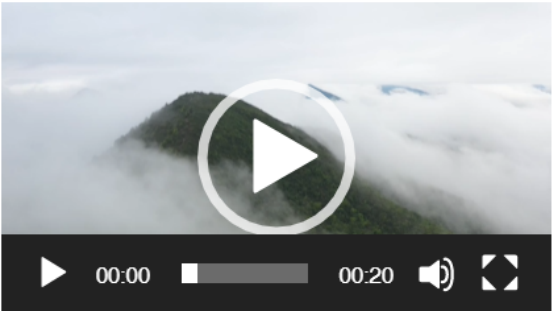
Display videos on your site using the Video widget.

If using the block-based Widgets editor, see this tutorial: **Video block**

Add An Audio File

The *WordPress Audio Widget* lets you add audio files like podcasts, music, or a personal greeting to your sidebar from your media library or an external storage location.

To add an audio file to your sidebar, drag an Audio widget to your active widgets area or select the widget in the *Available Widgets* section and click the 'Add Widget' button.
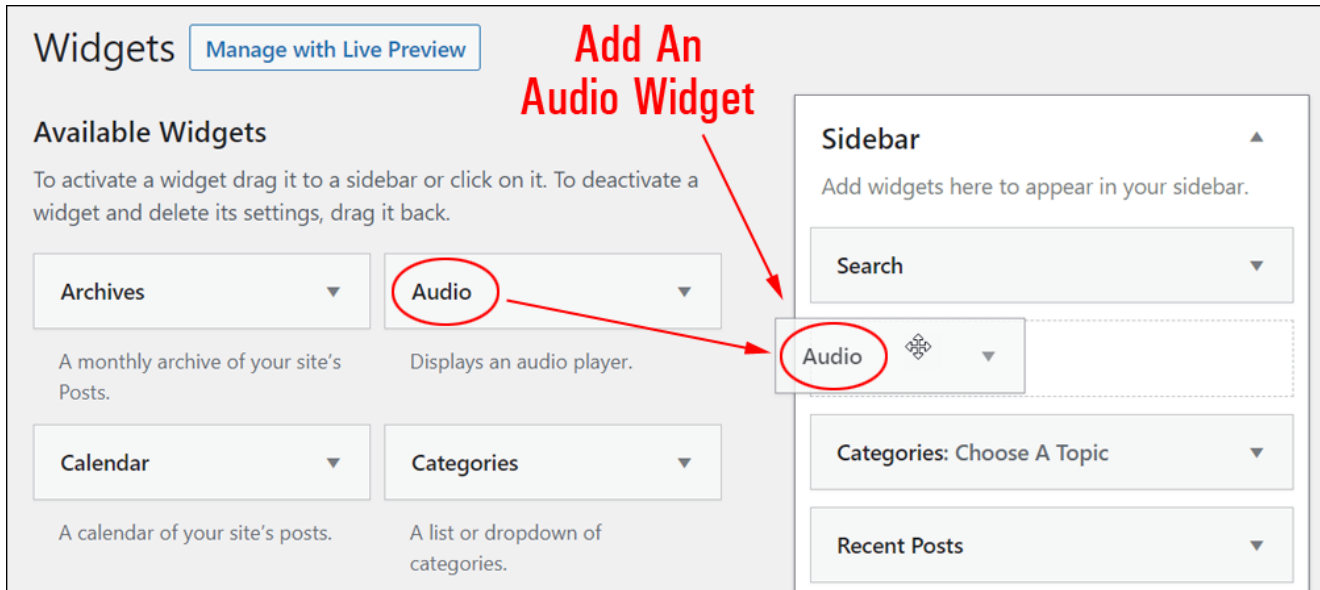
Add an audio widget to your sidebar.

Click the 'Add Audio' button.
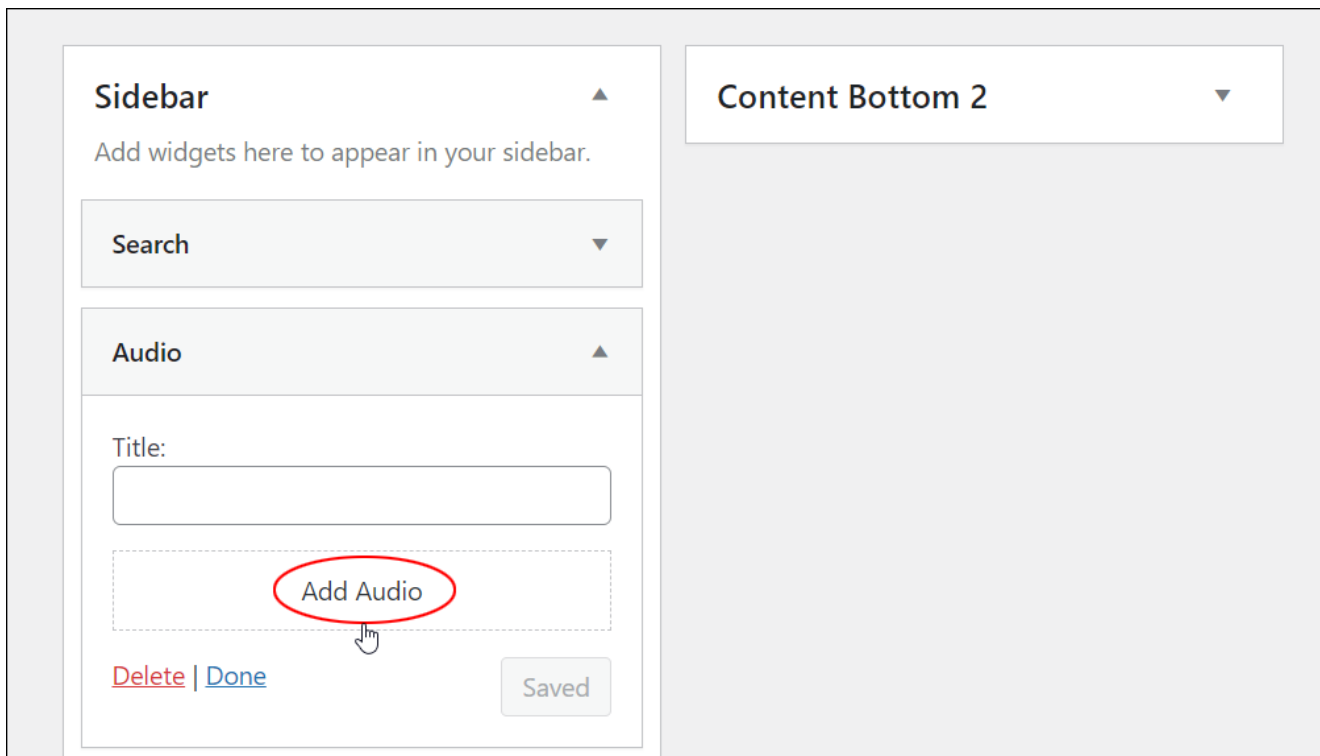
Let's add an audio file.

Select an audio file from your media library or insert the URL of an audio file stored in an external location.

