



# How to Find and Disable the Guided Tours Plugin on Your Joomla Sites

Joomla Guided Tours wastes resources on live sites. Why you should disable it in production and how mySites.guru handles it automatically.

Phil E. Taylor | 12 March 2026

Joomla 4.3.0 introduced the Guided Tours feature, a system plugin that walks administrators through common tasks in the admin panel with interactive step-by-step overlays. It highlights buttons and fields, shows explanatory tooltips, and guides you through workflows like creating an article or configuring user settings.

It's a thoughtful addition for people learning Joomla. But on production sites managed by experienced administrators, it's dead weight.

I'll cover what the plugin actually does under the hood, why it belongs disabled on live sites, how to disable it manually, and how [mysites.guru](https://mysites.guru) flags it automatically across all your connected Joomla sites.

## What Does the Joomla Guided Tours Plugin Do?

The Guided Tours system ( `plg_system_guidedtours` ) is a system plugin that loads on every page of the Joomla admin panel. It consists of several parts:

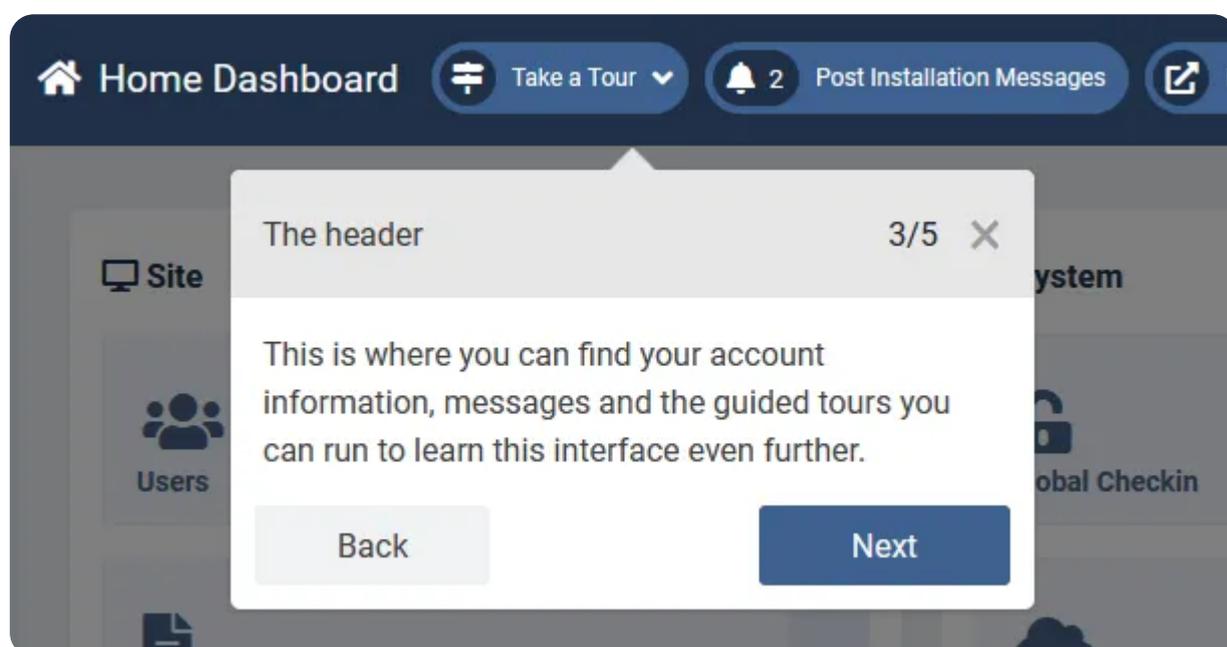
- **The system plugin** - hooks into every admin page load to inject the tour JavaScript and CSS
- **The tours component ( `com_guidedtours` )** - stores and manages tour definitions in the database
- **Tour step definitions** - JSON-based step sequences that target specific DOM elements on admin pages
- **The frontend overlay** - the actual interactive UI that highlights elements and shows instructional text

When the plugin is enabled, Joomla loads the tour framework on every single admin page request, regardless of whether anyone is actually running a tour. The JavaScript waits in the background, ready to activate when a user starts a tour from the admin menu.

