

Getting Started with GNOME Desktop

Basic information and instructions

WHAT?

GNOME is a user-friendly graphical desktop environment for SUSE Linux Enterprise Server. This guide details its default setup, customization and common operations.

WHY?

This document introduces SUSE Linux Enterprise Server users to GNOME Desktop, covering its basic settings and daily use.

EFFORT

It takes approximately 25 minutes to read and understand this guide.

GOAL

Gain a foundational understanding of GNOME Desktop's capabilities and learn how to tailor it to your specific needs and preferences.

REQUIREMENTS

- Desktop Applications module installed on your SUSE Linux Enterprise Server system

Publication Date: 11 Jun 2025

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1 Introduction to GNOME Desktop

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server includes GNOME Desktop, a desktop environment with an easy-to-use graphical interface. This article describes the default configuration of GNOME Desktop. If you or your system administrator modify the defaults, certain aspects might be different, such as appearance or key combinations.

1.1 What is GNOME Desktop?

GNOME Desktop is a streamlined, minimal graphical environment built on GNOME and optimized for enterprise use. It includes essential desktop components such as a terminal, text editor, file and Web browser, and basic multimedia and document viewers.

GNOME Desktop runs on Wayland by default, with [xwayland](#) support for legacy X11 applications. It offers infrastructure for accessibility, multilingual input and remote access using RDP. Additional GNOME applications are excluded unless explicitly required, ensuring a lightweight and secure experience.

1.2 Benefits of GNOME Desktop

GNOME Desktop is a free, open source and easy-to-use desktop environment offering a variety of core applications to help you organize and complete your daily tasks. With built-in support for accessibility, multilingual input and remote access via RDP, GNOME Desktop is well-suited for enterprise environments.

2 Logging in and managing your GNOME Desktop session

Learn how to log in to GNOME Desktop, and how to pause or finish the session.

2.1 Starting a session

When starting your SUSE Linux Enterprise Server system, you first see a login screen. All users must authenticate before starting a session. This step helps protect your personal information and data from unauthorized access.

PROCEDURE 1: HOW TO LOG IN

1. In the login screen, select your user name.
If your user name is not listed, click *Not listed?*. Then enter your user name and click *Next*.
2. Enter your password and confirm with **Enter** .