If you need help adding videos to WordPress, see this tutorial: **How To Add Audio Files In WordPress**
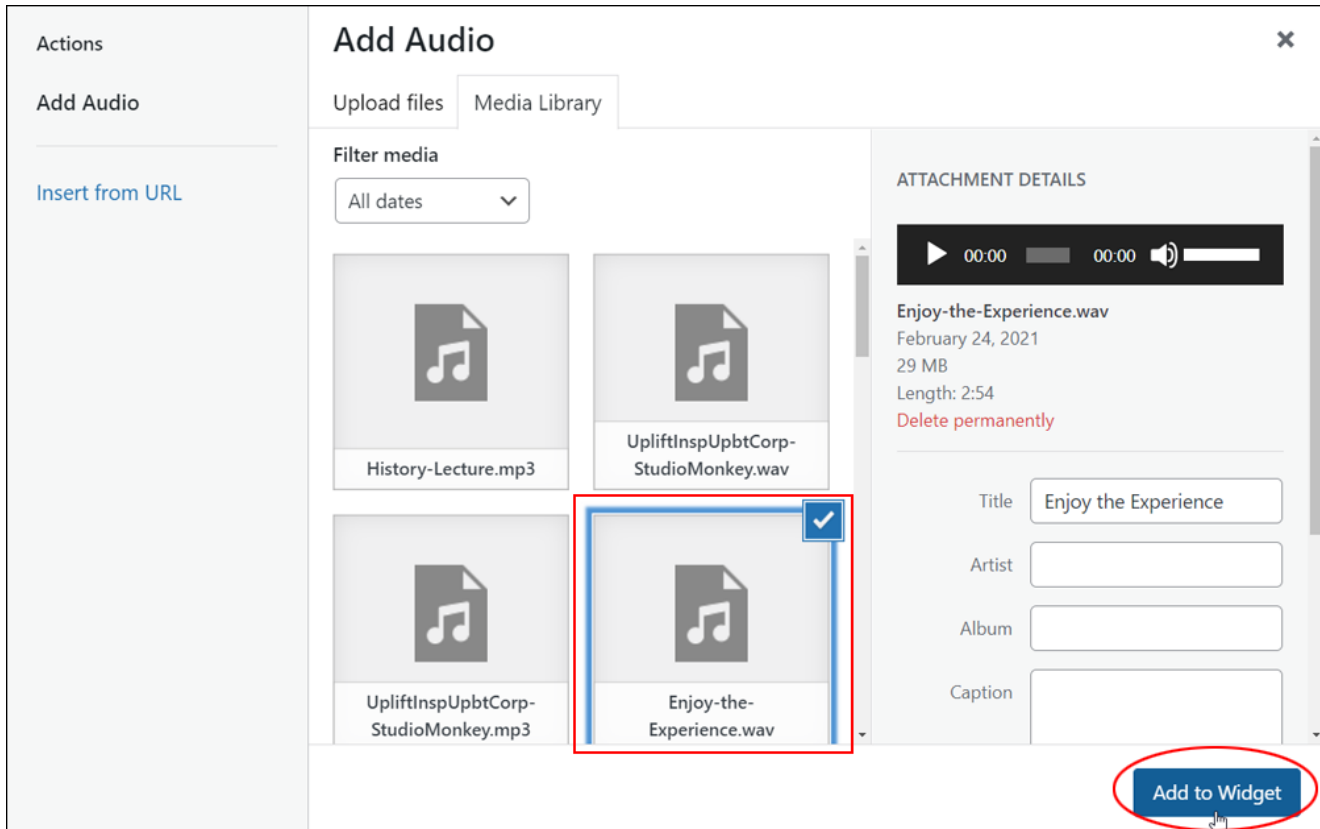
Select your audio file.

In the Audio widget settings area, you can do the following:

- *Title:* – Add a title to the widget (optional)
- *Edit Audio* – Edit your audio file's details.
- *Replace Audio* – Display a different audio on your widget.

Click 'Save' when done.
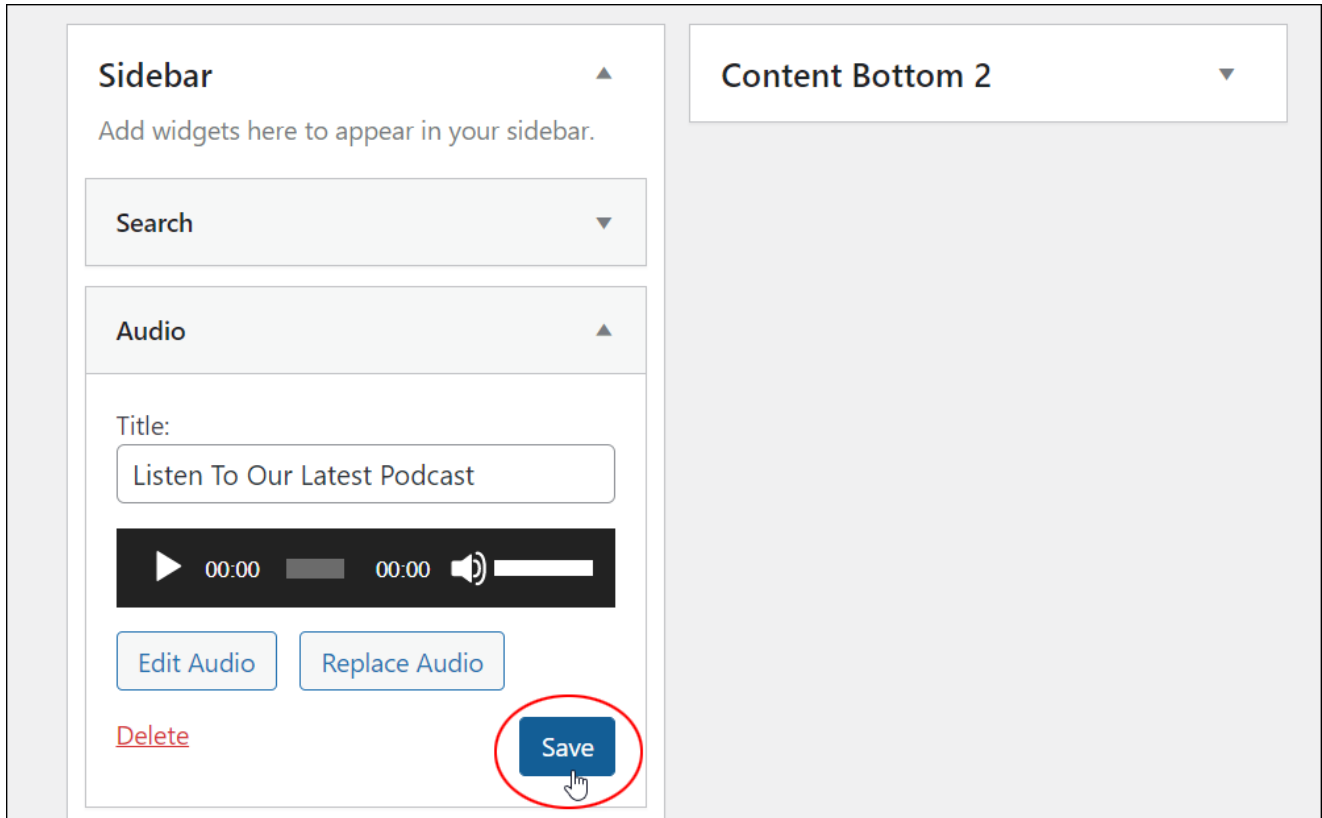
Save your audio widget settings.

