How To Setup Time Machine on a Mac:

1. First, prepare a hard disk or Time Capsule unit for Time Machine Backup. You may use any drive to accomplish this whether it will be an internal or external drive makes no difference. You may also choose to use a Network Attached Storage (NAS) drive. Mac OS X, by default, asks when it detects more than one hard drive if you would like to use the other drive as a Time Machine Backup Disk.

2. If the message corresponds with the drive that is to be used for the Time Machine backup, then select “Use as Backup Disk” button. If the hard disk is formatted correctly it will instantly be converted to a Time Machine backup disk; however, if it is formatted wrong, then the system will prompt the user to erase the disk to correctly format it.

3. When prompted just click the Erase button, and a progress bar will appear showing the progress of the formatting.
4. Once the disk is formatted Time Machine is ready to go and will automatically start backing the system up within a few minutes. This screen will inform you on the name of the unit, amount of space you are using, how much space you have left, date of backups, and how long until the next backup. You may also turn off Time Machine at this screen, or cancel certain hourly backups. This is also possible using the status icon in the menu bar if you have it enabled.

* To enable the status icon in the menu bar simply put a checkmark in the box next to the option as shown in the picture below at the bottom of the preference pane.

* To cancel backups on this screen, simply click the on the “x” button next to “Next Backup:” and it will cancel that hour’s backup.
5. If you want to, you can further configure Time Machine by selecting the “Options” button in the Time Machine preference pane. Here you can select what files/folders you would like to exclude from Time Machine backups, and whether or not you would like to be notified after the deletion of old backups. To add or remove files to list, simply click on the “+” button to open a new window where you can navigate to the files you would like to add or remove.

6. If you need to change what disk you want to use as a Time Machine backup, simply click on “Select Disk”, here you can alternate between drives connected directly to the computer and drives connected over the network via Time Capsule.
7. Time Machine can initially take a while to finish its backup of the hard disk, depending on the amount of space that is being used. It is advised that if you are using Time Machine through a NAS, you should plug in your computer via Ethernet instead of Wi-Fi as it will significantly reduce the amount of time it takes to create a backup. Firewire and SATA are both faster connections than USB. After the first backup, Time Machine will become significantly faster at backing up the disk since there will be few changes to the disk.

8. To enter Time Machine simply click on the Time Machine icon in the dock, or use the icon in the upper right hand corner of the screen in the menu bar.

   * Time Machine Status Indicator in Menu Bar

   * Time Machine Icon in Dock

9. When inside of Time Machine, you can navigate both backwards and forwards through old backups, restore lost or erased files and settings, by selecting the time frame you want to jump back to and clicking restore.
* For Dual Boot & PC Users

10. If you would like to use a disk to backup both a Mac and PC, or just make it able to be both readable and writable on a Mac and PC, then you need to format the disk as FAT via Disk Utility, which is located in the Utilities folder in Applications. When in Disk Utility, simply select the backup partition of the Time Machine drive, and select the “Erase” tab. Click on the Format drop down menu, and select “MS-DOS (FAT)”, the name of the partition will likely be shortened due to the nature of a FAT partition. When everything is set, simply click on the “Erase” button to format the drive.
11. If you would like to further customize the hard disk, in the left hand pane select the hard disk you would like to format, and click on the Partition tab. Select the appropriate number of partitions, create a name for the partition(s), on the Format drop down menu select MS-DOS (FAT), and assign a size for the partition(s). If you click on the “Options” button, you can select an appropriate Partition Map Scheme, which is explained well in the options pane.