Joomla ships with several built-in tours covering tasks like:

- How to create an article
- How to create a menu and menu items
- How to create a category
- How to configure global settings
- How to manage users and user groups

Extension developers can also create their own tours to introduce users to their extension's features. The system is extensible by design.



## When Does Joomla Guided Tours Make Sense?

There are legitimate scenarios where leaving the Guided Tours plugin enabled is the right call:

### Training new team members

If you're onboarding new administrators who haven't used Joomla before, the guided tours provide a structured introduction without needing someone to sit beside them. They can work through the tours at their own pace and get familiar with where things are.

## Development and staging environments

On development or staging sites where you're building out the admin experience, you might want tours enabled to test them or to understand the admin workflows from a new user's perspective.

## Custom client onboarding

If you build Joomla sites for clients and hand over the admin panel, some agencies create custom guided tours that walk clients through the specific workflows they need - publishing blog posts, managing products, or updating contact information. In this case, the tours are part of the deliverable.

## Extension developers testing tours

If you're developing a Joomla extension and building guided tours for it, you obviously need the plugin enabled during development and testing.

## Why Should You Disable It on Production Sites?

For the vast majority of production Joomla sites, the Guided Tours plugin should be disabled.

## Unnecessary resource loading

Every time an administrator loads any page in the Joomla admin panel, the Guided Tours plugin:

1. Executes its PHP system plugin code during the `onAfterDispatch` event
2. Injects JavaScript files for the tour engine
3. Injects CSS for the tour overlay styling
4. Loads tour definitions from the database

This happens on **every admin page load**, not just when someone clicks "Start Tour." The JavaScript sits idle in the browser, consuming memory and adding to the page's script evaluation time.

On a single page load, the overhead is small. But admin sessions involve dozens or hundreds of page loads. Across a day of admin work, across multiple administrators, it adds up to wasted bandwidth and processing time for functionality nobody is using.

## Admin interface clutter

With the plugin enabled, a "Guided Tours" menu item appears in the admin sidebar under Components. There's also a "Start Tour" button context in some admin views. For experienced administrators, these are visual noise - one more thing to scroll past, one more menu item cluttering the sidebar that serves no purpose.

## Increased attack surface

The Guided Tours plugin doesn't have a known vulnerability today. But minimising your attack surface matters regardless.

Every enabled plugin is code that runs on every request. If a security flaw turns up in any of them, every site with that plugin enabled is exposed. The Joomla security team has a good track record, but reducing active plugins to only what you need is basic hardening.

This is the same logic behind disabling other unused Joomla features. If you're not using it, turn it off. If a vulnerability is found in a component you're running, you want to already have the smallest possible footprint.

## It's a solved problem for experienced admins

Once you know how to create an article in Joomla, you don't need an interactive overlay to show you where the "New" button is. The guided tours are designed for first-time users. By the time you're deploying sites to production, you're past that stage.

The same applies to your team. If they need guided tours to do their daily work, they need training - not a plugin running on a production server.

## How Do You Disable Joomla Guided Tours Manually?

Disabling the plugin through the Joomla admin panel is straightforward:

1. Log in to your Joomla admin panel
2. Navigate to **System** in the sidebar menu
3. Click **Plugins** under the **Manage** section
4. Search for "Guided Tours" in the search box
5. Click on **System - Guided Tours** to open the plugin
6. Set the **Status** to **Disabled**
7. Click **Save & Close**

Alternatively, you can toggle the status directly from the plugin list by clicking the green checkmark icon next to the plugin name to change it to a red X.

You can verify it worked by checking that the "Guided Tours" menu item has disappeared from the Components menu and that no tour-related JavaScript loads on admin pages.

### The manual approach doesn't scale

If you manage one Joomla site, the above takes thirty seconds. If you manage ten sites, it's five minutes of repetitive clicking. If you manage fifty or a hundred sites, you're spending a meaningful amount of time logging into admin panels just to disable a single plugin.

And that's just the initial disable. What about after Joomla updates? What about new sites you add to your portfolio? What about sites where a well-meaning administrator re-enables it?

The manual approach requires you to remember to check this setting on every site, every time. That's exactly the kind of repetitive, error-prone task that should be automated.

