Install Ubuntu desktop

ubuntu.com/tutorials/install-ubuntu-desktop

What you'll learn

In this tutorial, we will guide you through the steps required to install Ubuntu Desktop on your laptop or PC.

What you'll need

- A laptop or PC (obviously!) with at least 25GB of storage space.
- A flash drive (8GB as a minimum, 12GB or above recommended).

Whilst Ubuntu works on a wide range of devices, it is recommended that you use a device listed on the Ubuntu certified hardware page. These devices have been tested and confirmed to work well with Ubuntu.

If you are installing Ubuntu on a PC or laptop you have used previously, it is always recommended to back up your data prior to installation.

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You can download an Ubuntu image here. Make sure to save it to a memorable location on your PC! For this tutorial, we will use the Ubuntu 20.04 LTS release.

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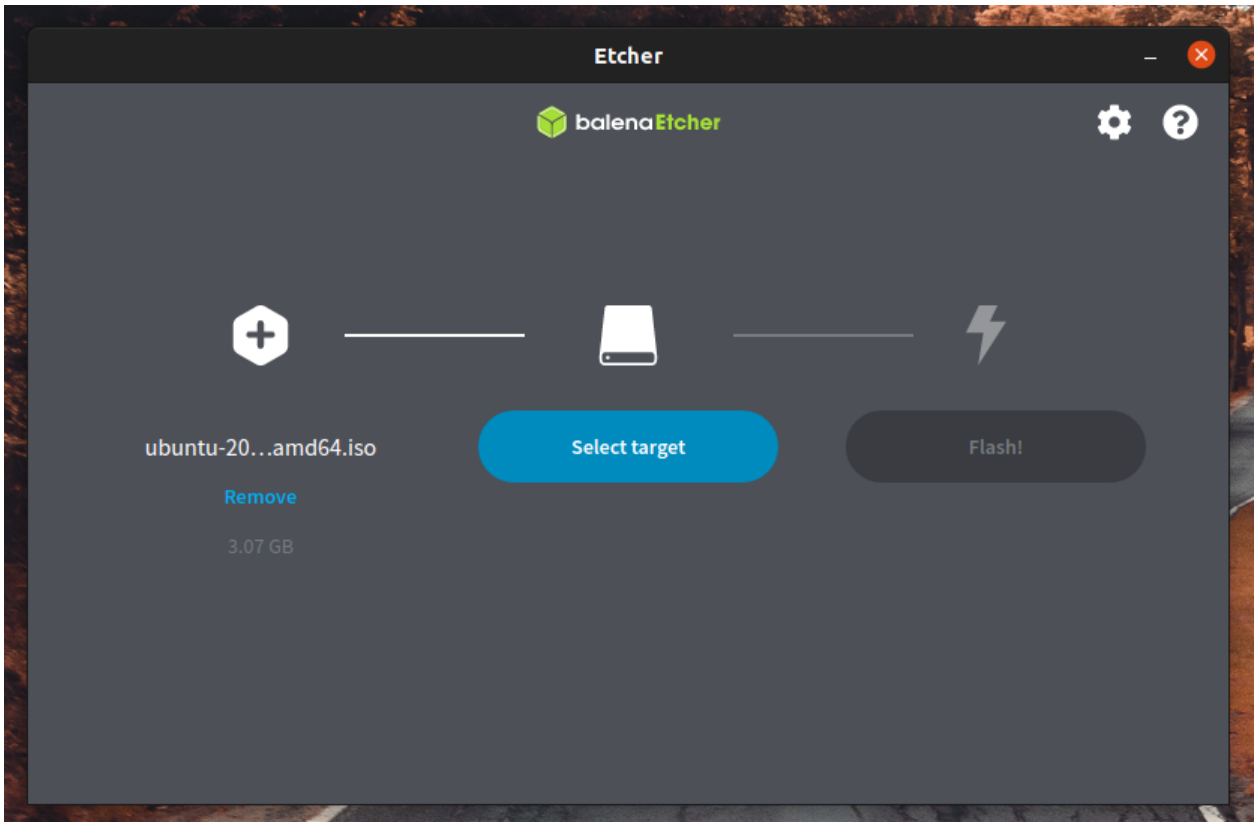
To install Ubuntu Desktop, you need to write your downloaded ISO to a USB stick to create the installation media. This is not the same as copying the ISO, and requires some bespoke software.

For this tutorial, we'll use balenaEtcher, as it runs on Linux, Windows and Mac OS. Choose the version that corresponds to your current operating system, download and install the tool.

If you prefer to use a different tool to create your USB, we also have tutorials for Rufus on Windows, Etcher on Mac OS and Startup Disk Creator on Ubuntu.

Select your downloaded ISO, choose your USB flash drive, and then click **Flash!** to install your image.



Installing Ubuntu from a DVD

It's also possible to install Ubuntu from a DVD instead of USB. Follow these guides to burn an Ubuntu installation DVD on Windows, MacOS or Ubuntu, then select the CD drive instead of USB device on the boot options screen in the following step.

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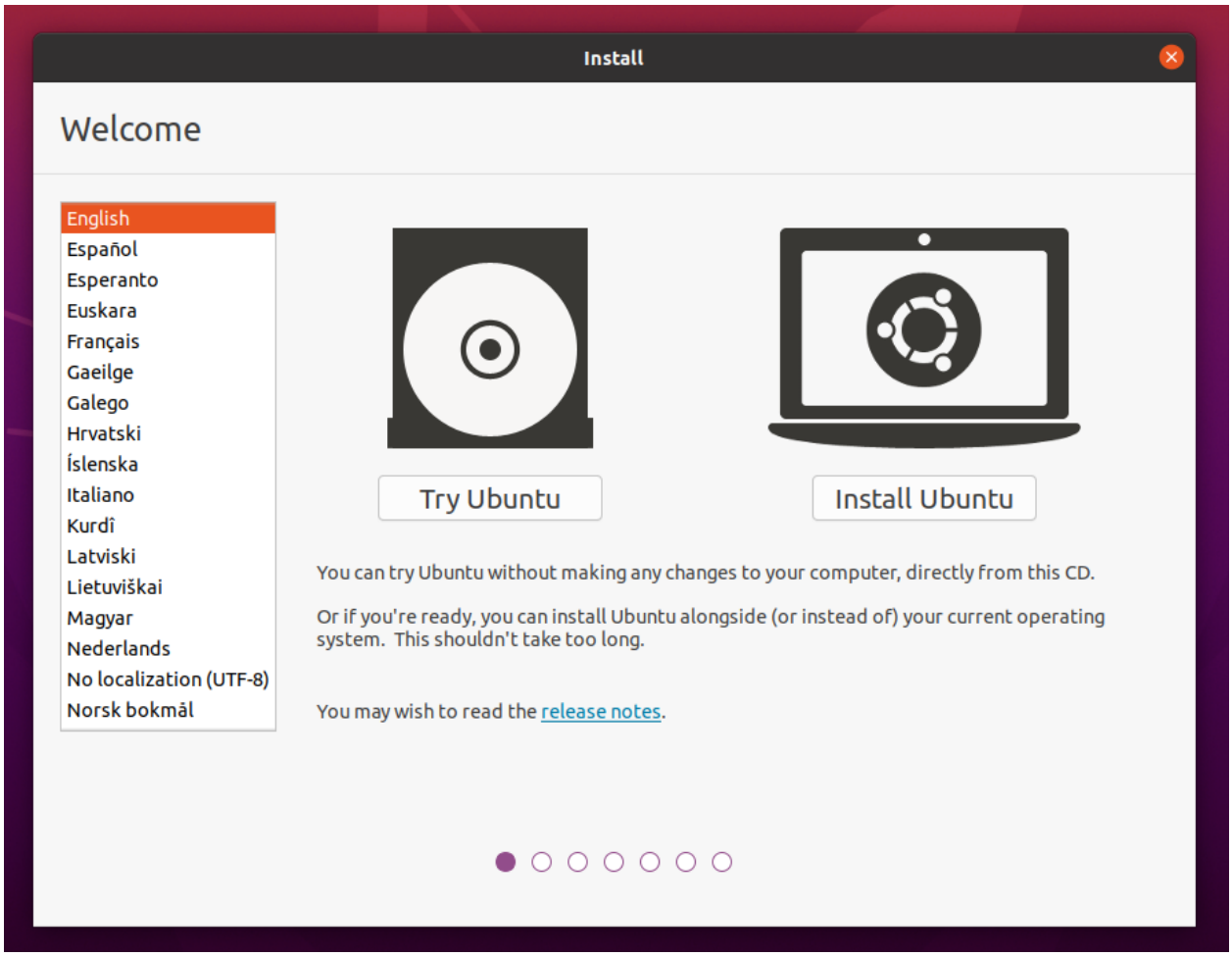
Insert the USB flash drive into the laptop or PC you want to use to install Ubuntu and boot or restart the device. It should recognise the installation media automatically. If not, try holding F12 during startup and selecting the USB device from the system-specific boot menu.