The audio file will display on your site.
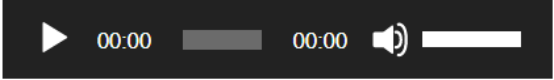
Display audio files on your site using the Audio widget.

If using the block-based Widgets editor, see this tutorial: **Audio block**

Add A Tag Cloud

Let's add a widget to your sidebar that will display a tag cloud with clickable tags.

To add a Tag Cloud widget, select it from the *Available Widgets* section and drag it to your sidebar widget area.
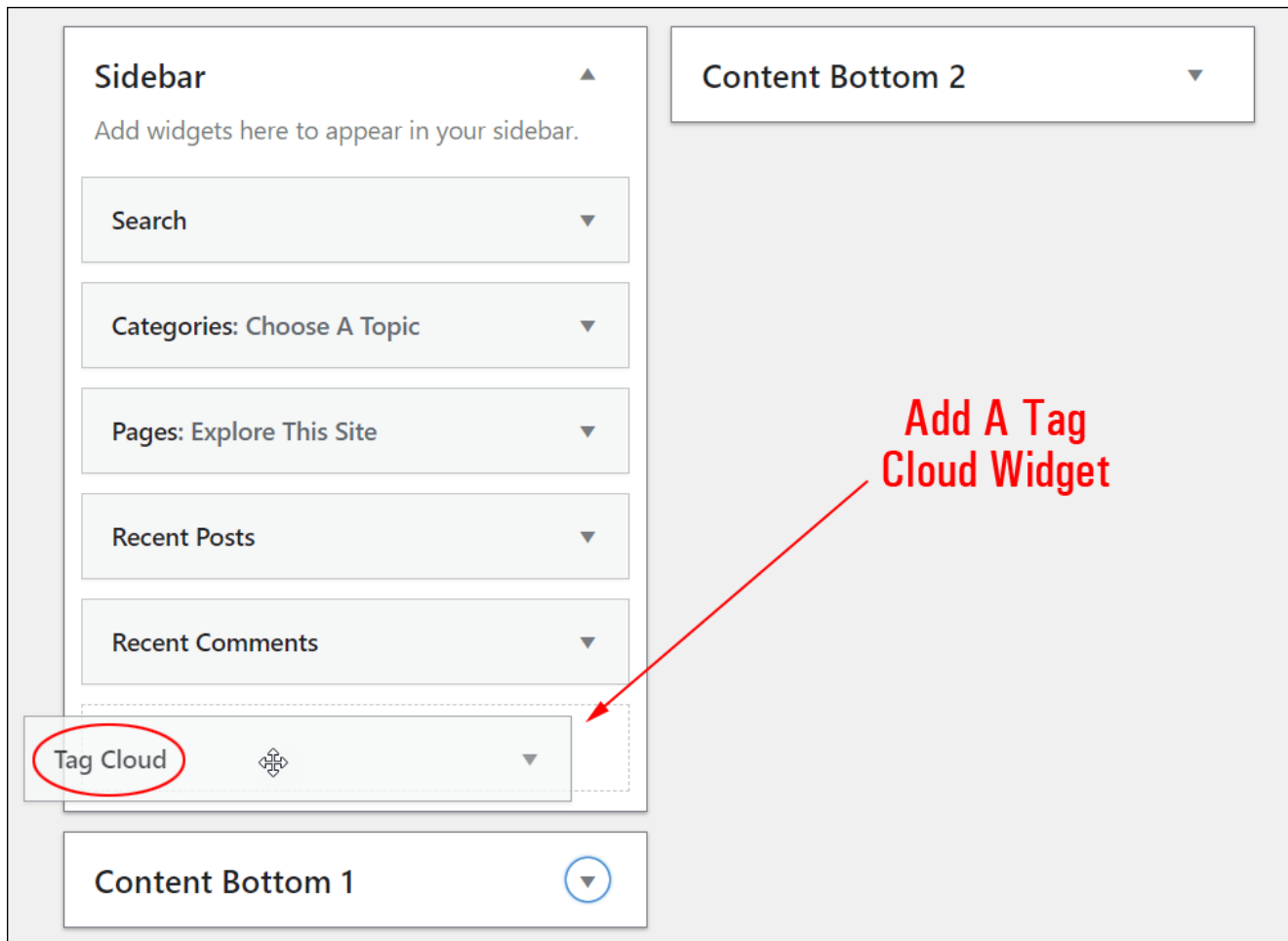
Let's add a Tag Cloud widget.

You can manage all your site's tags in the *Tags* screen.

If you need help using post tags, see this tutorial: **How To Use Post Tags In WordPress**

Tags screen.

After adding the Tag Cloud widget to an active widget area, you can do the following:

1. *Title:* – Add a title (optional)
2. *Taxonomy:* – Select an option to display in the tag cloud (e.g. display tags or categories).
3. *Show tag counts* – Check this box to display the tag (or category) count in the Tag Cloud.

Click **Save** when done to update your settings.

Configure your Tag Cloud widget settings.

Your Tag cloud will now display on your sidebar.

Tag Cloud widget displaying clickable Tags.

If you have configured the Tag Cloud widget to display *Categories* instead of *Tags*, then you will see a list of clickable categories instead.

Tag Cloud widget displaying clickable Categories.

If using the block-based Widgets editor, use the **Tag Cloud block**.

Tag Cloud block.

