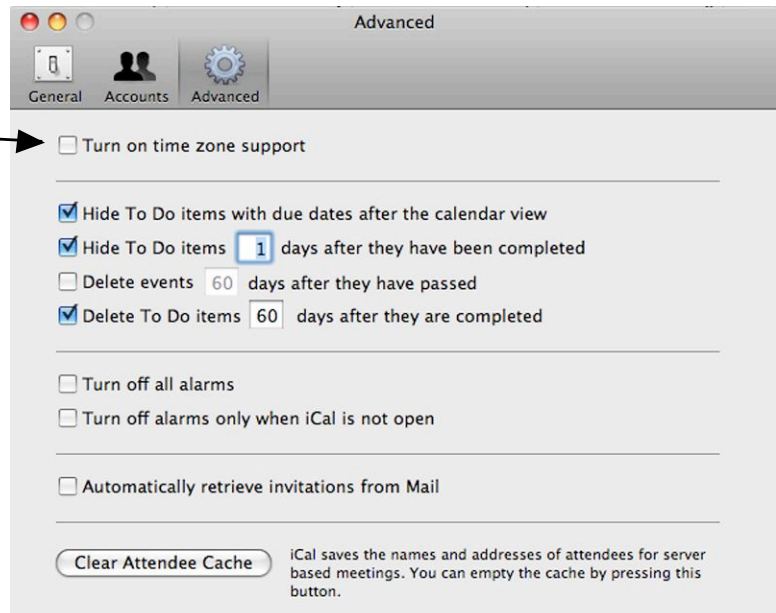


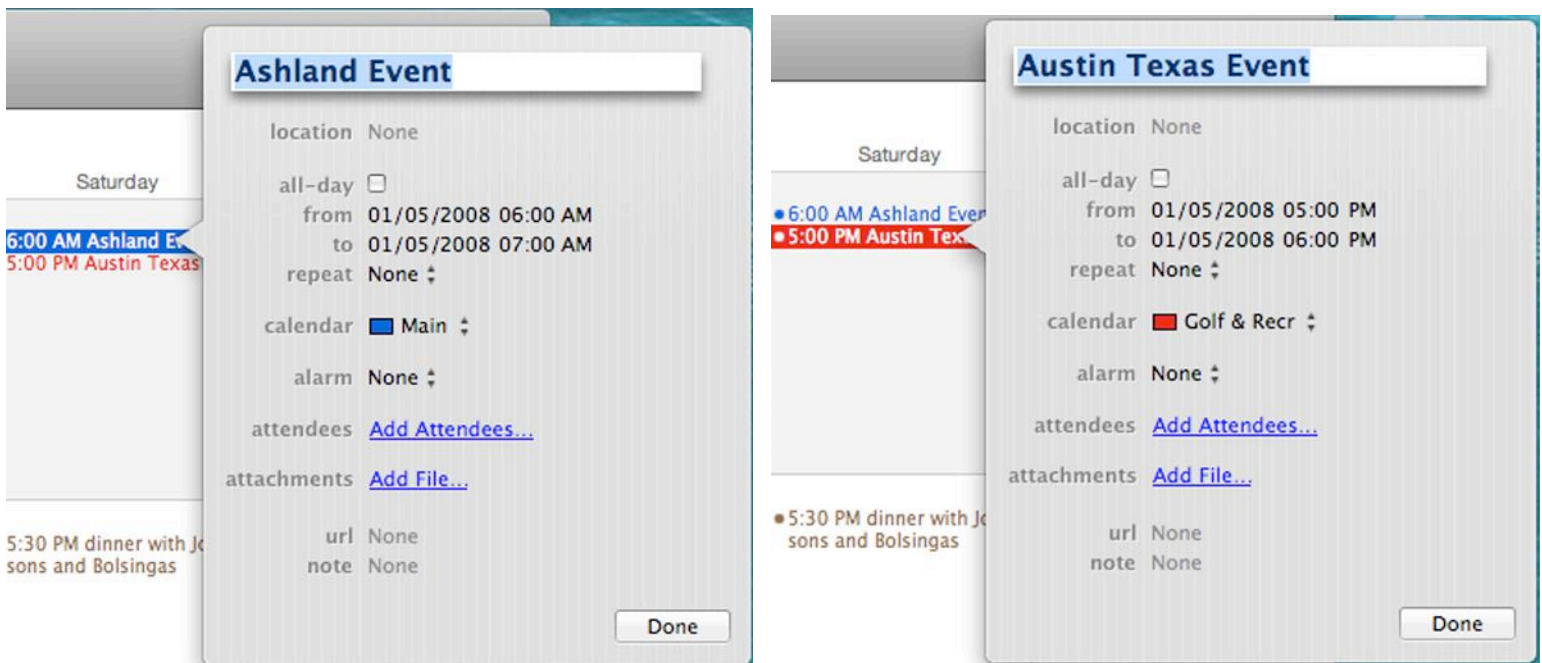
iCal is “smart” about times and dates. Maybe too smart for its own good. The behavior of event times can be very confusing, and is different depending on whether the “time zone support” Preference is turned on or off.