F12 is the most common key for bringing up your system's boot menu, but Escape, F2 and F10 are common alternatives. If you're unsure, look for a brief message when your system starts – this will often inform you of which key to press to bring up the boot menu.

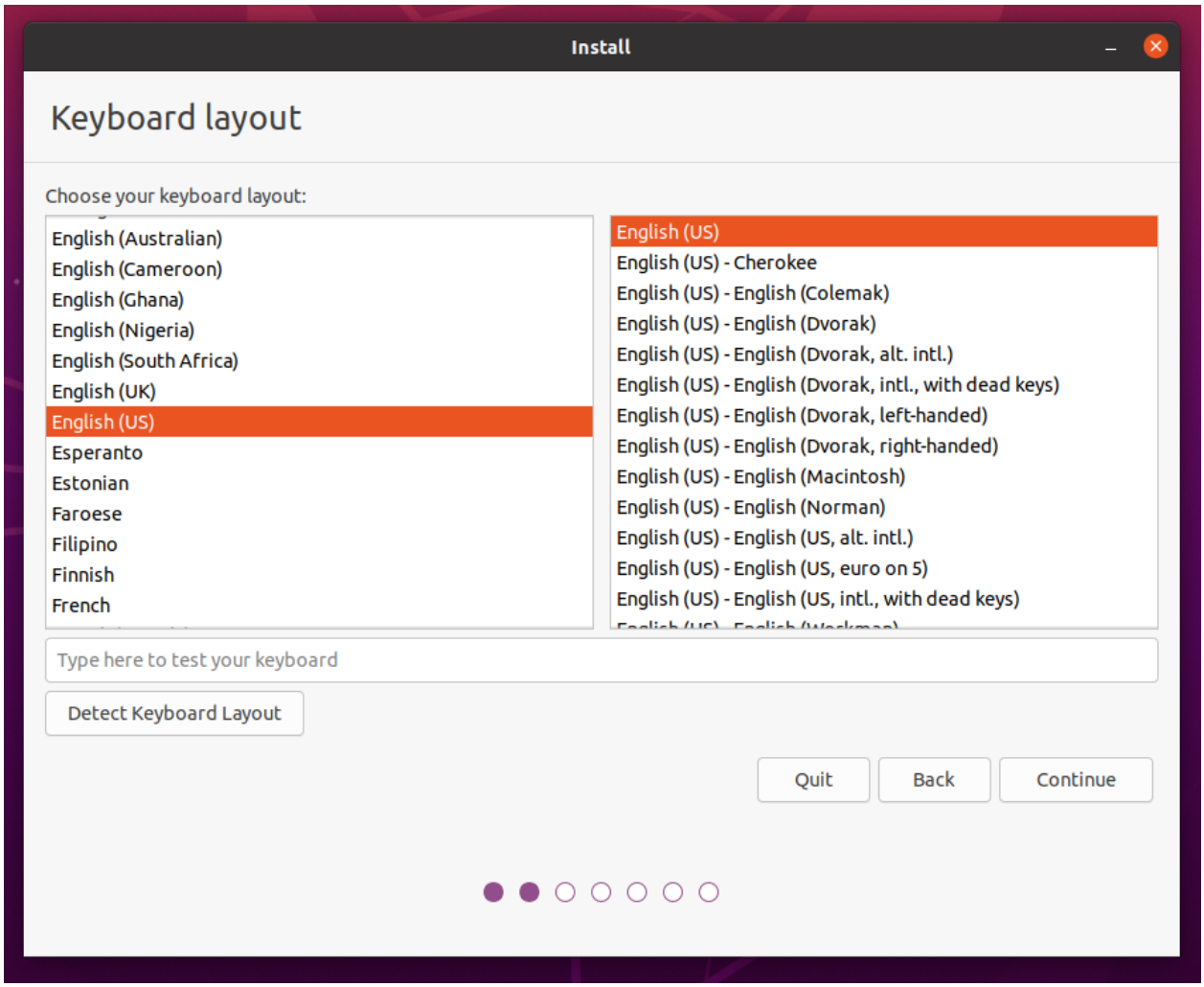
You should now see the welcome screen inviting you to either try or install Ubuntu.



If you click **Try Ubuntu**, you can preview Ubuntu without making any changes to your PC. You can return to the installer menu at any time by clicking the **Install Ubuntu** shortcut on the desktop.

To proceed, click **Install Ubuntu**.

You will be asked to select your keyboard layout. Once you've chosen one, click **Continue**.


Install
Keyboard layout
Choose your keyboard layout:
English (Australian)
English (Cameroon)
English (Ghana)
English (Nigeria)
English (South Africa)
English (UK)
English (US)
Esperanto
Estonian
Faroese
Filipino
Finnish
French
English (US)
English (US) - Cherokee
English (US) - English (Colemak)
English (US) - English (Dvorak)
English (US) - English (Dvorak, alt. intl.)
English (US) - English (Dvorak, intl., with dead keys)
English (US) - English (Dvorak, left-handed)
English (US) - English (Dvorak, right-handed)
English (US) - English (Macintosh)
English (US) - English (Norman)
English (US) - English (US, alt. intl.)
English (US) - English (US, euro on 5)
English (US) - English (US, intl., with dead keys)
Type here to test your keyboard
Detect Keyboard Layout
Quit
Back
Continue