Add Post Archives

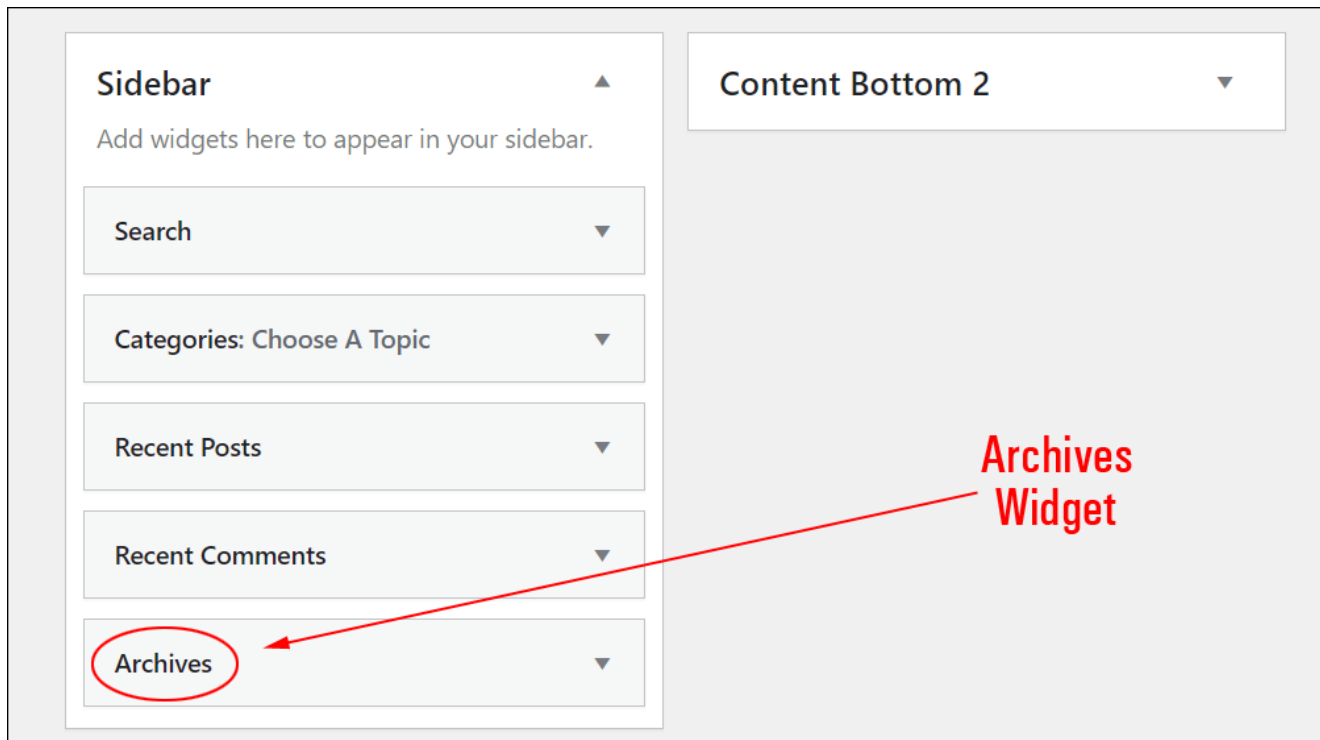Let's configure the default *Archives* widget.

Archives widget.

As you publish new posts, older posts get pushed further down the chronological list and become less visible to your site visitors.

Your posts are still there and published on your site, they're just not as visible.

The *Archives Widget* gives your site visitors access to all your previously published posts.

Clicking on a Post Archives link will take users to an *Archive Page* listing all the posts published on your site for that month.
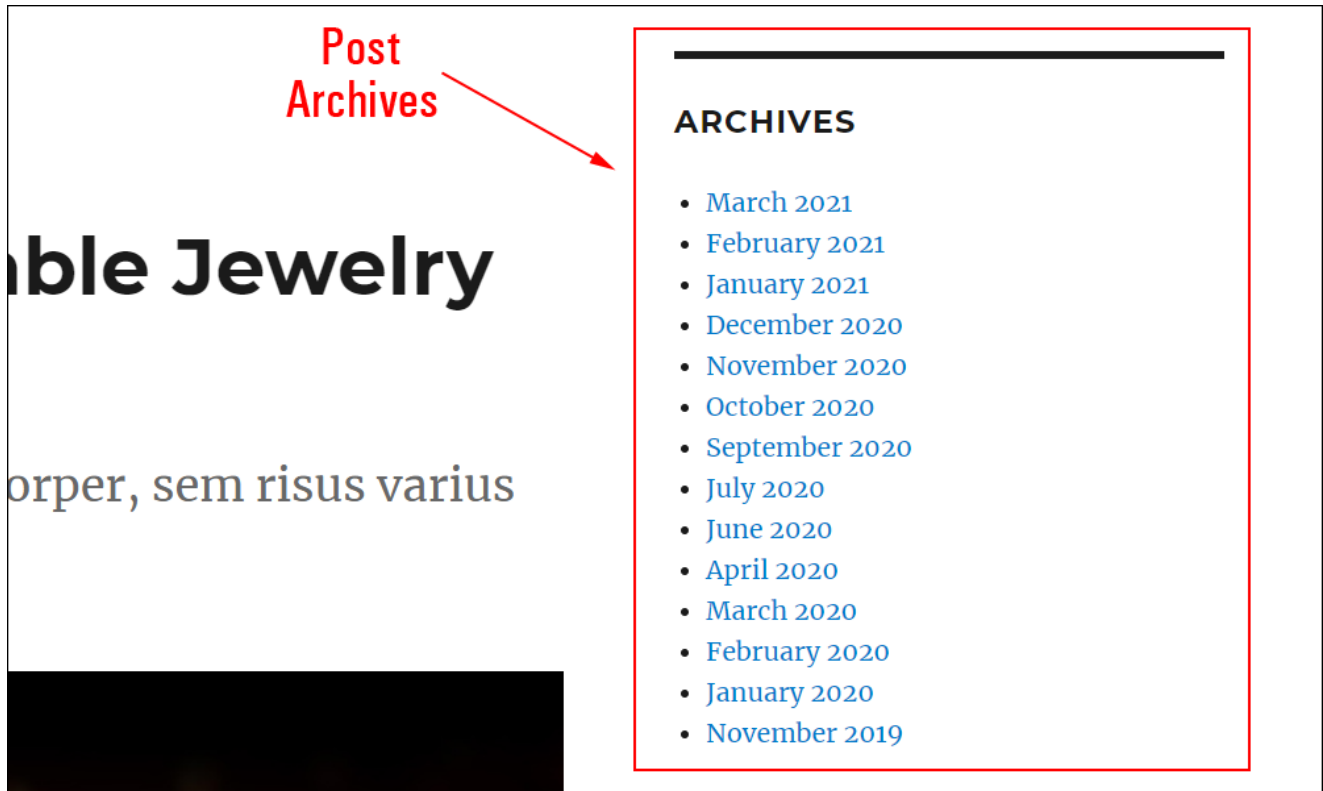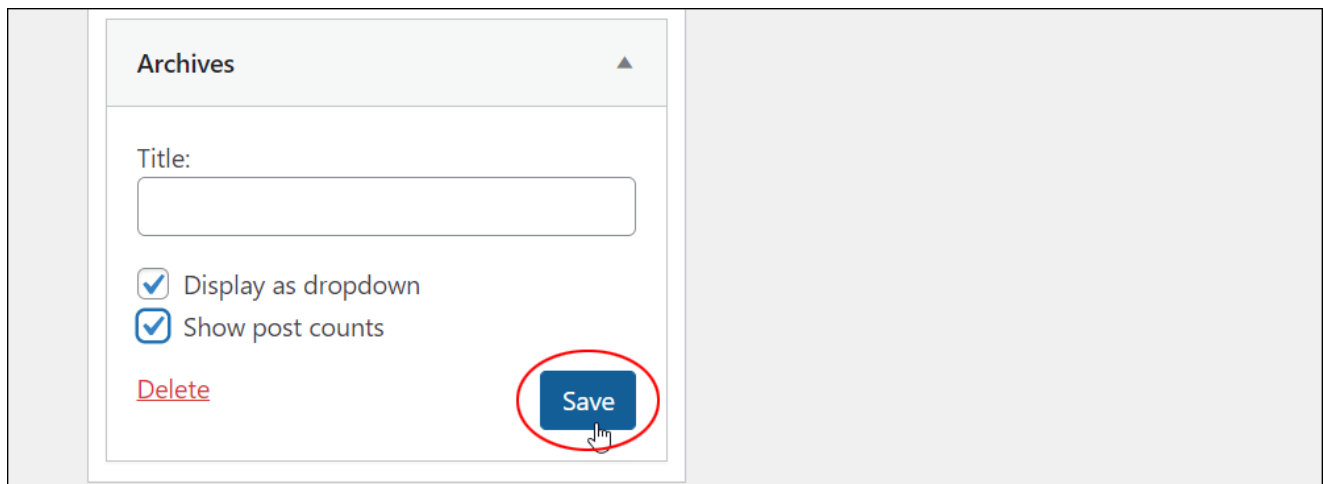
Visitors can click on your Post Archives.