First of all, here is where time zone support is turned on or off, in iCal Preferences/Advanced

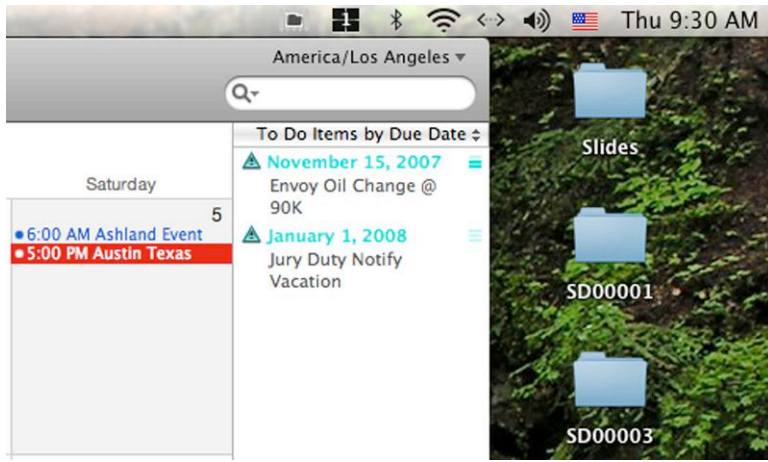


Let's look at how iCal behaves with time zone support OFF

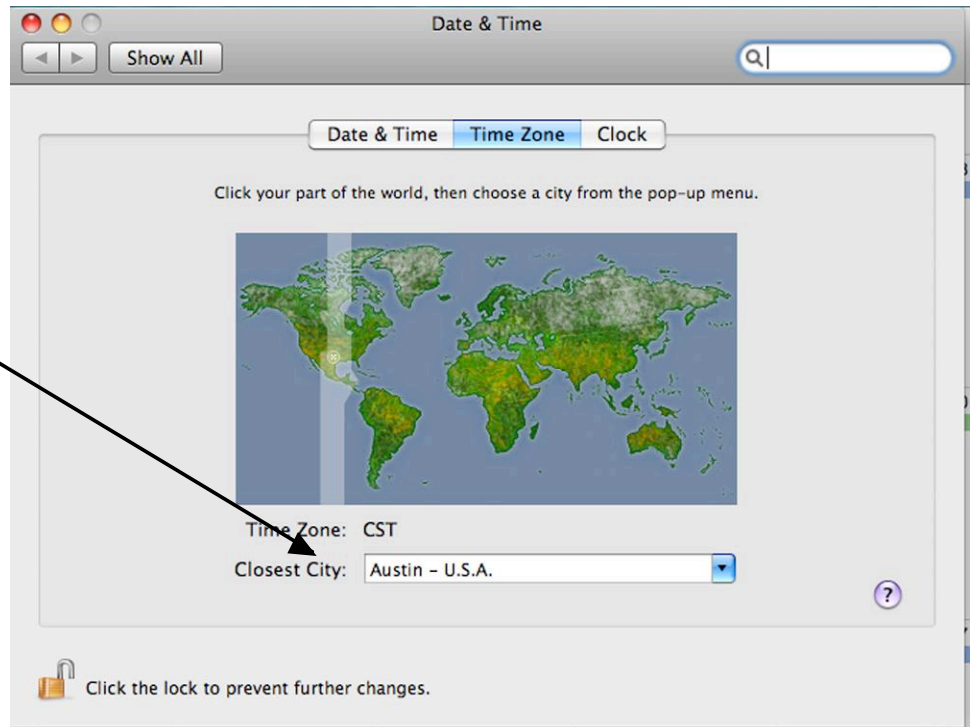
We're sitting here in Ashland (Pacific Std Time) and want to create an event that will take place here at 6:00 AM and another that we will attend in Austin, TX at 5:00 PM (Central Time).



