

Setup nginx for a glassfish app with ssl

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1. System

- I use Debian, version 8.7 ([why?](#))
- Vi is used as a text editor in the following

2. Why nginx?

When I was introduced to nginx a long time ago, it was as a convenient replacement for Apache Web Server: lighter, faster.

Indeed, nginx can help you direct the traffic received by your domain `www.example.com` to the `html / php / js` files or Java apps sitting on your server.

But it can do more than being a web server. Nginx is a "reverse proxy", quite a barbaric term. I'd describe it as **a tool doing useful stuff between your firewall and your web app**. For security, it helps you with:

- dealing with SSL certificates
- help you mitigate DDOS attacks, and generally, controlling traffic in an easier way than using iptables
- hide the server from view

So I suppose you could do much of what nginx does via iptable and whatever app server you use, but concentrating stuff in nginx makes it easier.

3. Why nginx + glassfish + ssl?

Why a tutorial specifically on nginx used for a glassfish app with ssl certificates?

- this is my personal use case
- there are no tutorials on it, though [this file on github](#) does 99% of the job (and we'll use it here).

So, this tutorial assumes you have created certificates with letsencrypt's certbot, as explained in a previous tutorial.

Let's start:

4. Installing nginx

```
sudo apt-get install nginx
```

```
sudo vi /etc/nginx/conf.d/yourdomain.com.conf
```

(note: the ".conf" extension is necessary for the file to be loaded in nginx)

Paste the content of [this file](#) in yourdomain.com.conf.

Explanations on the lines of this file:

```
upstream glassfish_server {
    server 127.0.0.1:8080 fail_timeout=0;
}
```

This tells on which port the glassfish server can be reached. Remember that the default port 8080 can be changed to a more random port. See the glassfish installation guide in the same series of tutorials.

```
server {
    listen      80;
    server_name berat.com;
    return      301 https://$server_name$request_uri;①
}
```

① This means you can still be contacted through **http**, it will simply be redirected to **https**. Nice!

```
ssl_certificate /var/certs/server.crt;
ssl_certificate_key /var/certs/server.key;
```

For a ssl certificate created with letsencrypt, these lines should be changed for:

- `ssl_certificate /etc/letsencrypt/live/yourdomain.com/cert.pem;`
- `ssl_certificate_key /etc/letsencrypt/live/yourdomain.com/privkey.pem;`

That's it. Restart nginx to load your config:

```
sudo /etc/init.d/nginx restart
```

Make sure the port 443 is open in your firewall.

Test your domain can be reached with SSL, with https and a nice green OK in the url bar: <https://yourdomain.com>

(don't write <https://yourdomain.com:8080>, it's silly but it blocked me a long time...)

The end



Tutorial by Clement Levallois.

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