## How mySites.guru detects the Guided Tours plugin

mySites.guru checks the Guided Tours plugin status as part of its [snapshot process](#). Every time a snapshot runs on a connected Joomla site (version 4.3.0 or later), the connector queries the Joomla extensions database:

```
SELECT count(*) FROM #__extensions
WHERE name = 'plg_system_guidedtours' AND enabled = 1
```

If the query returns 1, the plugin is enabled and the snapshot flags it. If it returns 0, the plugin is disabled and everything is green.

This check runs automatically. You don't need to remember to look for it. The snapshot result appears in the Extension Information section alongside other plugin checks, showing you at a glance whether the Guided Tours plugin needs attention.

The Guided Tours check is part of mySites.guru's broader [best practice audit](#) for Joomla sites. It sits alongside checks for debug mode, error reporting, post-installation messages, and other configuration items that should be tightened on production sites.

## What the snapshot shows

In the mySites.guru dashboard, the Guided Tours check appears in the Extension Information section of your site's snapshot. You'll see one of two states:

- **OK** (green) - the plugin is disabled, no action needed
- **Issue** (red) - the plugin is enabled and should be disabled on this production site

The check also tracks changes between snapshots. If the plugin was disabled on the last snapshot but is now enabled (perhaps after a Joomla update or someone re-enabling it), the trend indicator shows the change so you can catch configuration drift immediately.

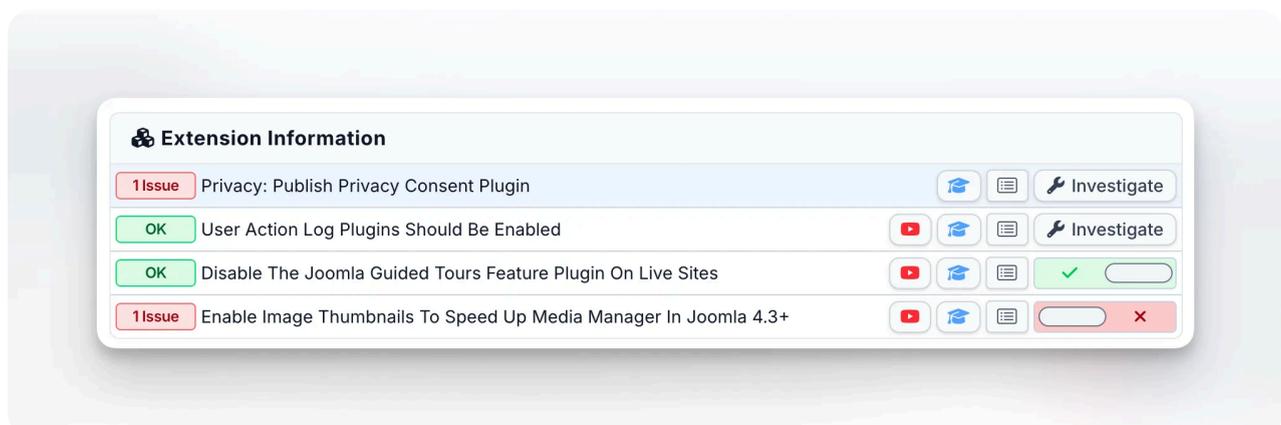
## How Do You Disable Joomla Guided Tours with mySites.guru?

Once the snapshot has identified that the Guided Tours plugin is enabled, you have two ways to fix it.

### From the site snapshot

Click on the Guided Tours check in the Extension Information section. mySites.guru shows you the current state and provides a toggle to enable or disable the plugin remotely. Click the toggle, and the connector updates the plugin's status in the Joomla database directly - no need to log into the Joomla admin panel.

The toggle works in both directions. If you need to temporarily re-enable the plugin (for training, testing, or onboarding), you can turn it back on from the same interface and disable it again when you're done.



This is the same pattern used for other Joomla configuration toggles, like [hiding post-installation messages](#) or [managing extensions](#).

