

Install and tour Visual Studio Code

To begin, let's download and install Visual Studio Code locally, then take a short tour of the user interface (UI) and features.

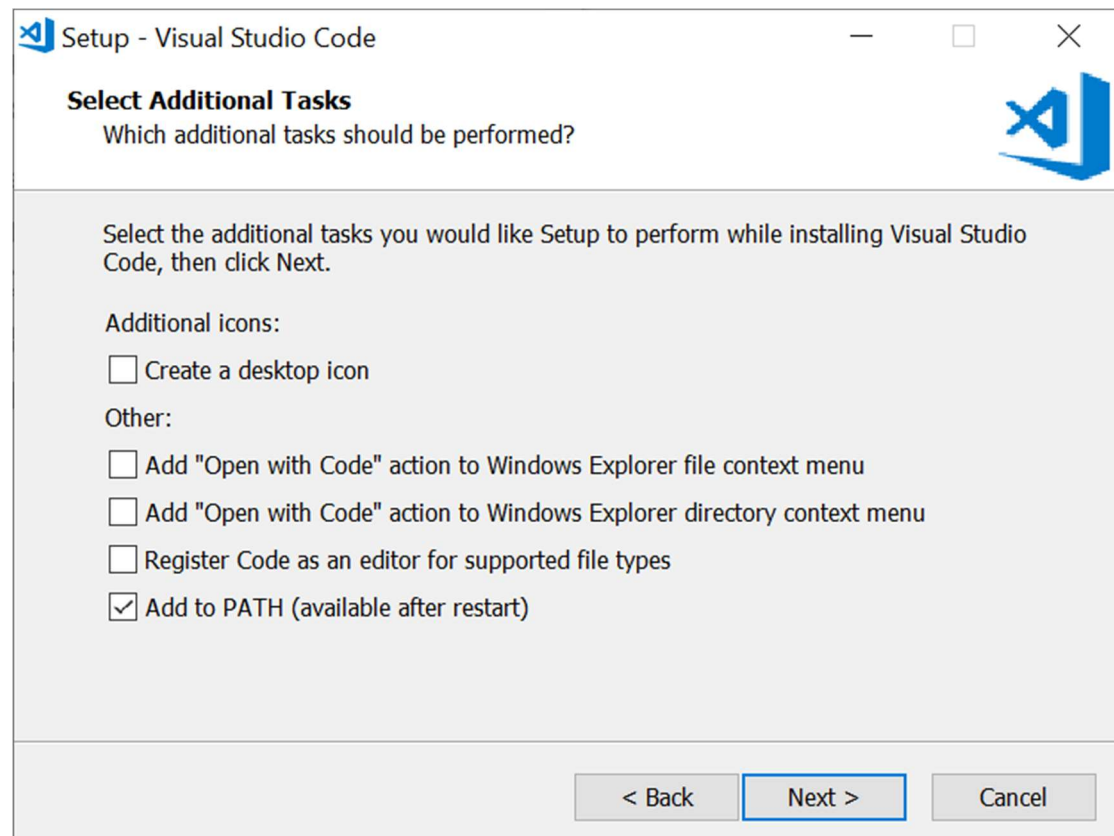
Download

Browse to <https://code.visualstudio.com> and select the stable build for your platform. Or just use the installation file "VSCodeUserSetup-x64-1.47.2.exe" which is provided.

Install

During installation, please accept the defaults to simplify your installation.

Below are the Windows options and their defaults.