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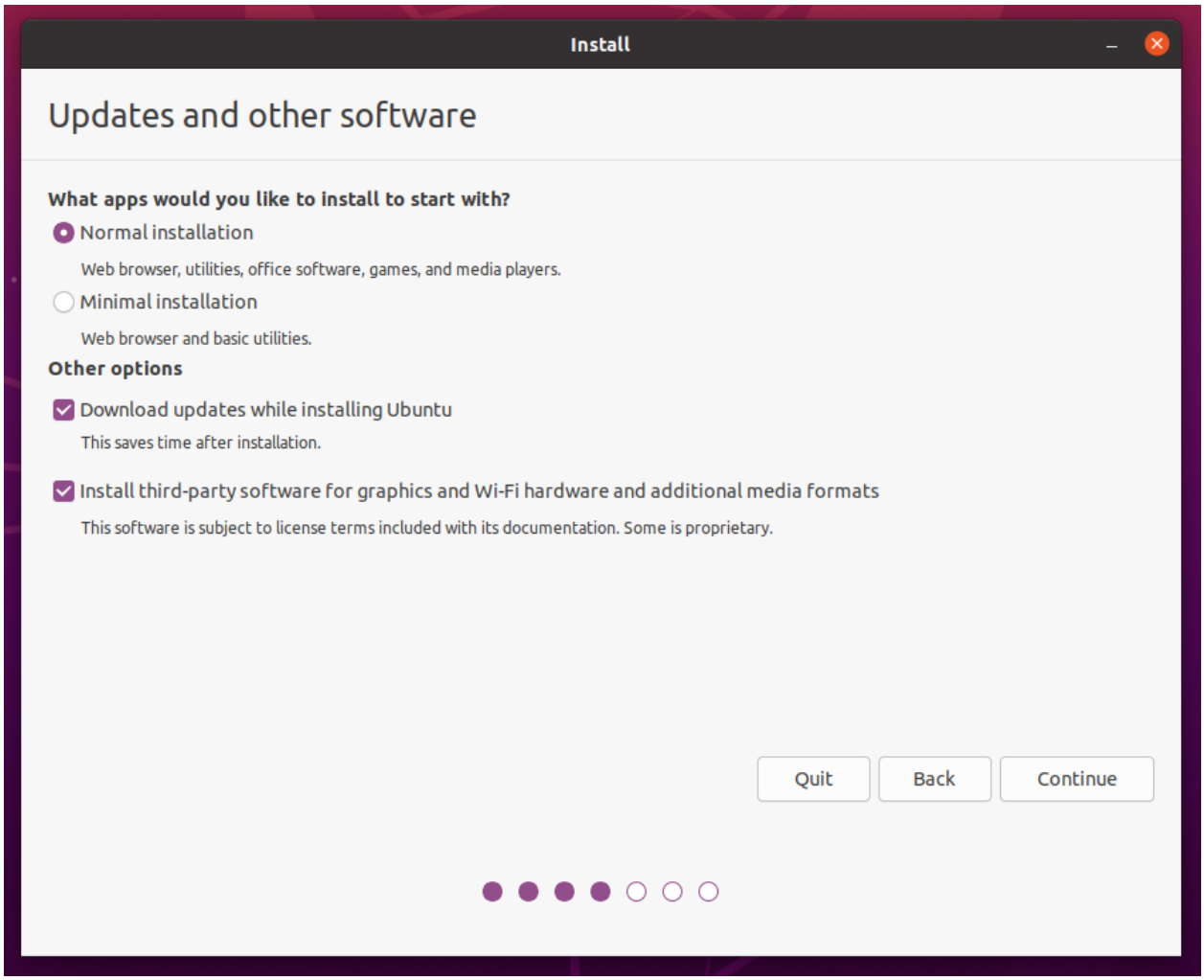
Next, you will be prompted to choose between the **Normal installation** and **Minimal installation** options. The minimal installation is useful for those with smaller hard drives or who don't require as many pre-installed applications.

In **Other options**, you will be prompted to download updates as well as third-party software that may improve device support and performance (for example, Nvidia graphics drivers) during the installation. It is recommended to check both of these boxes.

If you are not currently connected to the internet, you will be prompted to do so at this point. Ensure you are able to remain connected throughout the installation.