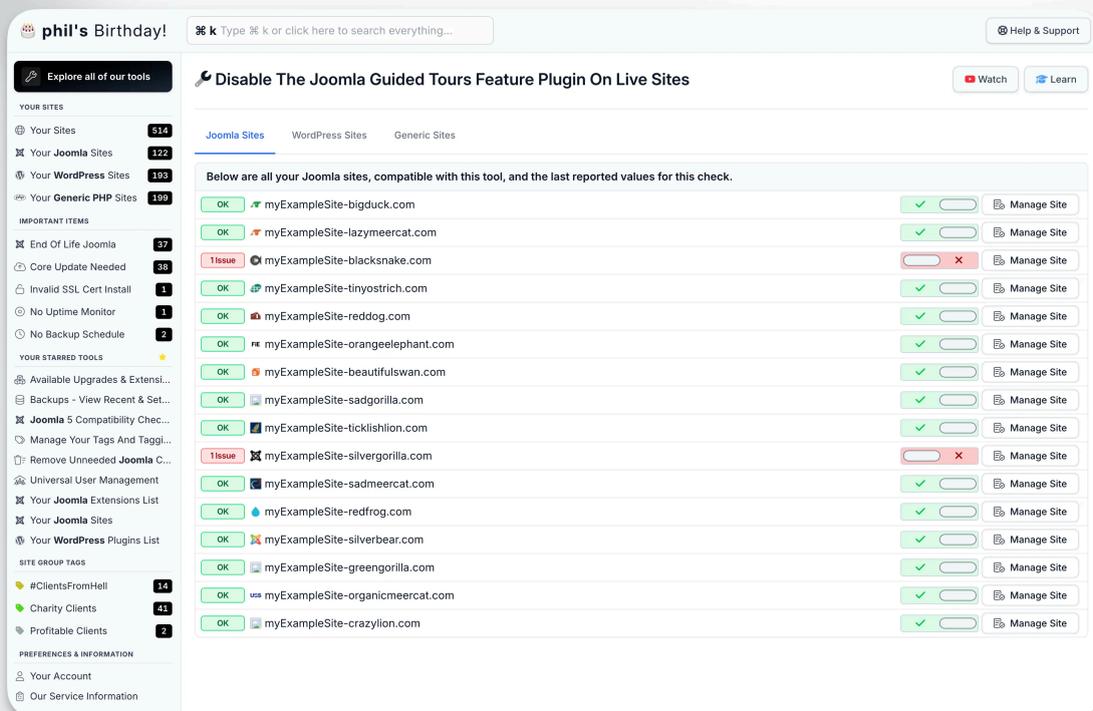
## From the all-sites tool view

For managing the Guided Tours plugin across your entire portfolio, the all-sites tool view is more efficient. This view lists every connected Joomla site (4.3.0+) and shows the Guided Tours plugin status for each one.

From this single screen you can:

- See which sites have the plugin enabled and which have it disabled
- Sort and filter to find sites that need attention
- Toggle the plugin on or off for individual sites

If you've just connected a batch of new Joomla sites to mySites.guru, the all-sites view lets you quickly scan for the Guided Tours plugin and disable it everywhere it shouldn't be running.



The screenshot displays the mySites.guru dashboard for user 'phil's Birthday!'. The main heading is 'Disable The Joomla Guided Tours Feature Plugin On Live Sites'. Below this, there are tabs for 'Joomla Sites', 'WordPress Sites', and 'Generic Sites'. A message states: 'Below are all your Joomla sites, compatible with this tool, and the last reported values for this check.' The table below lists 18 Joomla sites with their status and a 'Manage Site' button.

| Status  | Site Name                        | Plugin Status | Action      |
|---------|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| OK      | myExampleSite-bigduck.com        | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-lazymeercat.com    | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| 1 Issue | myExampleSite-blacksnake.com     | Disabled      | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-tinyostrich.com    | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-reddog.com         | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-orangeelephant.com | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-beautifulswan.com  | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-sadgorilla.com     | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-ticklishlion.com   | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| 1 Issue | myExampleSite-silvergorilla.com  | Disabled      | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-sadmeercat.com     | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-redfrog.com        | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-silverbear.com     | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-greengorilla.com   | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-organicmeercat.com | Enabled       | Manage Site |
| OK      | myExampleSite-crazylion.com      | Enabled       | Manage Site |

## Why Does Plugin Hygiene Matter on Joomla Sites?

The Guided Tours plugin is just one example of a broader principle: **production Joomla sites should only run the plugins they actually need.**

Joomla ships with a large number of system plugins enabled by default. Many of them are essential - authentication, session handling, content processing. But others are optional features that may not be relevant to every site.