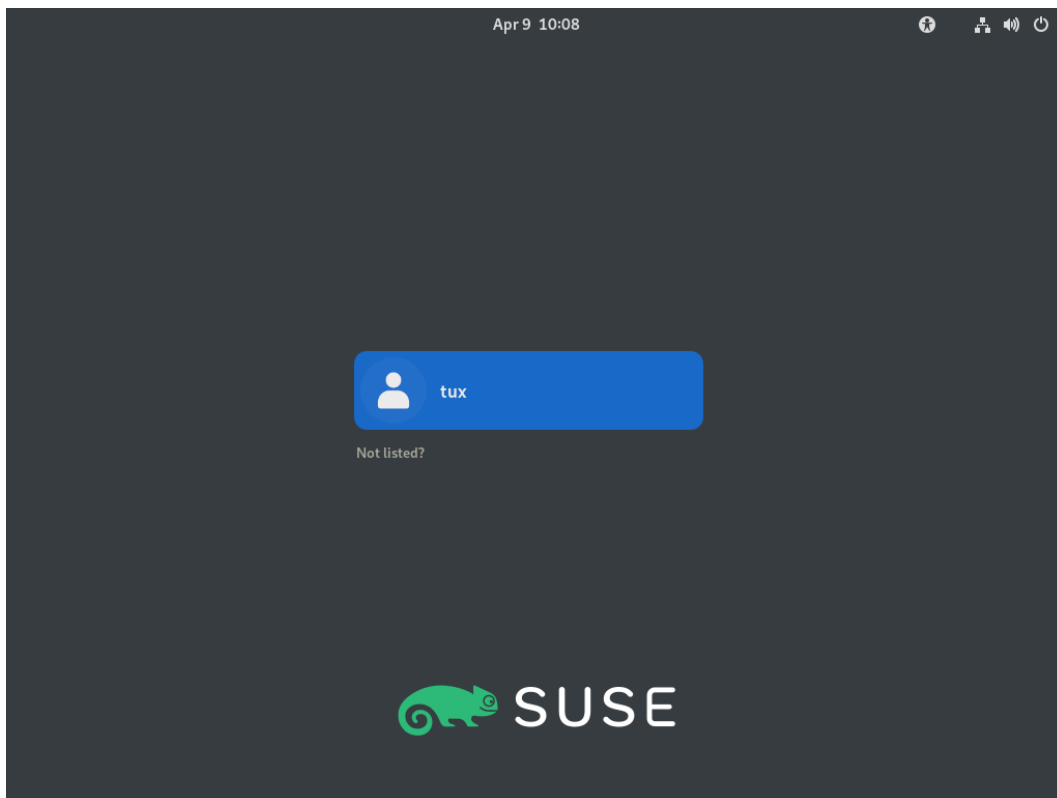


FIGURE 1: DEFAULT GNOME LOGIN SCREEN



Note: Enabling Auto Login

If the computer is used by a single person, you can enable Auto Login for this user at system start. This saves time, but also impacts account security. Auto Login can be enabled or disabled during installation. For security reasons, Auto Login is not recommended.

2.2 Pausing or finishing your session

To pause or end your session, open the *System* menu in the upper-right corner of the top bar. Click the *Power Off* button and choose one of the options listed.

- **Suspend.** Pauses your session and puts the system into a low-power mode. Suspend mode can be configured to lock your screen, so nobody can look at or change your work. Waking up the computer is generally much quicker than a full computer start. This mode is also known as suspend-to-RAM, sleep or standby mode.
- **Restart.** Ends the current session and restarts the computer. Restarting is necessary to apply the system updates.
- **Power Off.** Ends the current session and turns off the computer.
- **Log Out or Switch User.** Ends the current session, but leaves the computer on, so other users can log in. This option is only available if multiple user accounts exist.

2.3 Locking the screen

1. To lock the screen, open the *System* menu in the upper-right corner of the top bar and click the padlock icon.

When you lock your screen, a curtain with a clock appears first. After a while, the screen turns black.

2. To unlock the screen, move the mouse or press a key to display the locked screen dialog. Enter your password and press **Enter**.

2.4 Logging out or switching users



Note: Option only available on multi-user system

The *Log Out* and *Switch User* entries only appear in the menu if you have more than one user account on your system.

1. Open the *System* menu and click the *Power Off* button.

2. Select one of the following options:

Log Out

Logs you out of the current session and returns to the login screen.

Switch User

Suspends your session so another user can log in.

2.5 Restarting or shutting down the computer

1. Open the *System* menu and click the *Power Off* button.
2. Select one of the following options:

Suspend

Pauses your session and puts the system into a low-power mode. Suspend mode can be configured to lock your screen, so nobody can look at or change your work. Waking up the computer is generally much quicker than a full computer start.

Restart

Logs you out of the current session, then restarts the system.

Power Off

Logs you out of the current session, then shuts down the system.

3 Visual overview of GNOME Desktop

Learn how to use the *Activities* overview, the *Clock* and *Calendar* features and the *System* menu.

3.1 *Activities* overview

The *Activities* overview shows a preview of all open windows and icons for favorite and running applications. It also integrates searching and browsing functionality.