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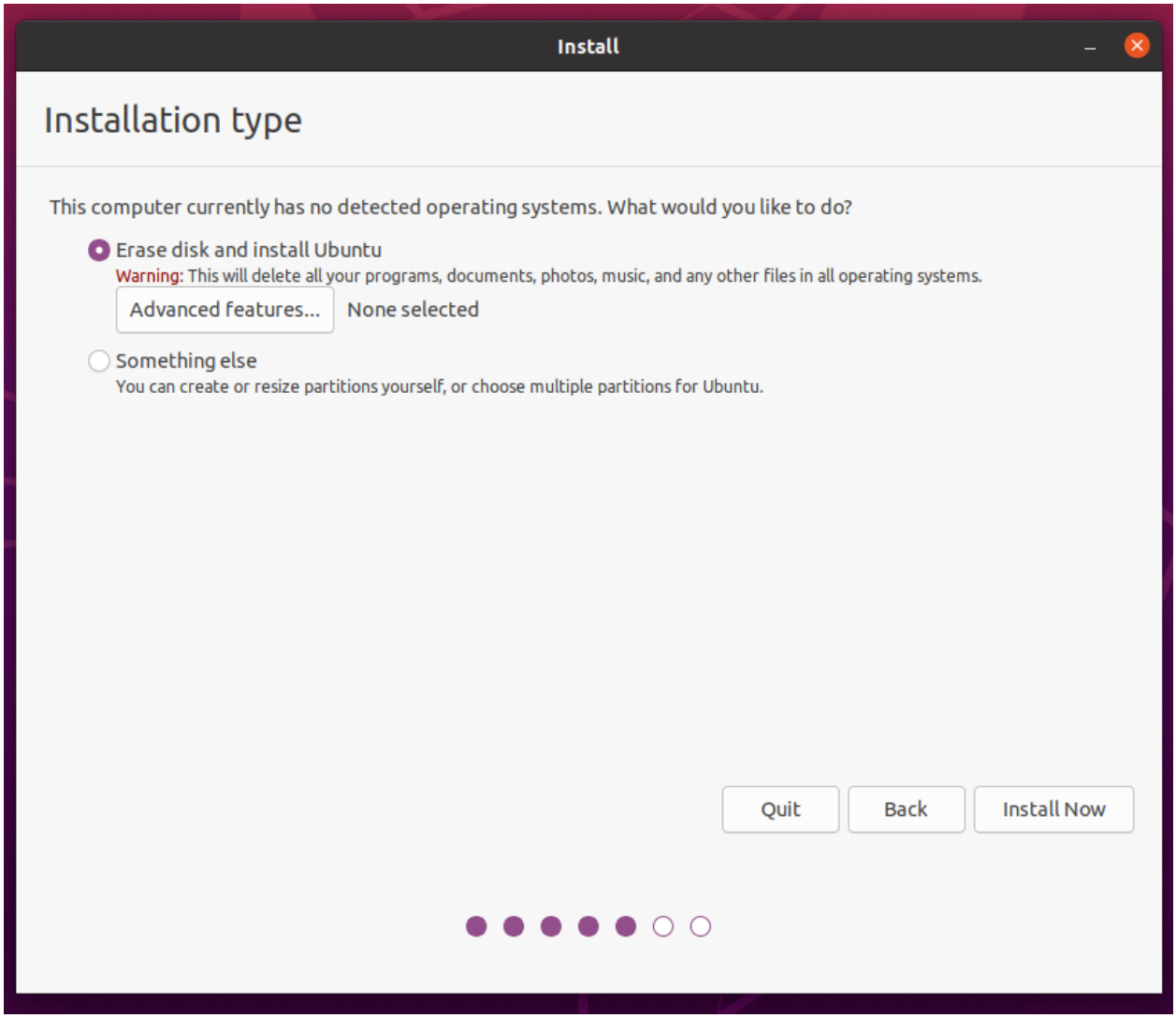
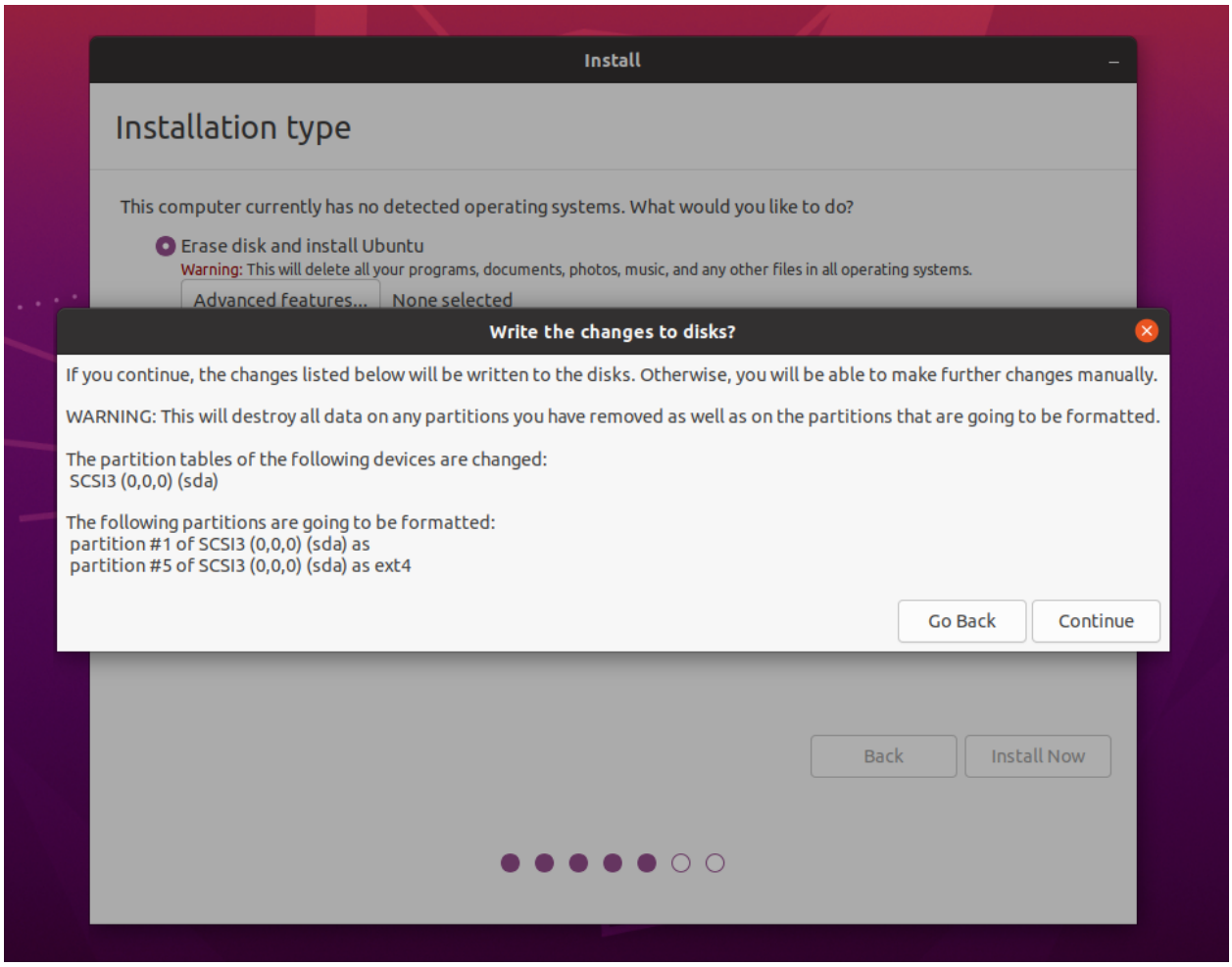
This screen allows you to configure your installation. If you would like Ubuntu to be the only operating system on your device, select **Erase disk and install Ubuntu**.

If your device currently has another operating system installed, you will receive additional options to install Ubuntu alongside that OS rather than replacing it. This requires some additional steps not covered in this tutorial. However, you can read more about setting up dual-booting in this useful tutorial on Dave's RoboShack.



If you are happy to continue the installation *without* enabling encryption, click **Install Now** and confirm the changes with **Continue**. Otherwise keep reading.


Install
Installation type
This computer currently has no detected operating systems. What would you like to do?
Erase disk and install Ubuntu
Warning: This will delete all your programs, documents, photos, music, and any other files in all operating systems.
Advanced features...
None selected
Write the changes to disks?
If you continue, the changes listed below will be written to the disks. Otherwise, you will be able to make further changes manually.
WARNING: This will destroy all data on any partitions you have removed as well as on the partitions that are going to be formatted.
The partition tables of the following devices are changed:
SCSI3 (0,0,0) (sda)
The following partitions are going to be formatted:
partition #1 of SCSI3 (0,0,0) (sda) as
partition #5 of SCSI3 (0,0,0) (sda) as ext4
Go Back
Continue
Back
Install Now