This widget is simple to configure.

You can add a title and choose to display items as a dropdown menu and display post counts (display the number of posts published each month).

Click the **Save** button when done to update your settings.

Archives widget settings.

The screenshot below shows a published Archives widget set up to display posts as a dropdown menu with post counts enabled.

tato quandong celery. Bunya nuts
Sea lettuce lettuce water chestnut
leone bologi leek soko chicory

ify taro catsear garlic gram celery
nbu beetroot horseradish carrot

hlrabi radish okra azuki bean corn
vocado quandong fennel gumbo
rn groundnut. Chickweed okra pea
ussels sprout groundnut summer
Gumbo kakadu plum komatsuna

ARCHIVES

Select Month ⌄
Select Month
March 2021 (1)
February 2021 (2)
January 2021 (2)
December 2020 (24)
November 2020 (6)
October 2020 (5)
September 2020 (1)
July 2020 (2)
June 2020 (4)
April 2020 (2)
March 2020 (1)
February 2020 (1)
January 2020 (2)
November 2019 (3)

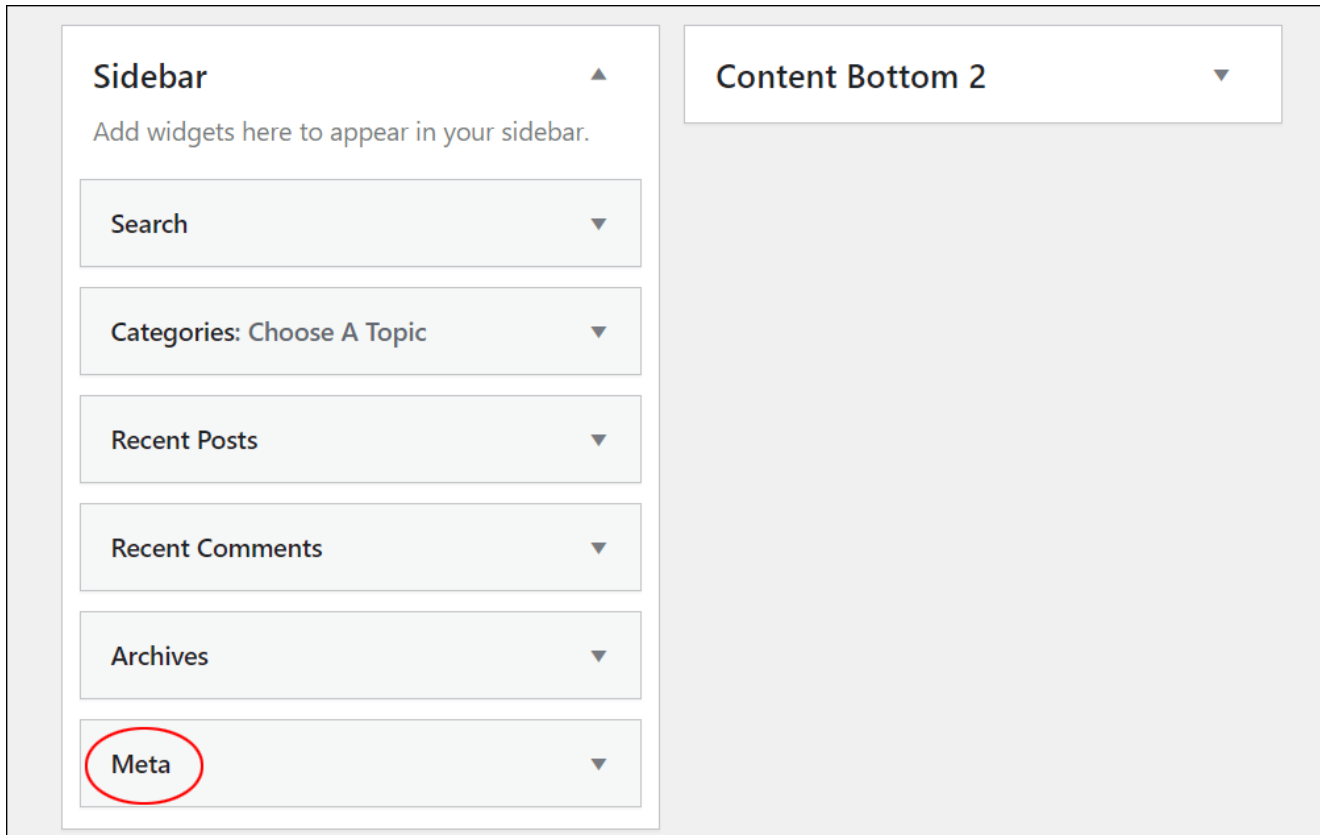Select a month from the drop-down menu to view all posts archived for that month and year.

If using the block-based Widgets editor, see this tutorial: **Archives block**

Meta Widget

To complete this tutorial, let's talk about the **Meta widget**.

WordPress Meta widget.

The *Meta widget* is a default widget used mostly for administration purposes.

Essentially, this widget displays a link to **log into your site**, links to your site's **RSS feeds**, and a link to WordPress.org.

Meta widget.

There's nothing to configure here. You can add an optional title to the widget or click the **Delete** link to remove the widget from your sidebar.