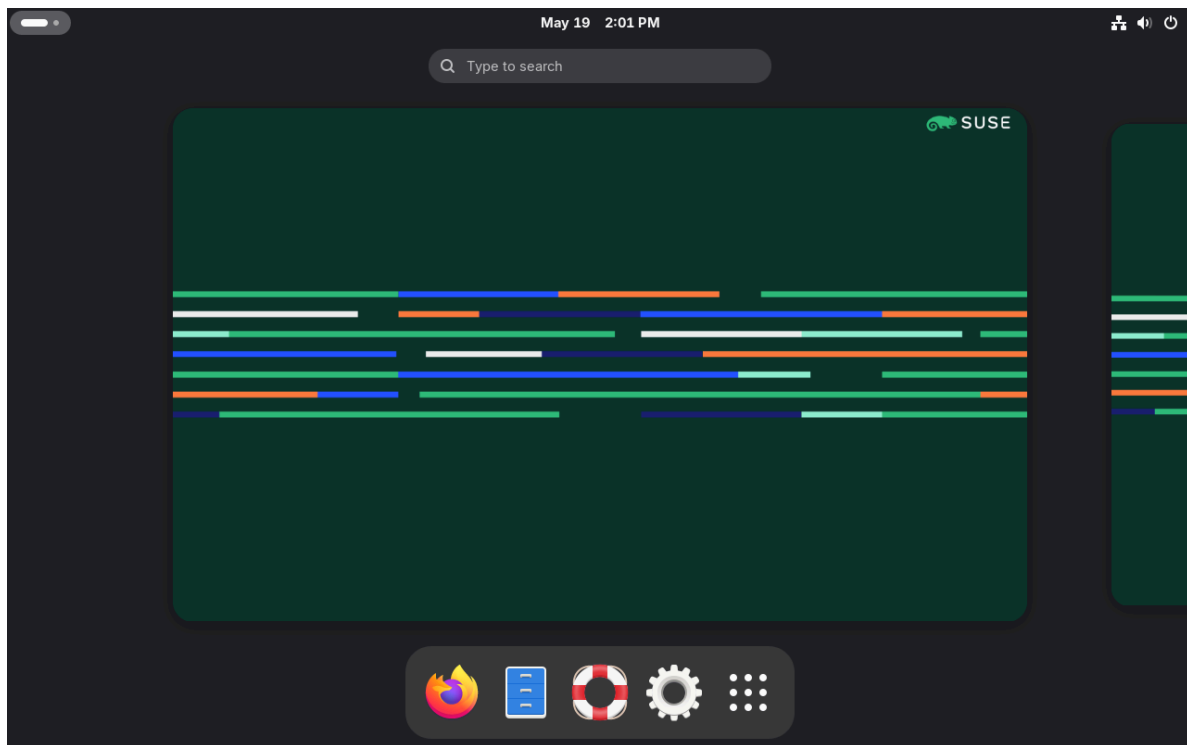


FIGURE 2: GNOME DESKTOP WITH ACTIVITIES OVERVIEW

OPENING THE *ACTIVITIES* OVERVIEW

To open the *Activities* overview, you have the following options:

- In the left corner of the top bar, click the *Activities* button.
- Move your mouse pointer to the upper-left hot corner.
- Press the **Meta** key on your keyboard.

FEATURES OF THE *ACTIVITIES* OVERVIEW

Search box

Use the search box at the top to find applications, settings and files in your home directory. To search, you do not need to click the search box. Begin typing directly after opening the *Activities* overview. Search starts while you type, you do not need to press **Enter**.

dash

The dash is the bar positioned in the center at the bottom. It contains your favorite applications and running applications. If you move the mouse pointer over one of the icons, the name of the corresponding application is displayed nearby. A small dot underneath the icon indicates that the application is running.

Right-clicking an icon opens a menu which offers different actions depending on the associated program. Using *Pin to Dash*, you can place the application icon permanently in dash. To remove a program icon from dash, select *Unpin*. To rearrange an icon, use the mouse to drag it to a new position.

3.2 *Clock and Calendar*

Click the clock icon on the top bar to see the current day of the week and time. If you are using the *Calendar* itself or any other calendar application that is supported by *Calendar*, it also shows your upcoming appointments and notifications.

3.3 *System menu*

To open the *System* menu, click the icons in the top-right corner of the screen. From here, you can adjust volume and brightness, manage network and power settings, take a screenshot, lock the screen, switch users, log out or shut down the system.

4 Working with GNOME Desktop

Learn how to manage files, access removable media and use assistive technologies in GNOME Desktop.

4.1 *Managing files and directories*

The GNOME Files application provides a graphical interface for managing local and remote files. To launch it, press **Meta**, search for files and select *Files* from the hit list.