A disciplined approach to plugin management means:

1. **Auditing what's enabled** - know which plugins are active on each site
2. **Disabling what's unused** - turn off plugins that don't serve a purpose on that specific site
3. **Monitoring for drift** - catch it when plugins get re-enabled unexpectedly
4. **Documenting exceptions** - know why a plugin is enabled when the default recommendation is to disable it

mySites.guru automates steps 1 through 3. The [extension management tools](#) give you visibility into every extension on every site, and the snapshot checks flag the ones that deviate from best practice. And it's not just plugins - [automatically removing fluff files after Joomla updates](#) is another way to keep your sites lean.

Want to see how your sites score across all best practice checks, not just Guided Tours? Run a [free audit](#) on any Joomla site to get a full report covering security, performance, and configuration.

## What Other Joomla Plugins Should You Review on Production Sites?

While you're looking at the Guided Tours plugin, here are other default Joomla plugins worth reviewing on production sites:

## System - Debug

The debug plugin displays diagnostic information at the bottom of every page, including database queries, memory usage, and loaded language strings. Essential for development, terrible for production. mySites.guru checks this as part of the [best practice audit](#).

## System - Statistics

Sends anonymous usage statistics to the Joomla project. Some site owners prefer to disable this for privacy or performance reasons.

## Content - Email Cloaking

If your site doesn't display email addresses in content, this plugin runs regex on every page output for no reason. Disable it if you don't need it.

## System - Debug Language

Shows untranslated language strings. Only useful during development when you're building or testing translations.

## Content - Load Modules

Allows loading modules within article content using `{loadmodule}` syntax. If you don't use this feature, it's scanning every article unnecessarily.

The principle is always the same: if it's not serving a purpose on this specific site in production, disable it. Every disabled plugin is one fewer thing to load, one fewer thing to update, and one fewer potential attack vector. The same logic applies to features like [Send Copy to Submitter](#) in contact forms - if it's not needed, it's just another thing running for no reason.

## Which Joomla Versions Include Guided Tours?

The Guided Tours feature was introduced in Joomla 4.3.0, released in April 2023.

Version compatibility breakdown:

| Joomla version   | Guided Tours status              |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Joomla 3.x       | Not available - no action needed |
| Joomla 4.0 - 4.2 | Not available - no action needed |
| Joomla 4.3.0+    | Present and enabled by default   |
| Joomla 5.x       | Present and enabled by default   |
| Joomla 6.x       | Present and enabled by default   |

mySites.guru's check only runs on Joomla 4.3.0 and later since earlier versions don't have the plugin. If you're managing a mixed portfolio of Joomla 3, 4, and 5 sites, the check automatically applies only to the sites where it's relevant.

If you're still running Joomla 3 sites, the Guided Tours plugin isn't a concern - but you should be thinking about your [migration path to Joomla 4 or 5](#) or considering the [Joomla 6 technical requirements](#) for your next upgrade cycle.

## Performance impact: how much does it actually matter?

Let's be honest about the performance impact. Disabling the Guided Tours plugin on a single site isn't going to cut your page load time in half. We're talking about a few kilobytes of JavaScript and CSS, plus a small amount of PHP execution time on each admin page load.

But performance optimisation on the admin panel is about the aggregate effect of many small improvements:

- Disable Guided Tours: saves a few KB of JS/CSS per page load
- Disable Debug plugin: saves significant output rendering
- Disable unused content plugins: saves regex processing on every article render

- Disable unused system plugins: saves PHP execution time on every request

Each one is small. Together, they make a noticeably snappier admin experience, especially on shared hosting where server resources are limited and PHP execution time is precious.

For agencies managing dozens or hundreds of sites, this adds up further. If you have 100 Joomla sites and each admin session involves 50 page loads, and each page load saves 20ms from disabling unused plugins, that's 1 second per session, multiplied by however many admin sessions happen per day across all your sites. Not life-changing, but not nothing either.

The bigger point is discipline: running lean configurations across your portfolio means fewer things to troubleshoot when something goes wrong.

## Fitting this into your wider Joomla management workflow

Disabling the Guided Tours plugin is one small piece. The [snapshot](#) that detects it also captures dozens of other configuration checks, so run them regularly to keep your data current.

The [best practice checks](#) cover debug settings, error reporting, SEF URLs, and more - Guided Tours is one item in that audit. The [extension management tools](#) give you a broader view of every extension on every site, not just this one plugin.