We know that the times are Ashland and Austin local times, although iCal doesn't.



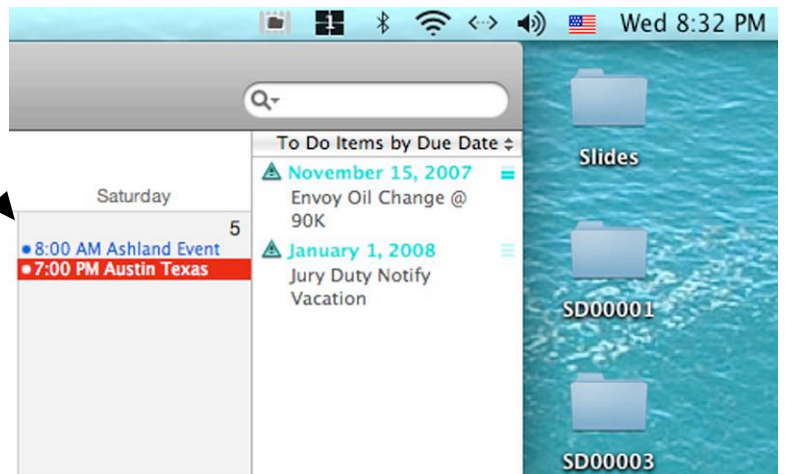
We're still in Ashland (Pacific time) and everything looks fine.



So we fly to Austin, and once there click on the clock at the right of the top menu bar, click on Open Date and Time and reset our Laptop's time zone to Austin time.

And look what's happened to our event times in iCal! They have advanced two hours!.

The problem is that even with the time zone support Preference turned off, iCal is still aware of the time zone. It assumes that the time you enter when you create the event is in the time zone that your computer clock is set to. It then changes all iCal times to the new time zone if you change your computer clock time zone.

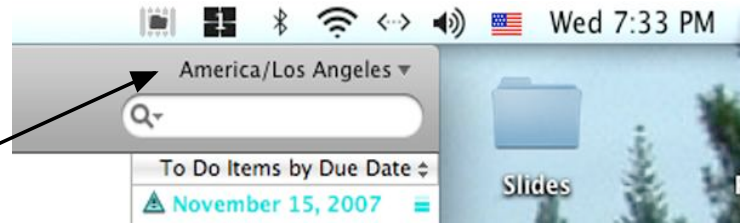


So, what can you do about this confusing behavior?. One solution is to just keep your computer clock set to your home time zone and remember that the event times are local times at the event's location. The other solution is to turn the time zone support Preference on. This can get confusing too, and we will look at it next.