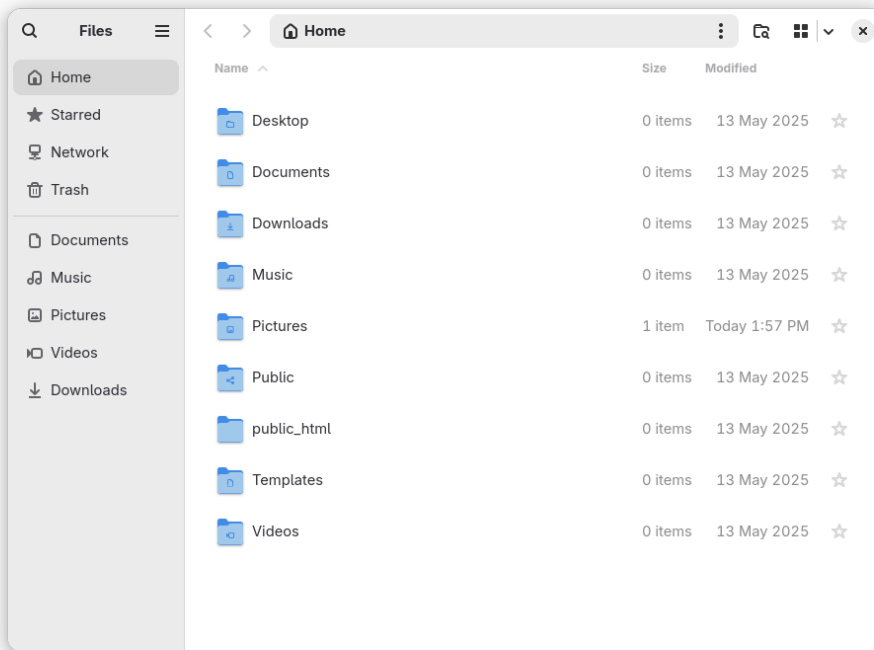


FIGURE 3: GNOME FILE MANAGER

The main interface elements include the following:

Toolbar

Includes back/forward navigation, a path bar with search function, view options (list or grid), sort controls and a three-dot menu for actions and settings specific to the current folder.

Sidebar

Provides quick access to frequently used folders and network locations. Toggle the sidebar with **F9**.

Main menu

The three-line icon at the top of the sidebar provides options like opening preferences, adjusting icon size, creating folders, or opening new windows and tabs.

Content area

Displays files and folders in the selected view. Use the toolbar's view menu (top right) to toggle between grid and list layouts.

Context menus

Right-click items or empty space to open a menu. Options depend on where you click—on a file or folder, or on the background.

4.1.1 Useful key combinations

The following table lists a selection of key combinations of GNOME Files.

TABLE 1: GNOME FILES KEY COMBINATIONS

Key Combination	Action
Alt + ← / Alt + →	Navigate backward/go forward.
Alt + ↑	Open parent directory.
Alt + ↓ or Enter	Open selected item.
Ctrl + L	Switch path bar from a button view to an editable text box. The editable path bar supports the URI schema and can be used to connect to remote servers via FTP, SFTP, SSH, SMB and other protocols. For example, use <code>ftp://tux@ftp.example.tld</code> to connect to an FTP server <code>ftp.example.tld</code> with the user name <code>tux</code> .
/	Jump to root directory.
Alt + Home	Open home directory.
Del	Move selected item to trash.

4.1.2 Administrative file tasks

Compressing files or directories

Right-click a directory, select *Compress*, choose an archive format (`.zip`, `.tar.xz` or `.7z`), then specify a destination.

Burning files to CD/DVD

Insert a blank storage medium, drag files to the *Blank Disc* entry in the sidebar, then click *Write to Disc*.

Bookmarking locations

Navigate to the folder you wish to bookmark, or locate a specific file within GNOME Files and click the star icon to the right of its name in the file manager's list or grid view. Bookmarked items will then be listed in the *Starred* section of the sidebar for easy access. Items in the sidebar, including those in the *Starred* section, can be renamed or reordered.

