



Excel IF Cell Contains: Cheat Sheet

25 Ready-Made Recipes (one-liners)

Scenario	Drop-in Formula (assume A2)
Contains text (insens.)	=IF(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("apple",A2)),"Yes","No")
Contains text (case)	=IF(ISNUMBER(FIND("Apple",A2)),"Yes","No")
Any of list (OR)	=IF(OR(ISNUMBER(SEARCH({"apple","orange","banana"},A2))),,"Fruit",,"")
All of list (AND)	=IF(AND(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("red",A2)),ISNUMBER(SEARCH("apple",A2))),,"Red Apple",,"")
Return B2 if "product"	=IF(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("product",A2)),B2,"")
Flag "error"	=IF(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("error",A2)),"Review","OK")
Contains digit 5	=IF(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("5",A2)),"✓","✗")
Wildcard char	=IF(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("report?",A2)),"Match",,"")
Does not contain	=IF(NOT(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("danger",A2))),,"Safe","Alert")
Discount if "discount"	=IF(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("discount",A2)),B2*0.9,B2)
CF rule "urgent"	=ISNUMBER(SEARCH("urgent",A2))
Highlight row "urgent"	=ISNUMBER(SEARCH("urgent",\$A2))
Contains any from D2:D5	=IF(OR(ISNUMBER(SEARCH(D2:D5,A2))),,"Found",,"")
Count contains "report"	=SUMPRODUCT(--ISNUMBER(SEARCH("report",A2:A10)))
Sum if contains	=SUMIF(A2:A10,"*sales*",B2:B10)
Average if contains	=AVERAGEIF(A2:A10,"*Q1*",B2:B10)
Text after "ID:"	=IFERROR(TEXTAFTER(A2,"ID:"),,"")
Text before " - "	=IFERROR(TEXTBEFORE(A2," - "),,"")
X OR Y but not both	=IF(XOR(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("apple",A2)),ISNUMBER(SEARCH("orange",A2))),,"Either","Both/None")
If contains ⇒ VLOOKUP	=IF(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("code",A2)),VLOOKUP(B2,D:E,2,FALSE),,"")
Append "(New!)"	=IF(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("new",A2)),C2&" (New!)",C2)
Any text vs blank	=IF(A2<>"","Has Text","Blank")
Contains "@"	=IF(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("@",A2)),"Email?","")
Binary flag (0/1)	=--ISNUMBER(SEARCH("complete",A2))
If contains ⇒ INDEX/MATCH	=IF(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("lookup",A2)),INDEX(D:D,MATCH(B2,C:C,0)),,"")

Performance / Version Notes

SEARCH/FIND on tens-of-thousands of rows can lag—prefer dynamic arrays or Power Query. TEXTAFTER, TEXTBEFORE, FILTER, UNIQUE, XLOOKUP require **Microsoft 365**.

Quick Reference – SEARCH vs FIND

Function	Case-sense	Wildcards * ?	Error if not found
SEARCH	No	☑	#VALUE!
FIND	Yes	✗	#VALUE!



Core "IF Cell Contains" Patterns

Goal	Case?	Formula Skeleton
Basic contains	Insensitive	=IF(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("text", cell)), value_if_true, value_if_false)
Basic contains	Sensitive	=IF(ISNUMBER(FIND("text", cell)), value_if_true, value_if_false)
NOT contains	Insensitive	=IF(NOT(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("text", cell))), value_if_true, value_if_false)
OR criteria	Insensitive	=IF(OR(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("x", cell)), ISNUMBER(SEARCH("y", cell))), ...)
AND criteria	Insensitive	=IF(AND(ISNUMBER(SEARCH("x", cell)), ISNUMBER(SEARCH("y", cell))), ...)

Fast Function Glossary

Function	Use
SEARCH	Find text (not case-sensitive)
FIND	Find text (case-sensitive)
ISNUMBER	Convert position → TRUE/FALSE
COUNTIF/SUMIF	Wildcard-friendly contains tests
FILTER	Spill rows meeting criteria
TEXTAFTER/BEFORE	Extract around delimiter
XLOOKUP	Modern, wildcard lookups

Modern Excel Formulas

Task	Sleeker Formula
Lookup partial text	=XLOOKUP(""&B2&"",A:A,C:C,"Not Found",2)
Filter rows containing text	=FILTER(A2:C89,ISNUMBER(SEARCH("urgent",B2:B89)),,"")
Unique list with contains	=UNIQUE(FILTER(A2:A89,ISNUMBER(SEARCH("blue",B2:B89))))

Mini VBA Snippet (case-insensitive)

```
Sub MarkUrgent()
    Dim c As Range
    For Each c In Range("A2", Cells(Rows.Count, "A").End(xlUp))
        c.Offset(0, 1).Value = If(InStr(1, c.Value, "urgent", vbTextCompare) > 0, _
            "High", "Normal")
    Next c
End Sub
```

Troubleshooting Flow

- Wrong Case?** → Use SEARCH not FIND.
- Formula returns #VALUE!** → Wrap in ISNUMBER or IFERROR.
- Multiple criteria confusion?** → Evaluate each ISNUMBER(SEARCH()) first, then combine with AND/OR.
- Slow on large data?** → Switch to Power Query or add helper column.