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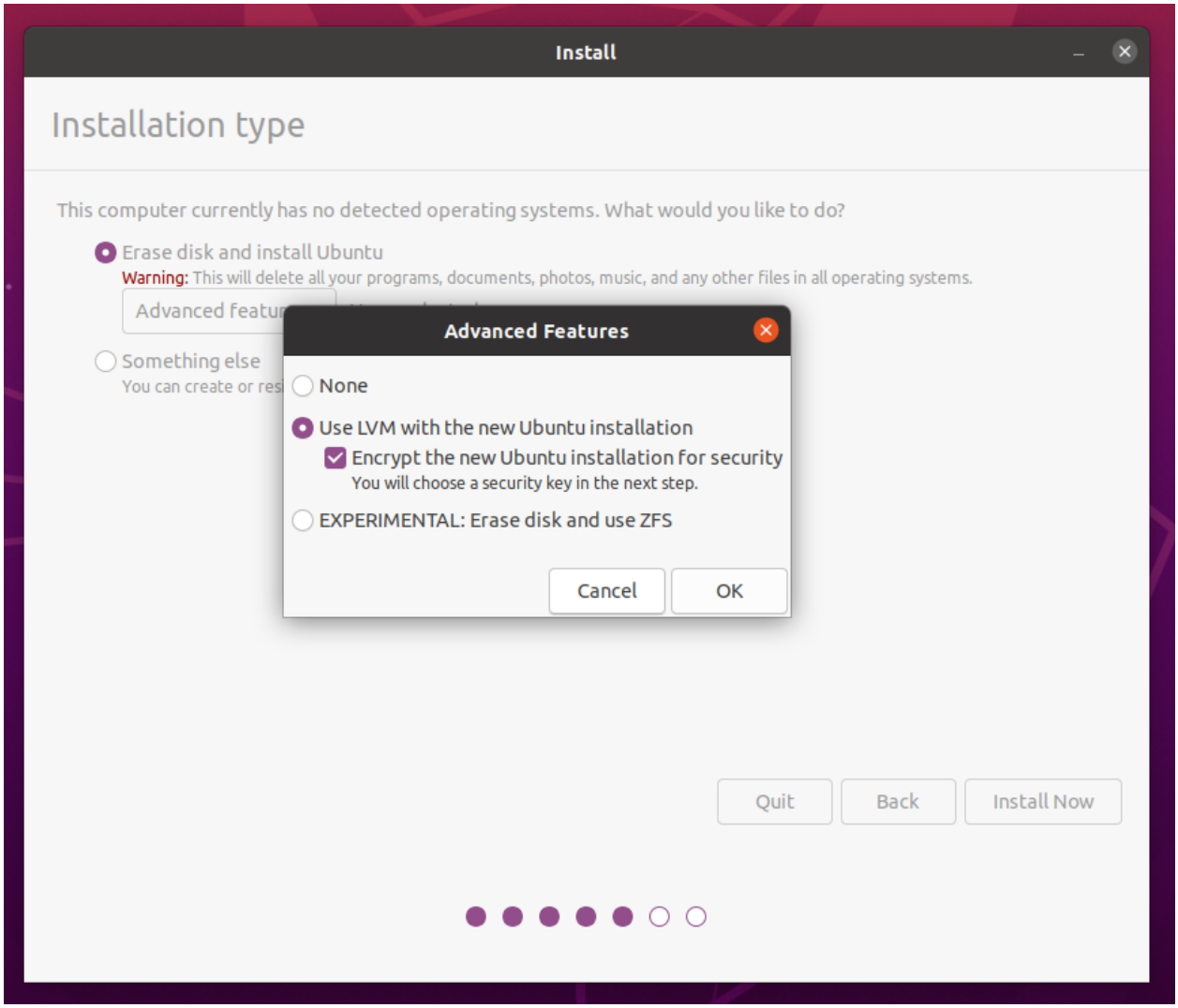
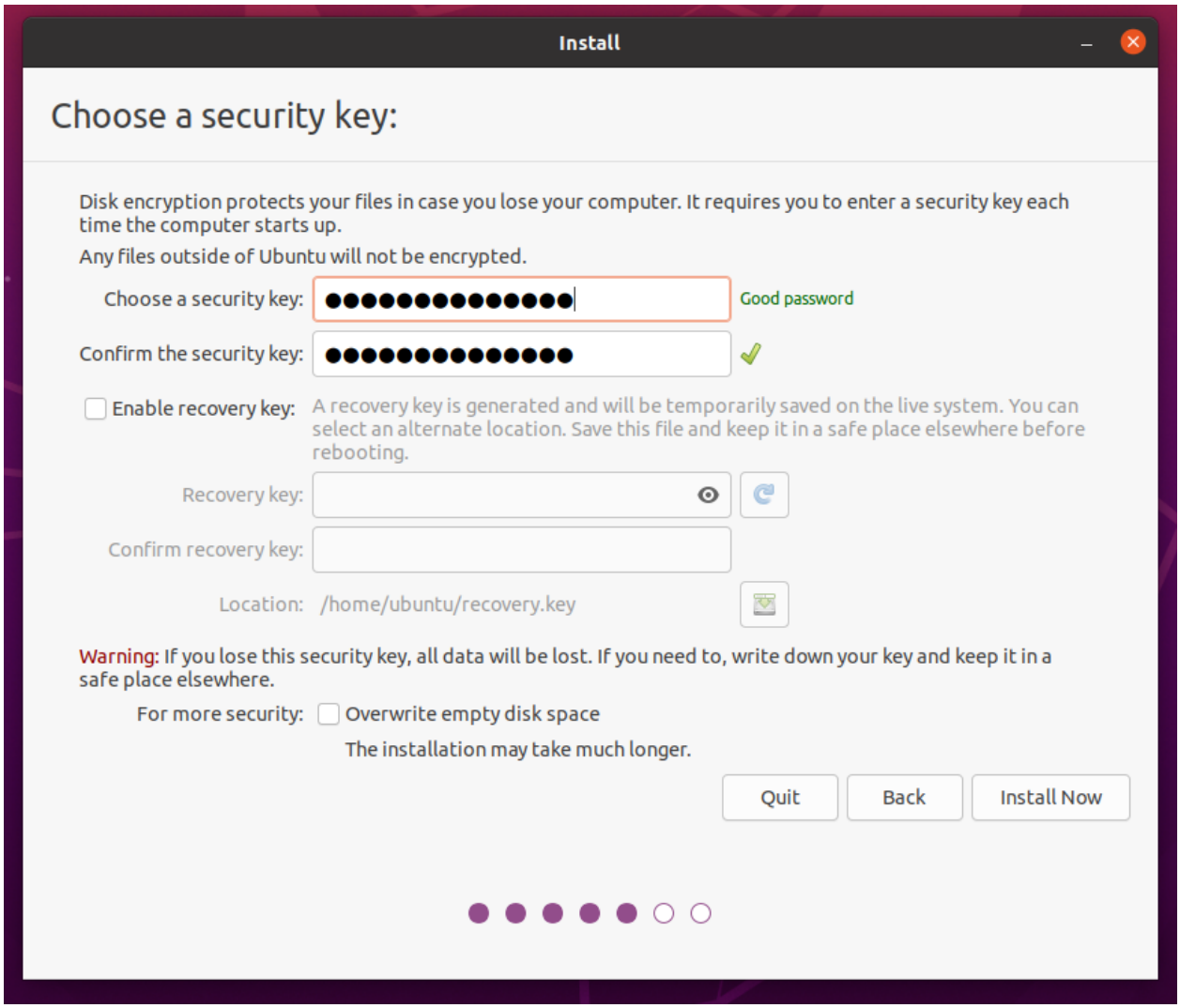
If you would like to encrypt your device, select **Advanced features... > Use LVM with the new Ubuntu installation > Encrypt the new Ubuntu installation for security**.



LVM stands for Logical Volume Management. By using LVM during the setup, it makes it easier to create and manage partitions post installation.

You will be prompted to create a security key once you click **Install Now**.

If you select encryption, it is important that you do not lose your security key! Write it down and store it in a safe place outside of your local system. **You will not be able to recover your data without it!**



Click Install Now and confirm the changes with Continue.