4.2 Accessing removable media

To access devices like USB flash drives or CDs and DVDs, insert or attach the medium. An icon for the medium is automatically created on the desktop. For many types of removable media, a GNOME Files window pops up automatically. If GNOME Files does not open, double-click the icon for that drive on the desktop to view the contents. In GNOME Files, an item for the medium appears in the sidebar.



Warning: Unmount to prevent data loss

Do not physically remove devices immediately after using them. Even when the system does not indicate that data is being written, the drive may not be finished with a previous operation.

To safely remove a device:

1. From the *Activities* overview, open *Files*.
 2. Locate the device in the sidebar and click the *Eject* icon.
- Now you can safely remove the device.

4.3 Assistive technologies

The GNOME Desktop provides built-in assistive technologies to support users with disabilities and facilitate interaction with common assistive devices. This chapter describes several assistive technology applications designed for users with physical disabilities like low vision or impaired motor skills.

4.3.1 Enabling assistive technologies

To configure accessibility features, open the *Settings* dialog by right-clicking the desktop and choosing *Settings*. In the navigation pane, select *Accessibility*. Each assistive feature can be enabled separately.

If you need a more direct access to individual assistive features, turn on *Always Show Accessibility Menu*. This will display an icon resembling a person in the top bar, providing quick access to accessibility settings.

4.3.2 Visual assistance

In the *Seeing* section of the *Accessibility* settings, you can enable features that help people with impaired vision.

- If the *Screen Reader* is turned on, the screen reader reads displayed text as you move the focus.
- Turning on *High Contrast* increases the color contrast of foreground and background interface elements.
- Turning on *On/Off Shapes* uses shapes to indicate state in addition to or instead of using color.
- Turning on *Animation Effects* enables visual animations throughout the user interface. Disabling this can help reduce visual distraction.
- Turning on *Large Text* increases the size of all text in the user interface.
- You can change the *Cursor Size* to improve pointer visibility.
- If *Sound Keys* are turned on, the system will play a sound when **Num Lock** or **Caps Lock** is toggled.
- Enabling *Always Show Scrollbars* keeps scrollbars visible at all times, which can help users who have difficulty locating them.

4.3.3 Hearing assistance

In the *Hearing* section of the *Accessibility* dialog, you can enable features helping people with impaired hearing.

Turning on *Overamplification* allows the system volume to exceed 100%, which can help users with hearing loss. Note that this may reduce sound quality.

If *Visual Alerts* are turned on, a visual indication is shown when an alert sound occurs. You can choose to flash either the window title or the entire screen. Use *Test Flash* to preview the effect.

4.3.4 Typing assistance

In the *Typing* section of the *Accessibility* dialog, you can enable and configure features that help people with mobility impairments.

- *Screen Keyboard* allows you to use the on-screen keyboard to type in input fields. When enabled, an on-screen keyboard appears at the bottom of the screen when you next have the opportunity to type.