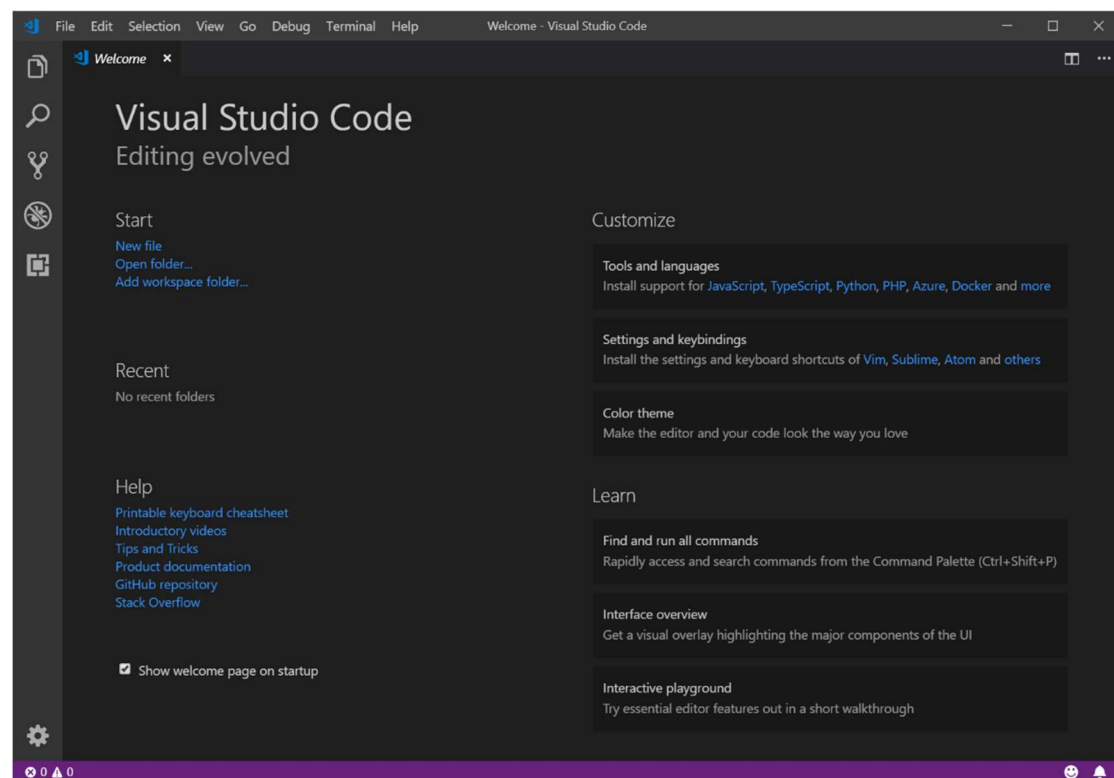
Update

Take a moment on first run to check for available updates. On Windows, this can be easily done using the **Help** pulldown menu and selecting **Check for Updates**. This option may appear in other pulldown menu locations on other platforms.