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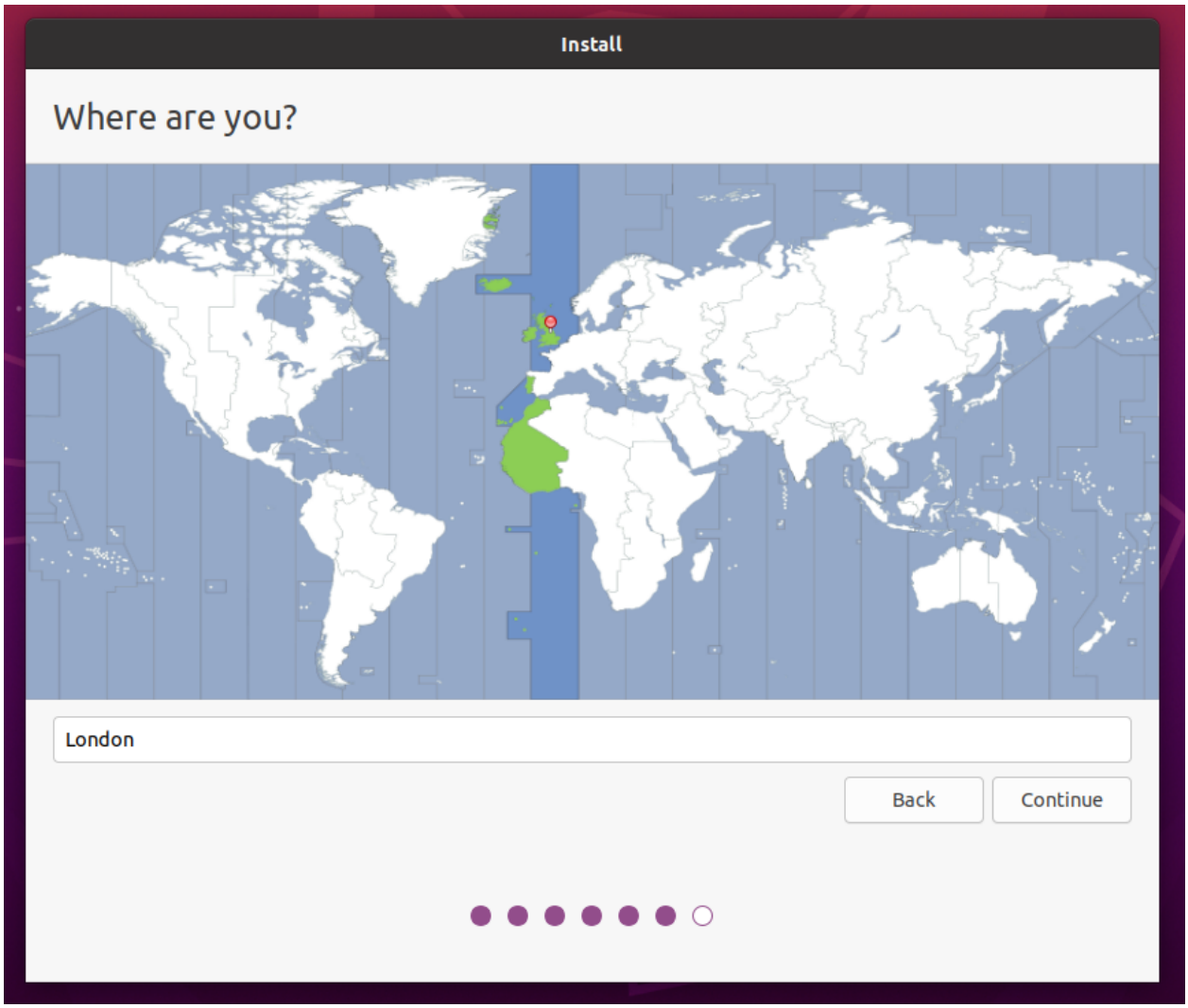
Select your location and timezone from the map screen and click **Continue**. This information will be detected automatically if you are connected to the internet.



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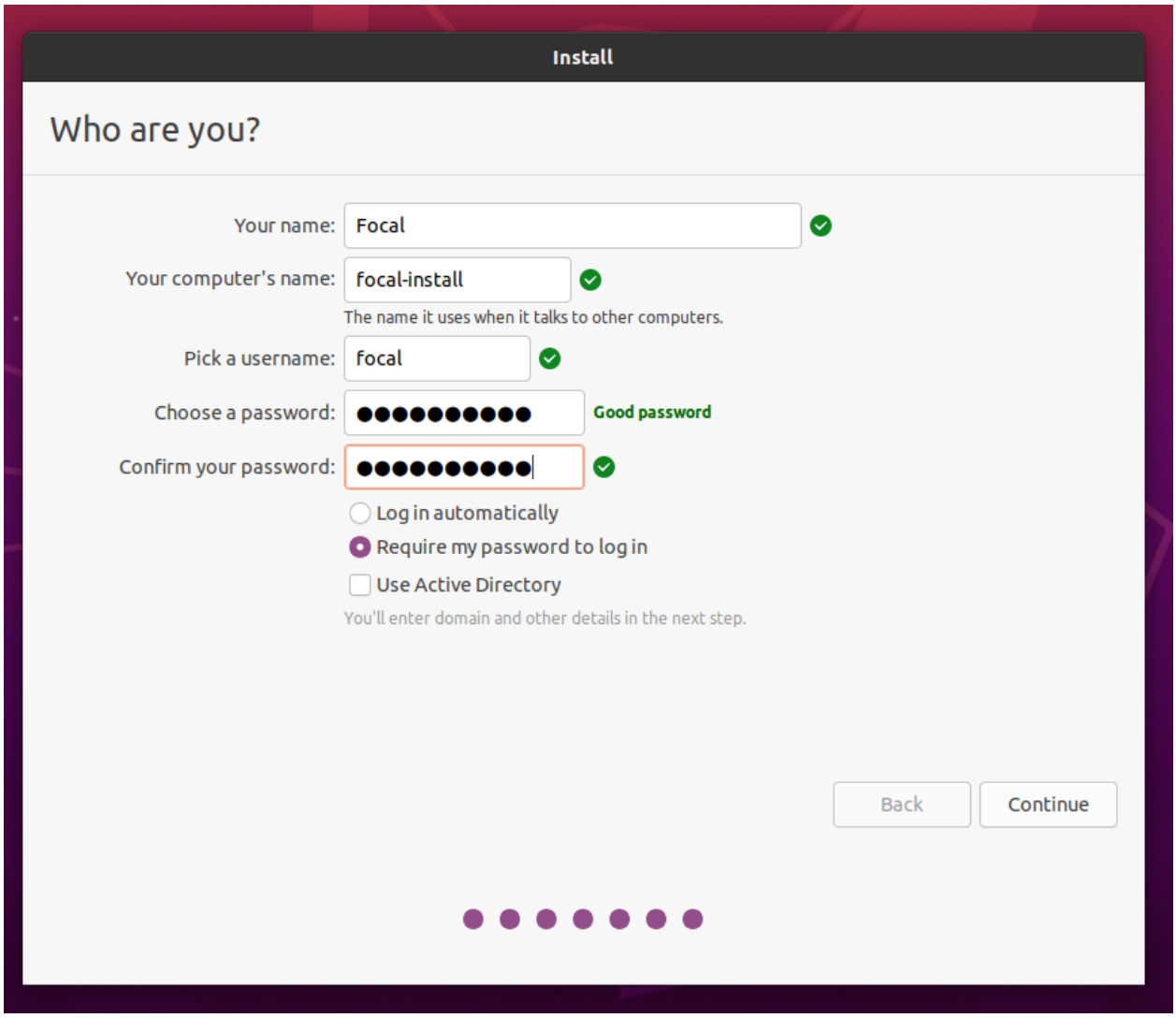
On this screen, you will be prompted to enter your name and the name of your computer as it will appear on the network. Finally, you will create a username and a strong password.

You can choose to log in automatically or require a password. If you are using your device whilst travelling, it's recommended to keep automatic login disabled.