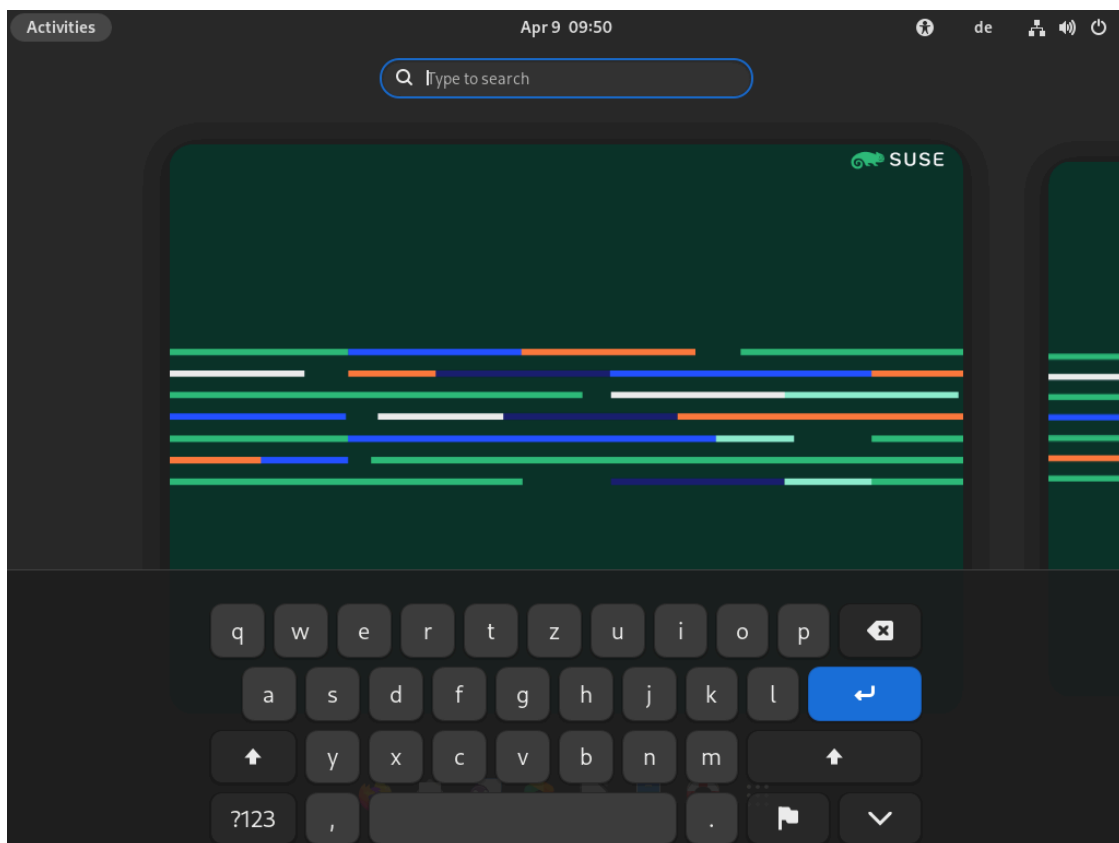


FIGURE 4: ON-SCREEN KEYBOARD

- To enter numbers and symbols, press the *?123* button first. More symbols are available if you press the *=/<* button. To return to the alphabetic keyboard, press the *ABC* button.
- To temporarily hide the keyboard, press the button with the arrow down icon. The keyboard is shown again automatically in the next situation where you can use it. To change your keyboard layout or change *Region & Language* settings, press the button with the flag icon.
- *Enable by Keyboard* allows you to turn accessibility features on or off using the keyboard.
- **Text Cursor**
 - *Cursor Blinking* controls if the cursor blinks in text fields.
 - *Blink Speed* lets you adjust the speed at which the cursor blinks, from *Slow* to *Fast*.
- **Typing Assist**
 - *Repeat Keys* makes key presses repeat when the key is held down.
 - *Sticky Keys* allows you to type key combinations one key at a time rather than having to hold down all keys at once. When this feature is turned on, sequences of modifier keys act as a key combination. For example, the **Alt** → **→|** shortcut switches between windows.
With sticky keys turned off, you need to hold down both keys at the same time. With sticky keys turned on, press **Alt** and then **→|** to do the same.
 - *Slow Keys* introduces a delay between when a key is pressed and when it is accepted. This means that you need to hold down each key you want to type for a little while before it appears. Use slow keys if you accidentally press several keys at a time when you type, or if you find it difficult to press the right key on the keyboard first time.
 - *Bounce Keys* allows you to ignore key presses that are rapidly repeated. This feature can help, for example, if you have hand tremors which cause you to press a key multiple times when you only want to press it once.

4.3.5 Pointing and Clicking

In the *Pointing and Clicking* section of the *Accessibility* settings, you can enable and configure features that help people with mobility impairments related to using a mouse or other pointing devices.

- *Mouse Keys* allows you to use the numeric keypad to move your mouse pointer.
- *Locate Pointer* helps you reveal the pointer location by pressing the Left **Ctrl** key.
- *Activate Windows on Hover* allows you to place the pointer over a window to activate it.
- *Double-Click Delay* lets you adjust the time allowed between clicks for them to be recognized as a double-click.
- **Click Assist**
 - *Simulated Secondary Click* enables a secondary click (usually equivalent to a right mouse button click) to be performed by holding down the primary mouse button. This is useful if you find it difficult to move your fingers individually on one hand, or if your pointing device only has a single button.
 - *Hover Click* allows you to trigger a click by hovering the mouse pointer over an item on the screen. This is useful if you find it difficult to move the mouse and click at the same time.