If you need to verify the change in Joomla's admin panel, [one-click admin login](#) gets you there without credentials. And just like [dismissing post-installation messages](#) across hundreds of sites, the Guided Tours toggle works at scale from the dashboard.

## Getting started

If you're already a mySites.guru subscriber, run a snapshot on your Joomla 4.3+ and Joomla 5 sites and check the Extension Information section for the Guided Tours check. If any sites show it as enabled, toggle it off from the dashboard.

If you're not yet using mySites.guru, you can [run a free audit](#) on any Joomla site to see all the best practice findings, including the Guided Tours plugin status. The audit covers security, configuration, and performance checks - the Guided Tours plugin is just one of many items it reviews.

For a full overview of what mySites.guru offers for Joomla site management, check the [features page](#).

## Wrap up

The Guided Tours plugin has its place during onboarding and training. On production sites where everyone already knows Joomla, it's just extra JavaScript, CSS, and database queries on every admin page load for no benefit.

Disabling it on one site takes thirty seconds. Keeping it disabled across a portfolio of sites, catching it when Joomla updates re-enable it, and maintaining consistent configuration across fifty or a hundred sites - that's where doing it manually falls apart.

mySites.guru's snapshot check catches it automatically, flags it, and gives you a one-click toggle. No logging into individual admin panels, no spreadsheet tracking which sites you've already fixed.

## Further reading

- [Guided Tours - Joomla user manual](#) - official docs on what guided tours do and how they work
- [A builder's guide to Guided Tours](#) - Joomla Community Magazine walkthrough on creating custom tours, with CSS selectors and export methods
- [Joomla 4.3.0 release announcement](#) - the release that introduced Guided Tours

- [Joomla security advisories](#) - official list of disclosed vulnerabilities, useful context for why reducing active plugins matters
  - [OWASP attack surface analysis](#) - the general security principle behind disabling unused features
- 

This is one of many Joomla-specific tips in our [Joomla Agency Handbook](#).

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the Joomla Guided Tours plugin?

The Guided Tours plugin (plg\_system\_guidedtours) is a system plugin introduced in Joomla 4.3.0 that provides interactive step-by-step walkthroughs of the Joomla admin panel. It highlights buttons, fields, and menu items in sequence to teach administrators how to perform common tasks like creating articles, managing users, or configuring global settings.

## Why should I disable the Guided Tours plugin on production Joomla sites?

On a live production site, the Guided Tours plugin loads JavaScript, CSS, and JSON tour data on every admin page load even when nobody is using the tours. This adds unnecessary overhead to the admin panel. Once your team knows how to use Joomla, guided tours serve no purpose and simply consume resources and add visual clutter to the admin interface.

## Does disabling the Guided Tours plugin break anything in Joomla?

No. The Guided Tours plugin is a feature plugin, not a core dependency. Disabling it removes the tour functionality and the Tours menu item from the admin panel but has no effect on content management, user management, extensions, or any other Joomla functionality. You can re-enable it at any time.

## How does mySites.guru detect whether the Guided Tours plugin is enabled?

During each snapshot, mySites.guru's connector queries the Joomla extensions database table to check whether plg\_system\_guidedtours is enabled. If the plugin is active, the snapshot flags it as an issue. The check runs automatically on Joomla 4.3.0 and later since that is the version where Guided Tours was introduced.

## Can I disable the Guided Tours plugin across all my Joomla sites at once?

Yes. mySites.guru provides a toggle to disable the Guided Tours plugin on individual sites from the snapshot view, and an all-sites tool view that lets you see the plugin status across every connected Joomla site. You can disable it on any site with one click without logging into the Joomla admin panel.

## Will the Guided Tours plugin come back after a Joomla update?

Joomla updates can re-enable the plugin if an update script resets its state, though this is uncommon. mySites.guru catches this automatically because it checks the plugin status on

every snapshot. If a Joomla update re-enables the plugin, the next snapshot will flag it again and you can disable it immediately.

### **Is the Guided Tours plugin a security risk?**

The Guided Tours plugin is not a direct security vulnerability. However, any enabled plugin increases the attack surface of your Joomla installation. If a security flaw were discovered in the Guided Tours plugin code, every site with it enabled would be affected. Disabling plugins you don't need is a standard hardening practice that reduces your exposure to future vulnerabilities.

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## Get in touch

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