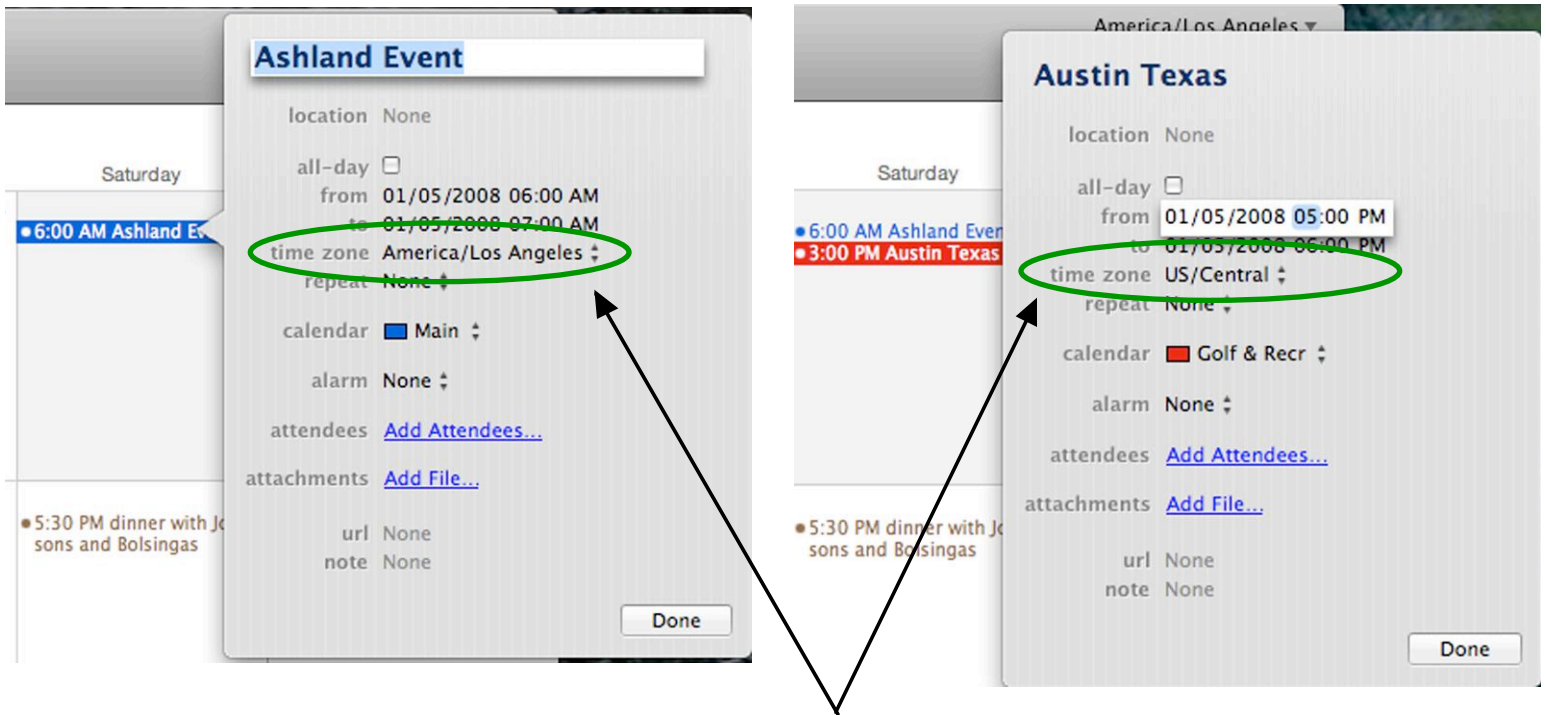
iCal behavior with Time Zone Support turned ON.

First we'll go to Preferences/Advanced (See p. 1) and check the turn on time zone support checkbox.

You can tell when time zone support is turned on because you will see a time zone indicator in the upper right corner of the iCal window.



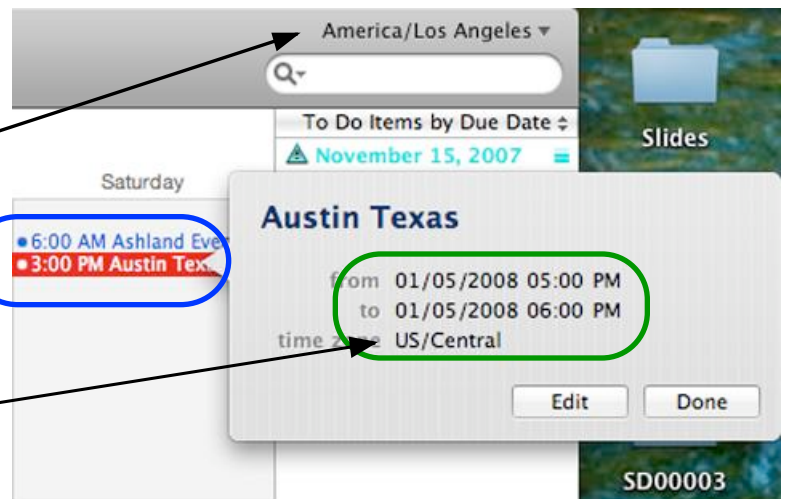
Now let's create the same two events, one in Ashland and one in Austin.



Note that we now have a little menu where we can specify in what time zone the time for the event is.