Tour

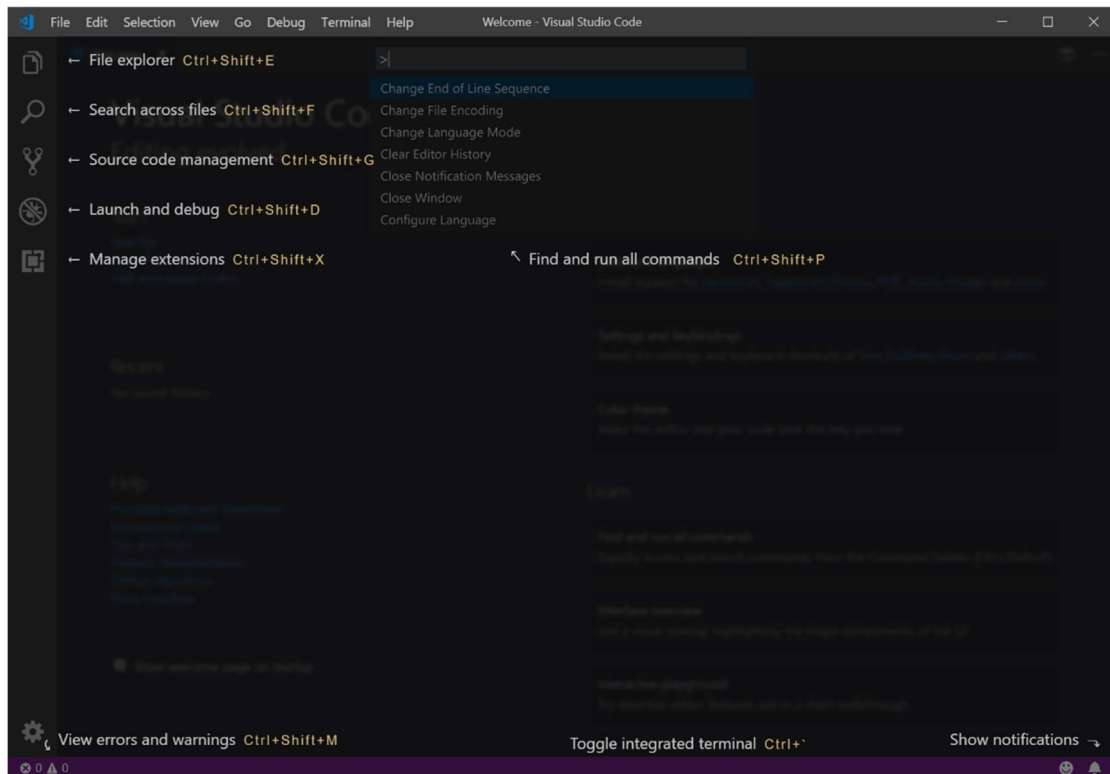
Let's take a look at a few key features of the user interface, and a short tour of Visual Studio Code's core functionality.

When you first run Visual Studio Code, you should see a "Welcome" page similar to the screenshot below. If you don't see the Welcome page, you can access it using the **Help > Welcome** dropdown menu item.