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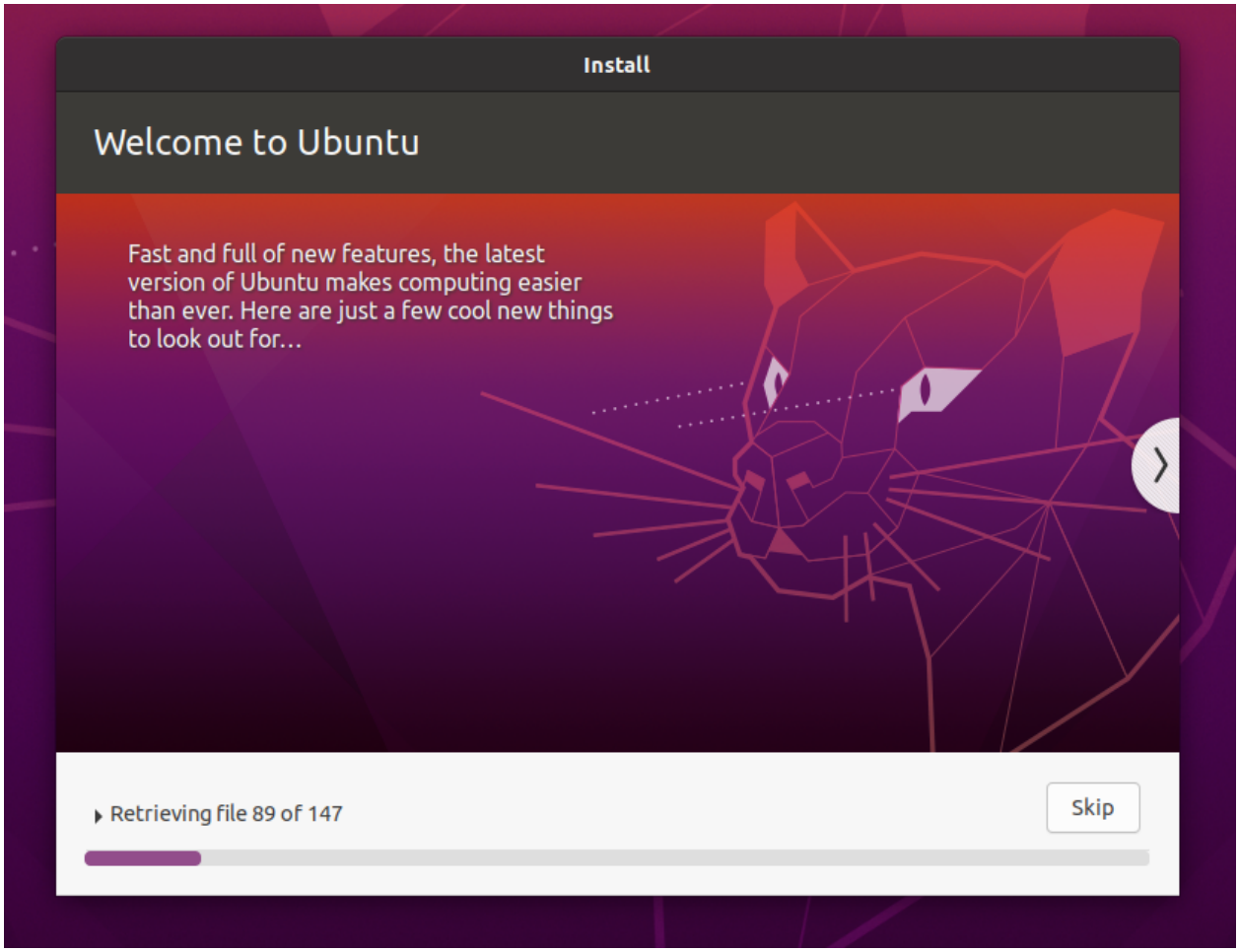
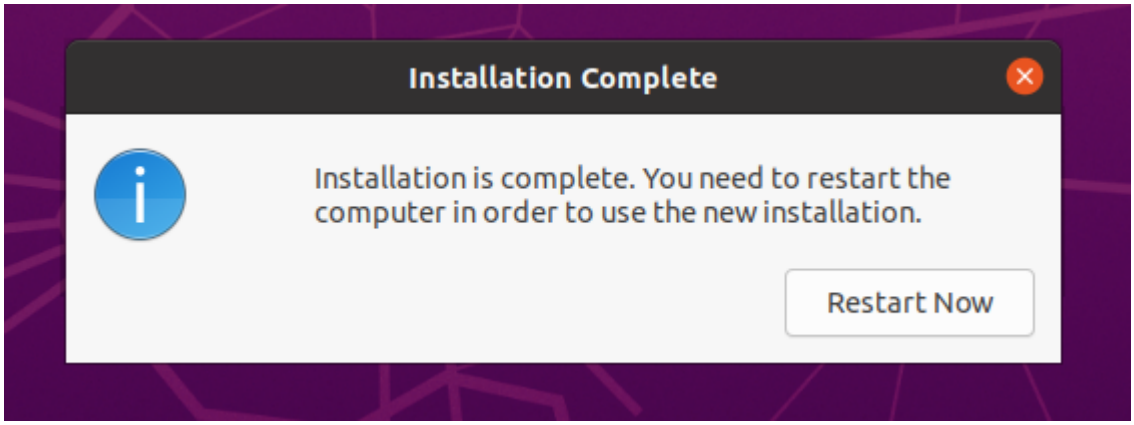
Now sit back and enjoy the slideshow as Ubuntu installs in the background!



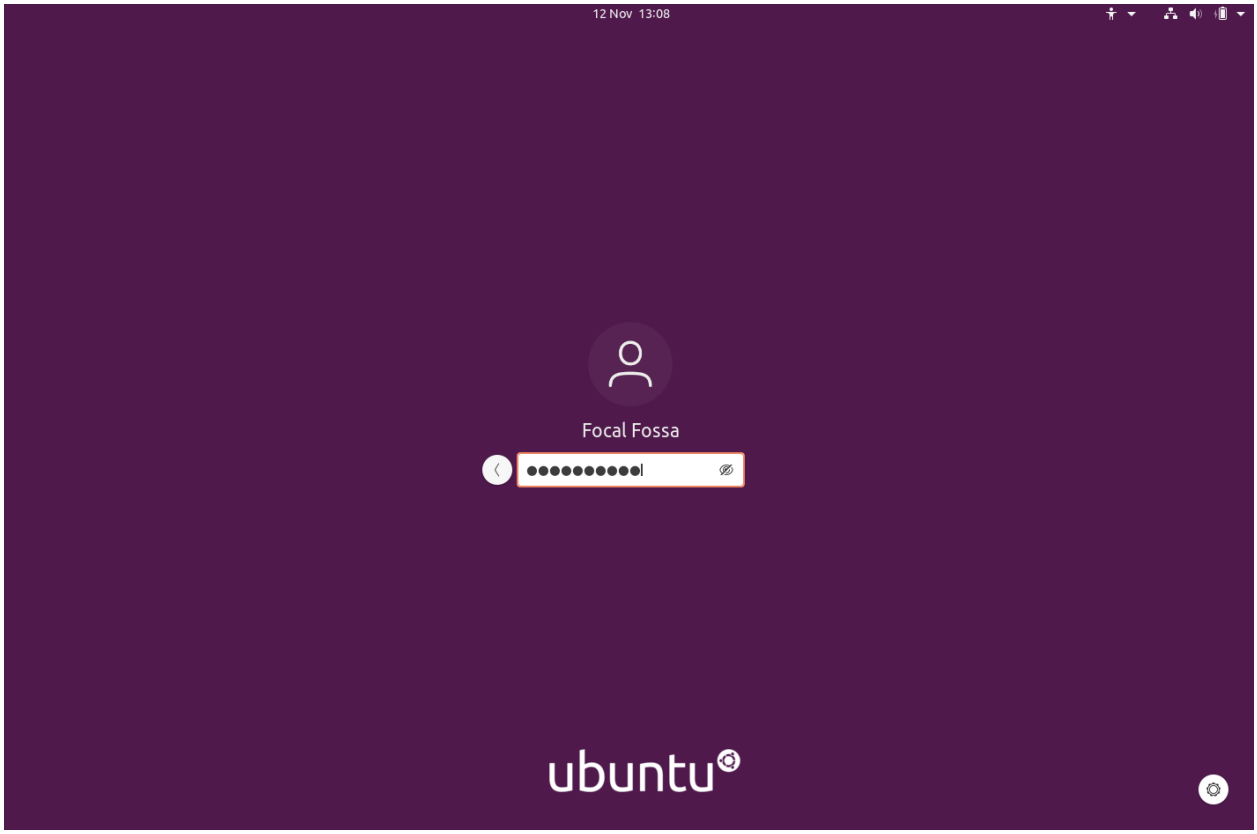
Once the installation has completed, you will be prompted to restart your machine.