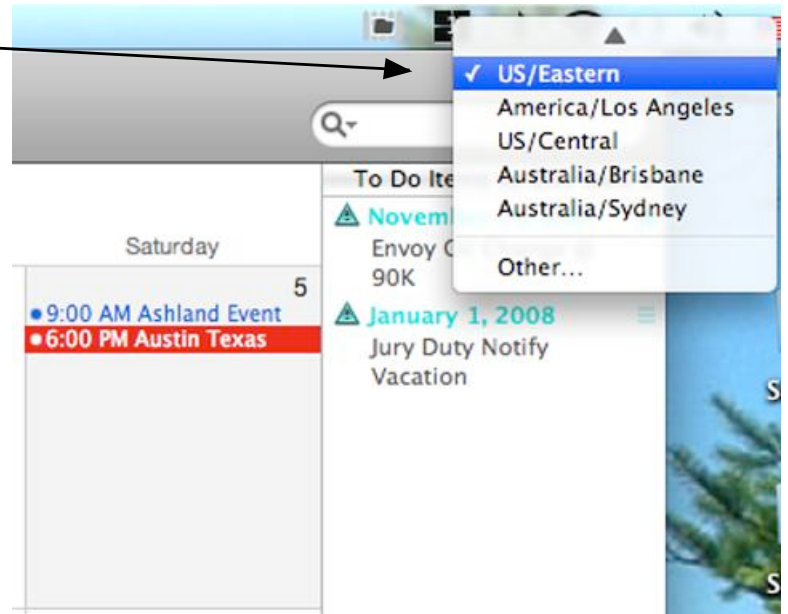
We are still in Ashland, and iCal now looks like this.

All the events in the **main calendar window** show times as they would be in **this** time zone.



In the **detail popup window**, the times are correct for the time zone specified for the event.

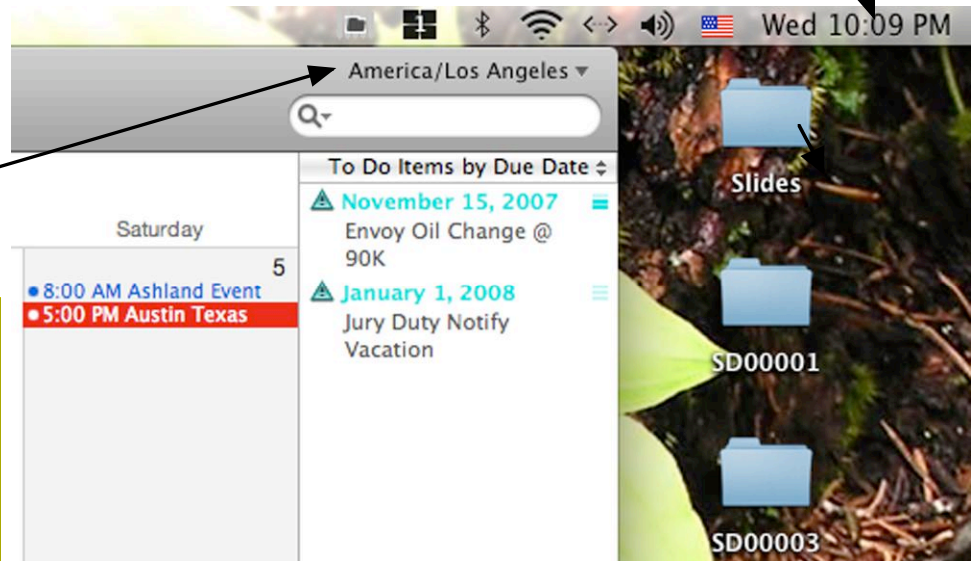
Note that the time zone indicator is actually a pull-down menu. You can display the times in the main window in any time zone in the world. This can be handy if, for instance, you wanted a colleague in New Jersey to call you during your 6 AM meeting in Ashland. You would tell him to call at 9 AM his time.



So, again we fly to Austin, open date and time and set our laptop's clock to Central time.

Wait a minute! The times on the main calendar page are now in Central time, but our selected time zone here still says Pacific time. What gives?

This is a little glitch in iCal. Normally the iCal main page event times are controlled by the iCal time zone setting in the upper right of the iCal window, but when you change the computer's time zone, it doesn't get reset properly.



To get around this little problem, simply set the iCal time zone manually to the same one your computer clock is set to using the pull-down menu as shown at the top of this page.

Once you have done this, things behave normally. iCal main window times are controlled by the iCal time zone setting. You can change it to display event times for any time zone, as at the top of the page.

Two final Questions and Answers. If you turn on the time zone support Preference, what about all those events you created earlier, when you had it turned off? Their time zones will be set to whatever computer clock time zone was in effect when you created the event.

If you create some events with different time zones and then turn time zone support off, what happens to them? iCal remembers the settings, and they will be correctly restored when time zone support is turned on again.