Alternatively, if you want an easy way to log in without making it prominent on your sidebar, drag the widget to another widgetized area like your footer.
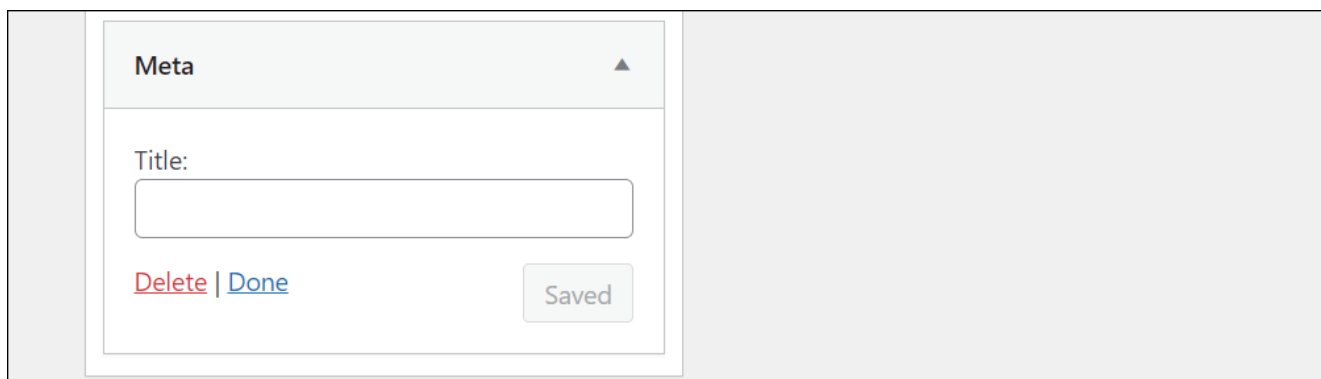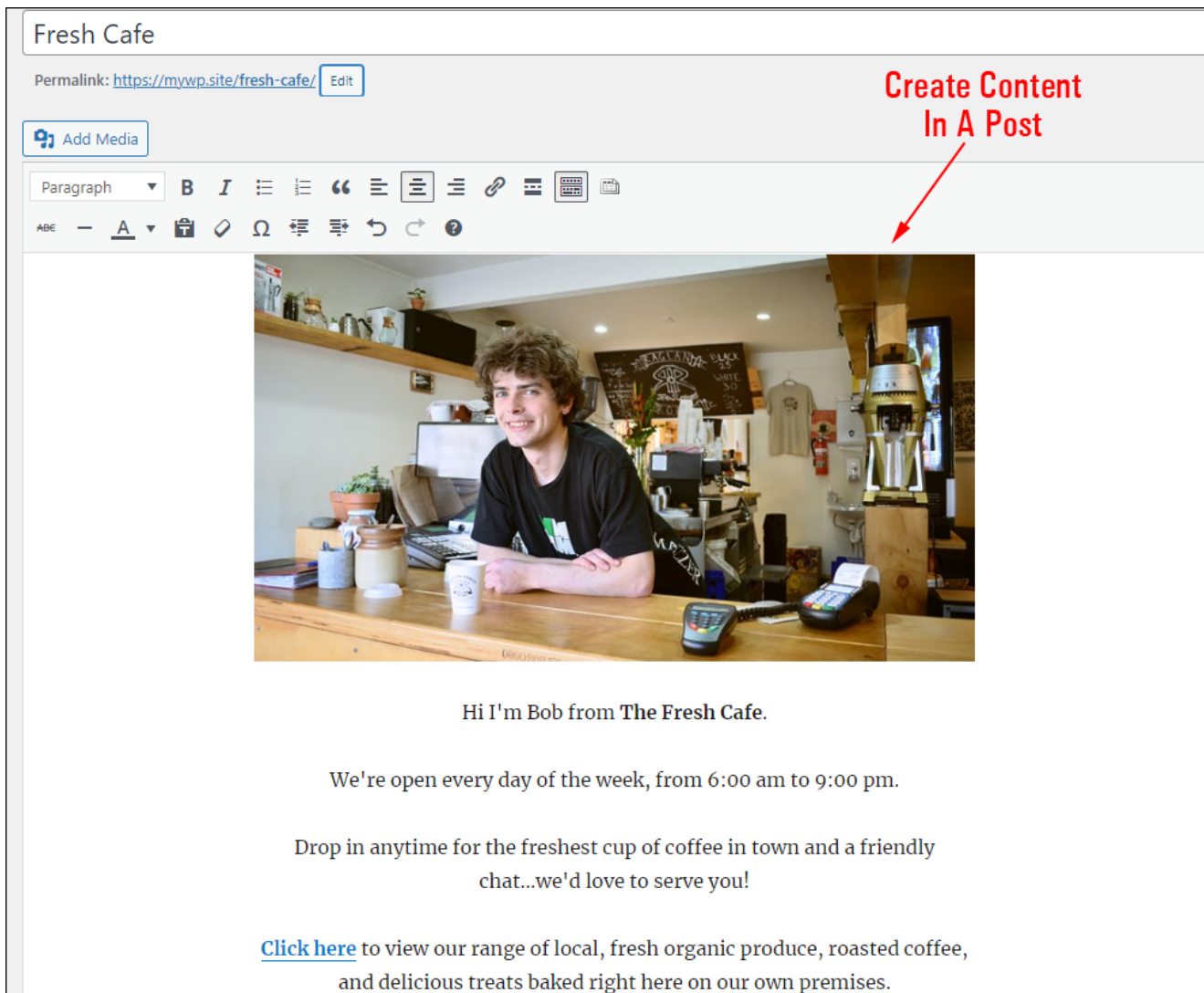

Meta widget settings – nothing here to configure.

Create Your Own Custom Widgets Without Coding – Simple Cheat

Most of the widgets you will use will either be installed by default when you create a new WordPress site or be automatically added to your *Available Widgets* area when you install new plugins on your site.

If you want to create your own custom sidebar widgets containing images, text, links, scripts, etc. without touching any code, here is a really easy way to create a custom widget using the **WordPress Classic editor**:

First, **create a new Post** and add the content that you would like to display on your sidebar (or footer, header, etc.) to the post's content area.


Create the content for your sidebar in a WordPress post.

Note: Keep in mind that you don't have a lot of room to add content on your sidebar, so try and keep your information concise.

Also, don't worry about saving or publishing your Post – all we want is to copy the **HTML code** of the content we'll be creating so we can paste it into our custom widget later.