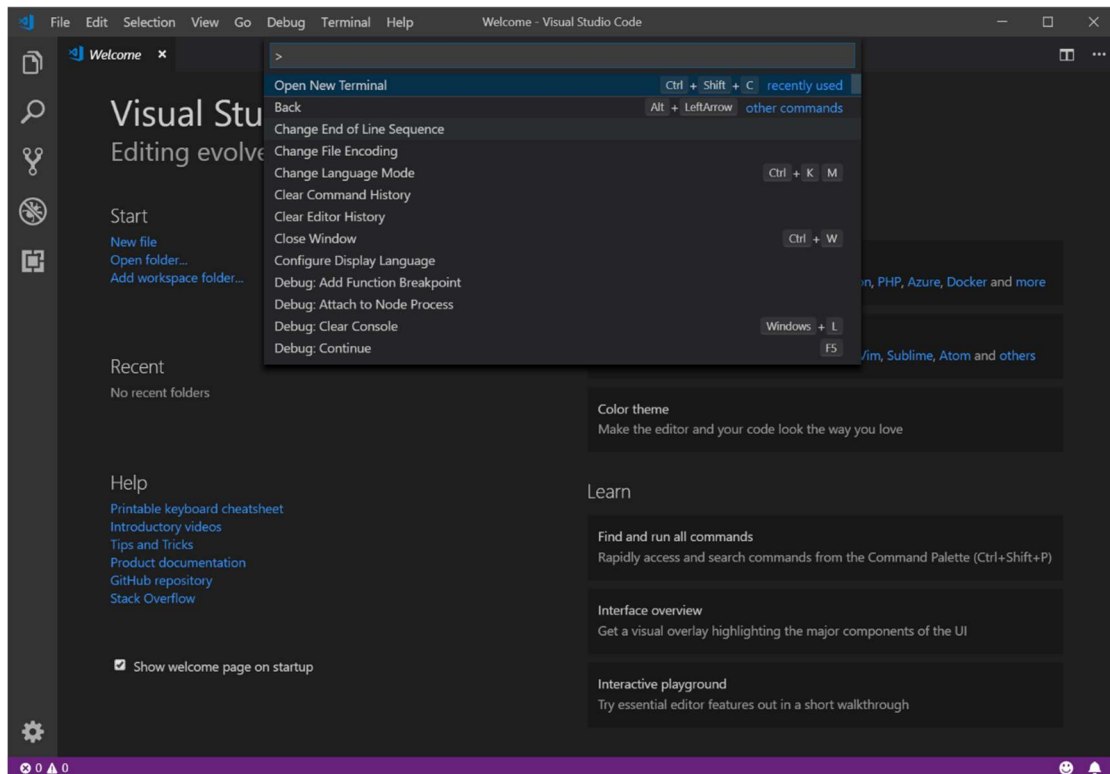


User interface

The first thing you'll probably notice is how simple the interface seems to be. This is intentional but hides the true power of this editor. For now, familiarize yourself with the main UI components.



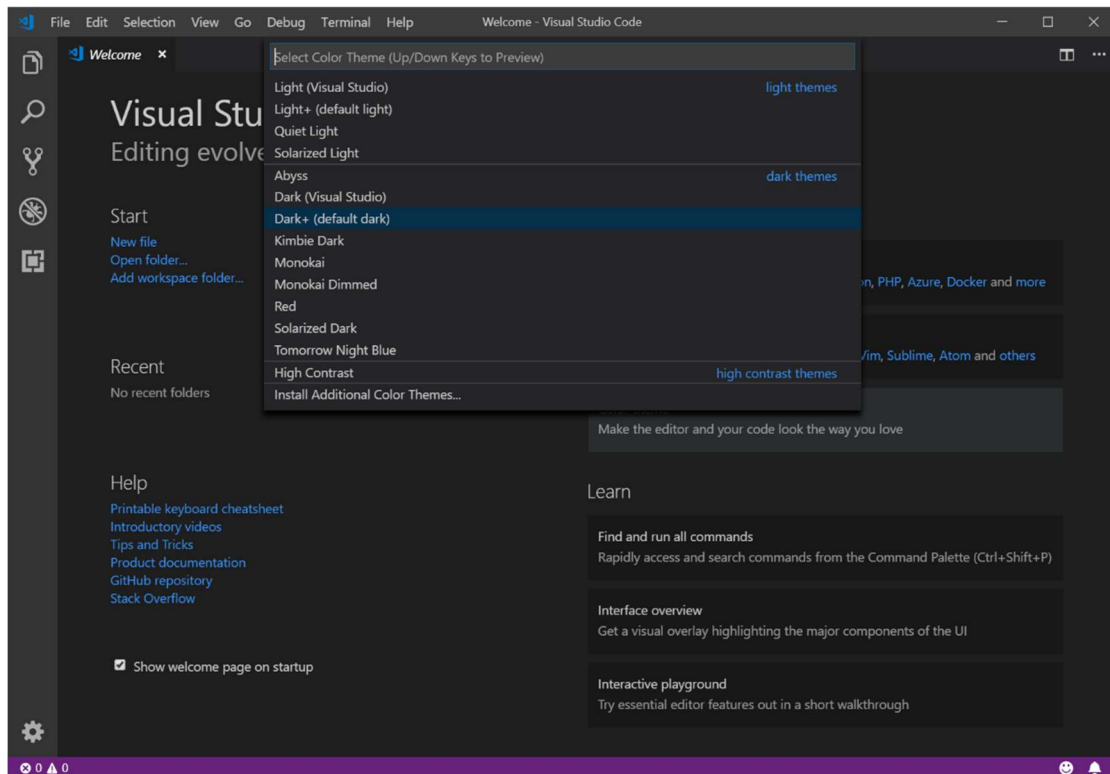
One UI function you are likely to find quite valuable is the Command Palette (F1 on any platform, Ctrl + Shift + P on Windows, and listed under the **View** dropdown menu). It's a great starting place if you have an idea what you'd like to do in Visual Studio Code, but can't recall exactly how to do it.



