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Many iPhone users have noticed that after updating to iOS 26, the System Data (also shown as "iOS" or "Other Data") has ballooned in size. Some users report it jumping from 10 GB on iOS 18 to 30–45 GB on iOS 26 — sometimes larger than the operating system itself.

This can make a 64 GB or 128 GB iPhone nearly unusable, even if you've deleted apps, photos, and videos. Fortunately, there's a community-tested workaround that can free up several gigabytes of System Data instantly.

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Step-by-Step Fix

1. **Check your storage**

   - Go to **Settings > General > iPhone Storage** and note how much space System / iOS Data is using.

2. **Set the date into the future**

   - Open **Settings > General > Date & Time**.

   - Turn off *Set Automatically*.

- Manually set the date to today's date but **3 years in the future** (for example, if today is September 25, 2025, set it to September 25, 2028).

3. **Close all apps**

   - Swipe up from the bottom (or double-tap the home button on older models).

   - Close every app, including **Settings**.

4. **Reboot your iPhone**

   - Power the phone off completely.

   - Turn it back on.

5. **Check storage again**

   - Return to **Settings > General > iPhone Storage**.

   - System Data should shrink — many users report recovering **5–10 GB immediately**.

6. **Reset date & time**

   - Go back to **Settings > General > Date & Time**.

   - Turn *Set Automatically* back on.

Why Does This Work?

Apple hasn't explained the cause, but evidence suggests System Data is inflated by:

- Caches that don't auto-purge,

- Log files that continue growing, or

- A bug in iOS 26's storage reporting.

By shifting the system clock forward, iOS forces expiration of cached data and temporary logs, then cleans them up during reboot.

Additional Tips

- **Repeat when needed**: If System Data grows again after weeks or months, you can repeat the trick.

- **Backup regularly**: Storage issues can sometimes corrupt data. iCloud or iTunes backups help prevent loss.

- **Last resort**: A full restore via Finder or iTunes usually resets System Data, but it's time-consuming compared to the quick date-reset fix.

References

- [User Manual](#)

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