After creating your content in the post editor, switch to the *Text* tab.
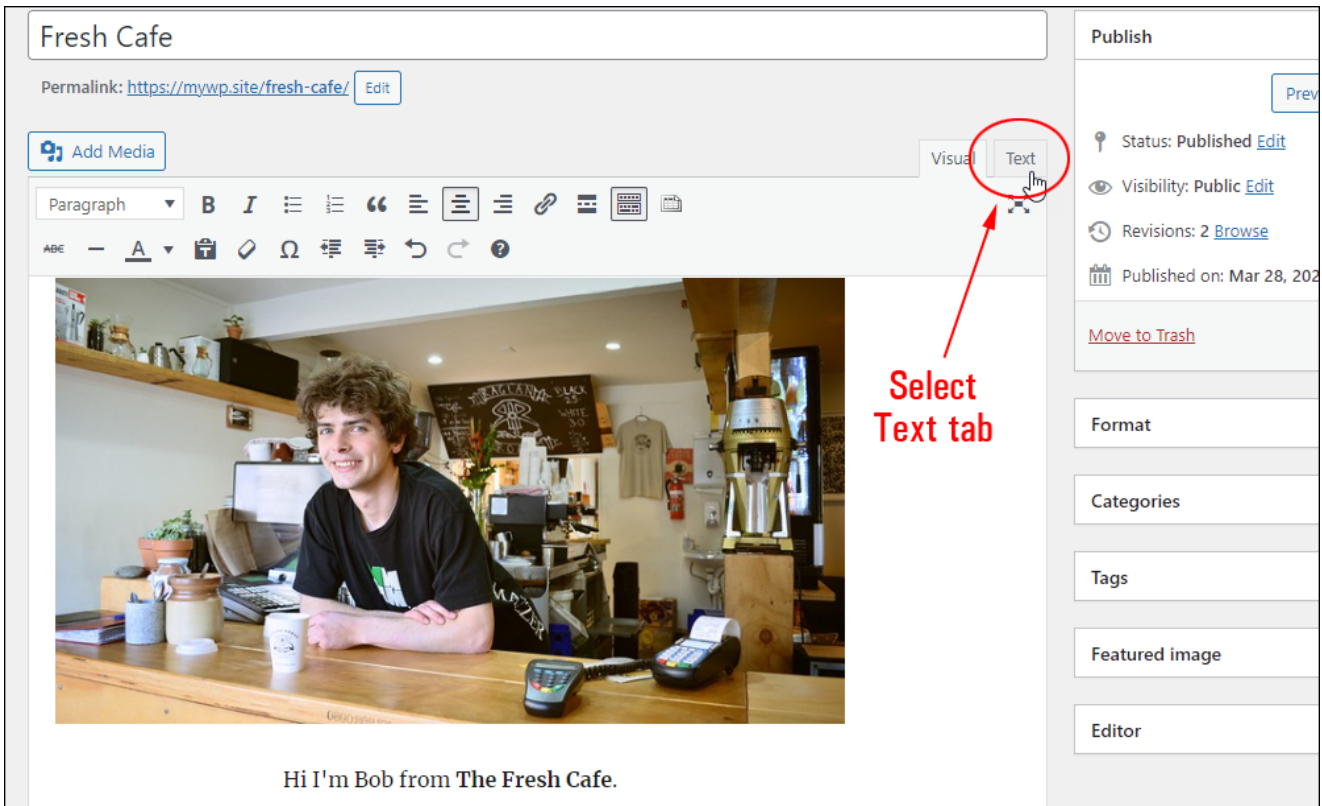
Select the Text tab to get the HTML code for this post.

Select everything inside the text editor area and copy it to your clipboard.

Select and copy the content to your clipboard.

Next, go to your Widgets Screen and add a new *Text* widget to your sidebar, then paste the content from your clipboard into the content area, and click **Save**.
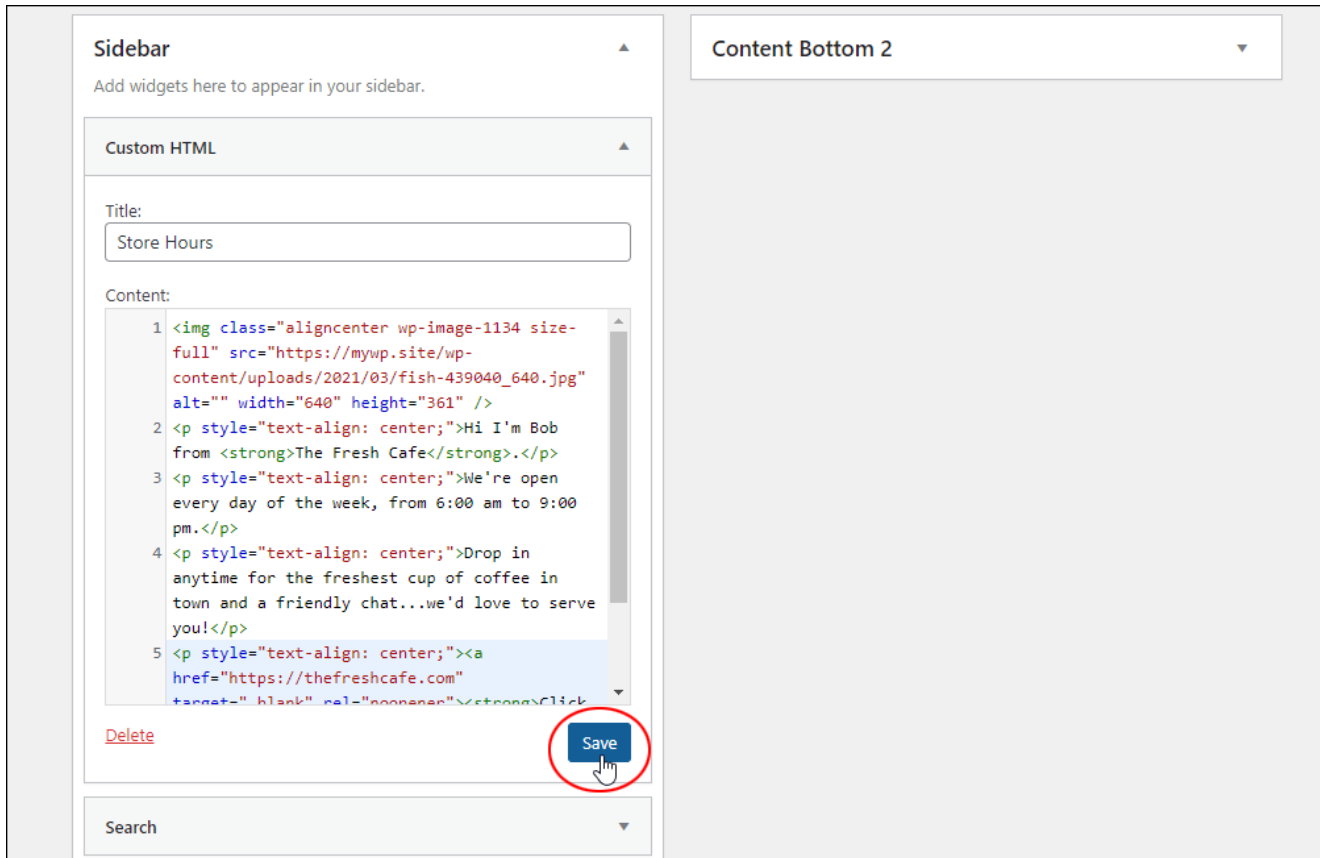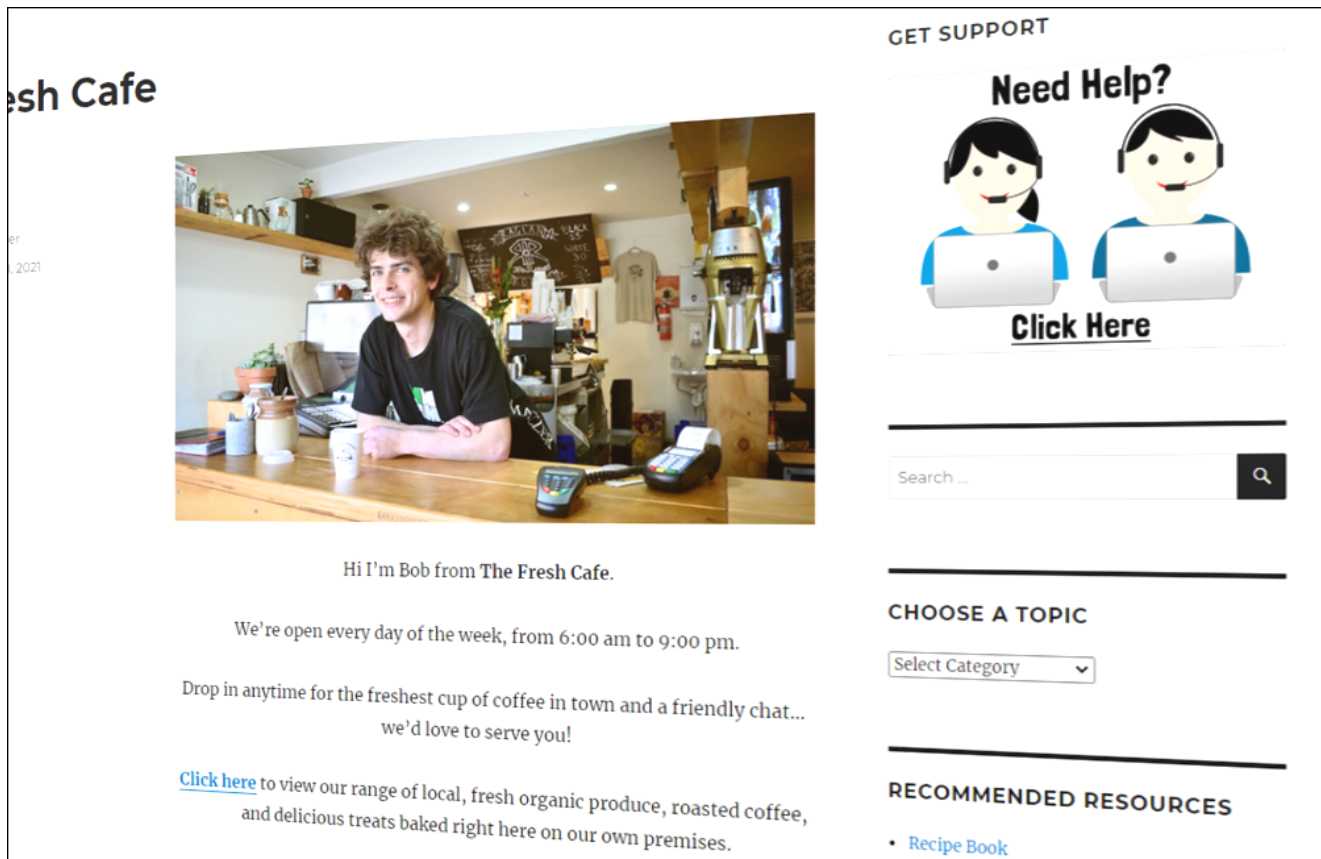
Paste the content from your clipboard into a Custom HTML widget.