Click **Restart Now**.

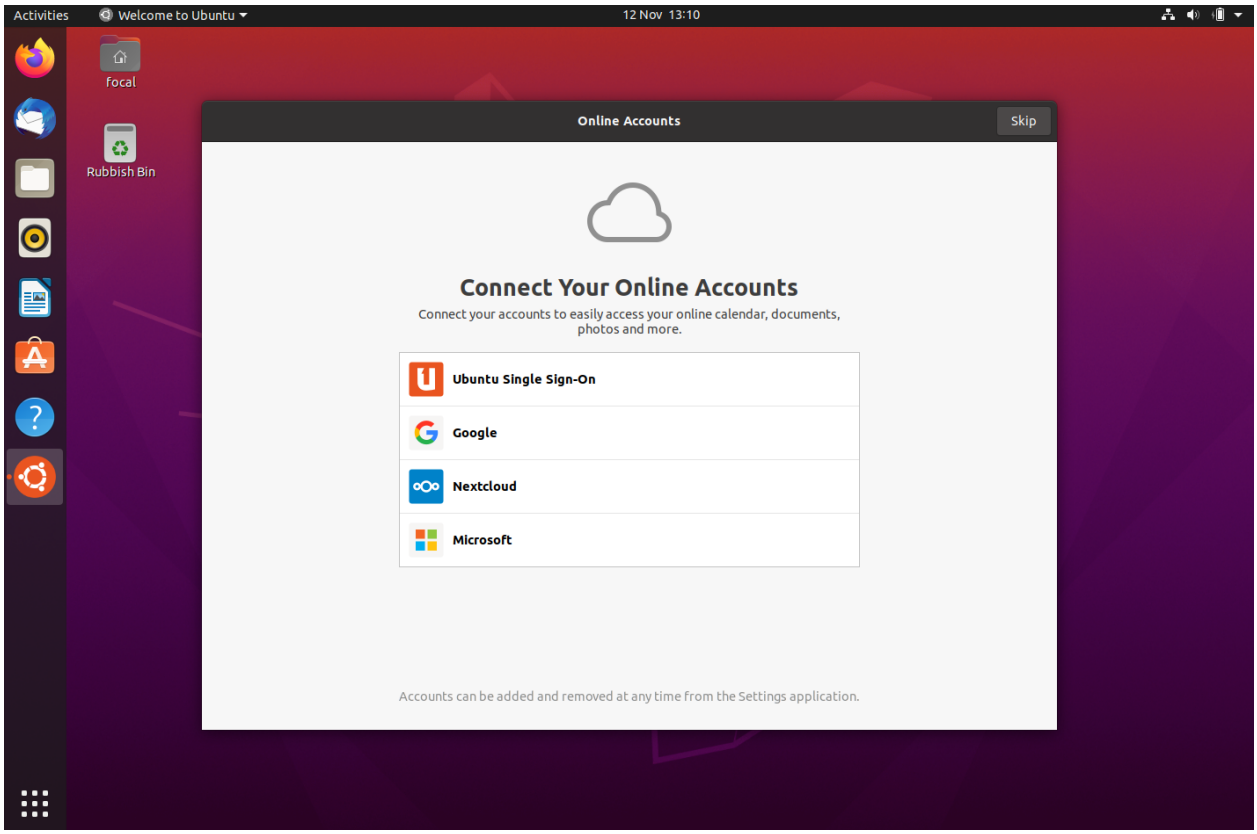


When you restart, you will be prompted to remove your USB flash drive from the device. Once you've done this, press **ENTER**.

Enter your password on the login screen (assuming you selected that option when creating your login details).



And that's it, welcome to your new Ubuntu Desktop!



The welcome widget will help you with some additional setup options, including:

- Connecting your profile to various online accounts.
- Configure Livepatch to automatically apply updates to your device (this option is only available when using a long term support [LTS] version of Ubuntu).
- Opting into sending device information to Canonical to help improve Ubuntu (by default, Canonical doesn't collect device information).
- Activating location services.
- Downloading additional apps from Ubuntu Software.

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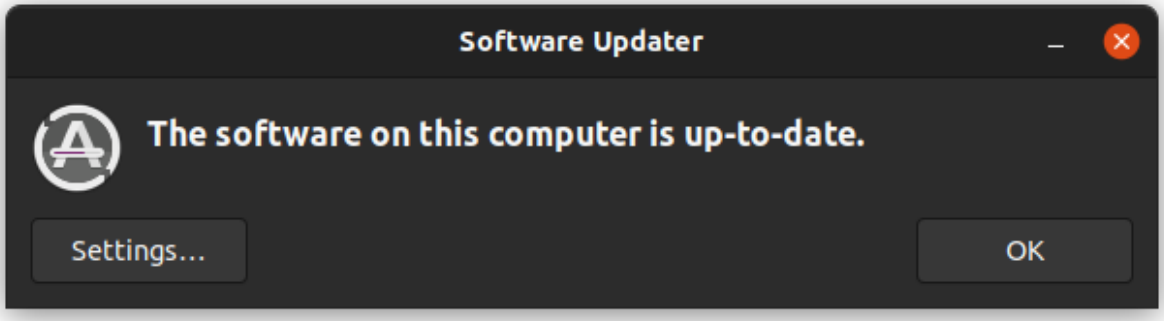
It's always good practice to ensure your system is up to date, especially after a fresh install.

The easiest way to do this is via the **Software Updater** app. Search for Software Updater via the app menu (the icon with 9 squares in the bottom corner of your window) and it will check for updates and apply them.



You can also update Ubuntu using the terminal.

Press **CTRL+ALT+T** to bring up a Terminal window (or click the terminal icon in the sidebar).

Type in:

```
sudo apt update
```

You will be prompted to enter your login password.

This will check for updates and tell you if there are any that need applying. To apply any updates, type:

```
sudo apt upgrade
```

Type **Y**, then press **ENTER** to confirm to finish the update process.

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Thank you for completing this tutorial. We hope you enjoy your new desktop.

Check out our picks for Top 10 apps for a fresh Linux install in 2021.

If you have any issues, please contact us via the Ubuntu Discourse, or visit Ask Ubuntu.

You can also read the latest news about Ubuntu Desktop on the Ubuntu Blog.

As a next step, why not try:

- Installing Ubuntu Desktop on a Raspberry Pi 4
- Using VirtualBox to try out different Ubuntu flavours

For users who need to run both Ubuntu and Windows you can also install Ubuntu via Windows Subsystem for Linux (WSL).

- Install Ubuntu on Windows Subsystem for Linux (WSL) on Windows 10
- Install Ubuntu on Windows Subsystem for Linux (WSL) on Windows 11

To help us improve our tutorials, please let us know how you got on!

Survey:

I found this tutorial helpful

I found Ubuntu easy to install