By default, the Command Palette comes up in Command mode, signified by the `>` prompt. This mode includes most Visual Studio Code functionality, including finding keyboard shortcuts. But there's far more available here. For a list, press `F1 + backspace` to remove the command prompt (`>`) and type a question mark (`?`). Take a moment to explore these modes if you'd like.

Color themes

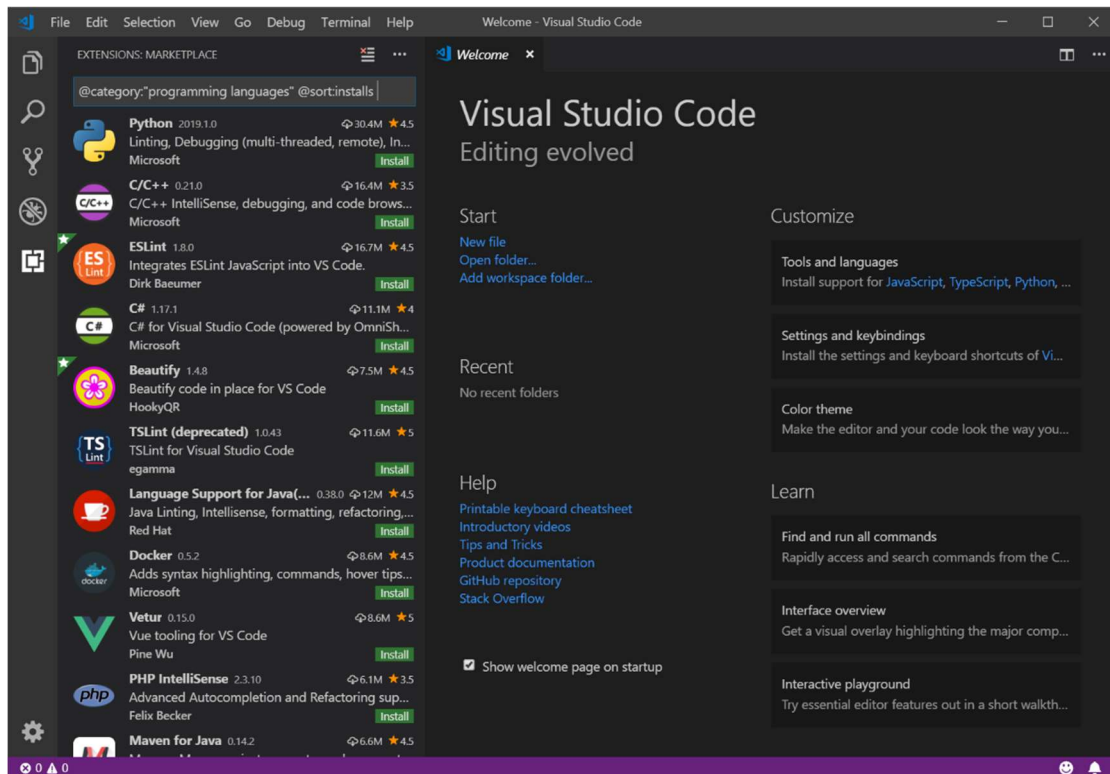
Changing the look of your editor is a big deal to most of us. Visual Studio Code makes it easy with Themes. On the Welcome page, select **Color theme** under **Customize** and you'll see something like the following.



Take this opportunity to try our different colour themes. If the default themes aren't satisfying for you, there are many extensions to bring even more visual functionality into the UI.

Tools and extensions

Click on the **Tools and languages** topic under **Customize** and you'll see the left pane expand to show the current list of available extensions, similar to what you see below. You can also use the **View** menu and select **Extensions**. Note that the first option adds the filter `@category:"programming languages"` to the extensions list, to show only extensions in that category. You can edit this filter yourself, or clear it with the **Clear Extensions Input** button (highlighted in the screenshot below).



We won't install any of these right now, but feel free to take a moment to scroll through the list to get an idea of the varied options available.