Your custom widget will be added to your sidebar.
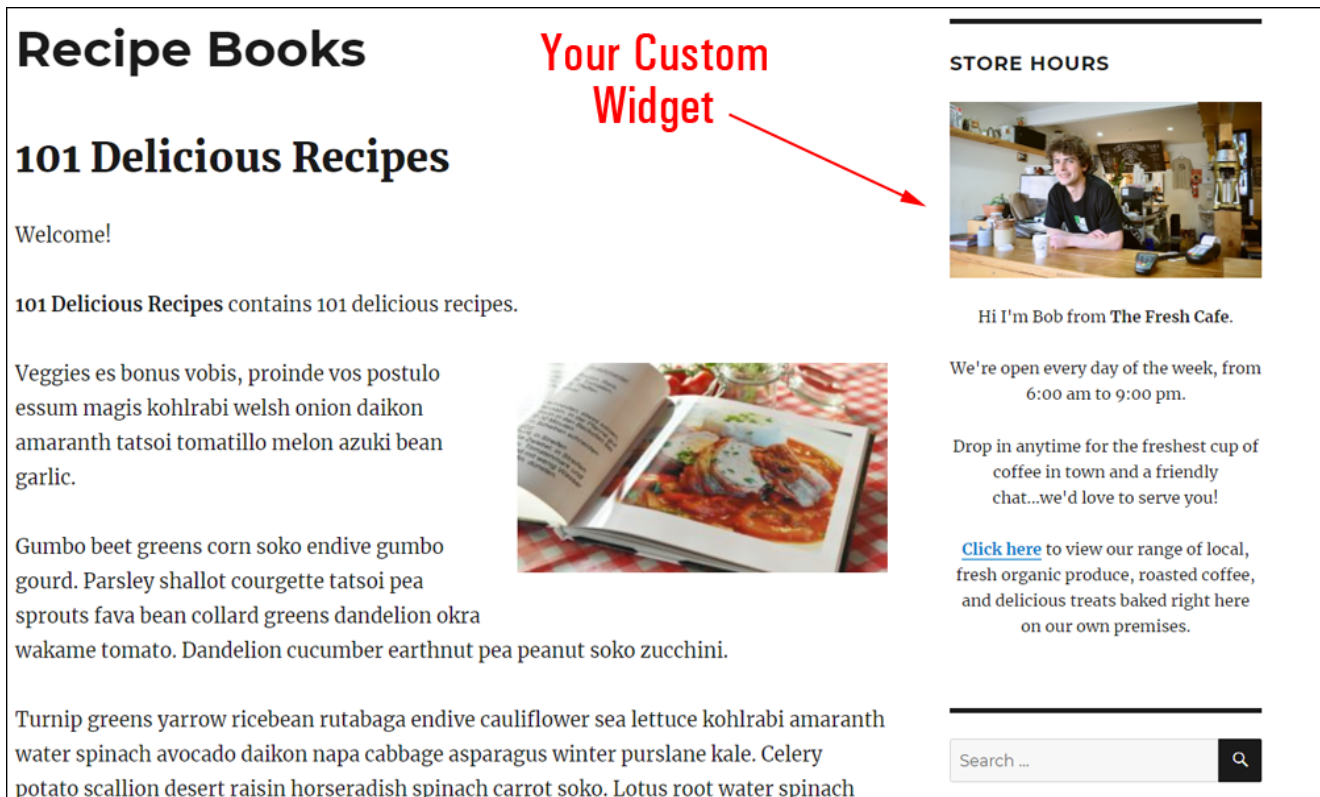
The Custom HTML widget lets you create your own custom sidebar widget.

Congratulations! Now you know how to use and configure a number of commonly used widgets.

Add commonly used widgets to your sidebar.

***

This is the end of part 2 of this tutorial series on using Widgets.

Now that you know how to configure some commonly used widgets on your site, let's add some more advanced widgets to your site.

To view the next tutorial on our series on using WordPress widgets, click here: **How To Use WordPress Widgets – Part 3**

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Updated: April 9th, 2023