If this feature is turned on, a small hover click window may open and stay above all your other windows, allowing you to choose what type of click should happen when you hover. When you hover your mouse pointer over a button and do not move it, the pointer gradually changes color. When it has fully changed color, the button is clicked.

4.3.6 Zoom

In the *Zoom* section of the *Accessibility* settings, you can enable features that help people with visual impairments.

- *Desktop Zoom* allows you to magnify the entire screen.
- *Magnifier* section offers detailed configuration options, including *Magnifier View*, *Screen Area* and *Follow Behavior*.

- The *Crosshairs* section includes options like *Overlap Mouse Cursor*, *Thickness* and *Length* sliders, and *Color*.
- *Color Filters* offers the *Inverted* option to invert colors in the magnifier region, and *Brightness*, *Contrast* and *Color* options to adjust color effects.

5 Customizing the settings for GNOME Desktop

Learn how to customize the settings for GNOME Desktop, like changing the background or configuring language and keyboard settings to suit your personal taste and needs.

5.1 Configuring the desktop background

The desktop background is the image or color that is applied to your desktop. You can also customize the image shown when the screen is locked.

To change the desktop background:

1. Right-click the desktop and choose *Change Background*.

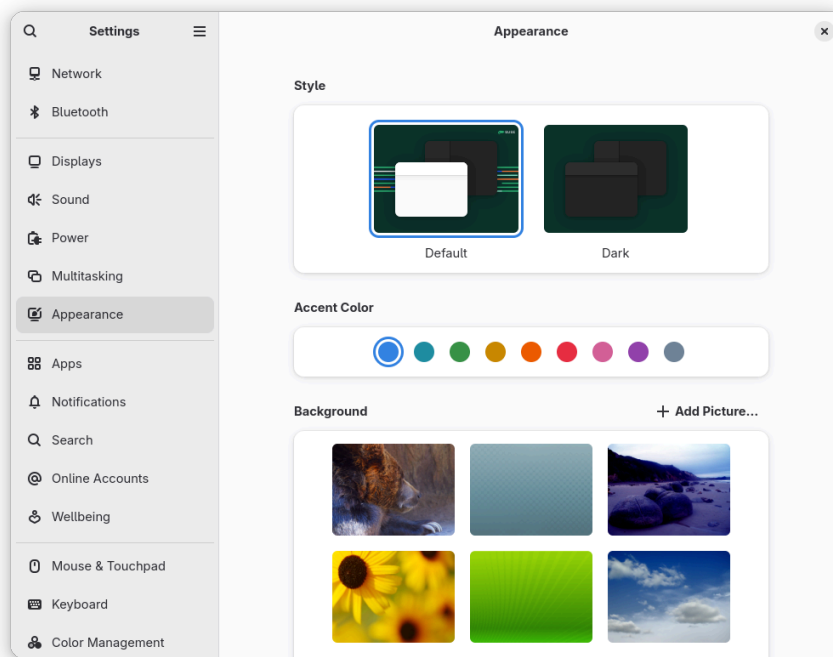


FIGURE 5: GNOME BACKGROUND SETTINGS

2. Select one of the wallpapers (preconfigured images distributed with your system) shown in the content area.
3. Alternatively, click *Add Picture* to select an image from your Pictures directory (~/Pictures) or another location in your file system.
4. Close the *Settings* dialog.

The new background is now shown on your desktop.

5.2 Configuring language settings

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server can be configured to use any of several languages. The language setting determines the language of dialogs and menus and can also determine the keyboard and clock layout.

To configure your language settings, right-click the desktop and choose *Settings* > *System* > *Region & Language*.

Here you can choose:

- *Language*. Choose a language from the list. For the change to take effect, you are prompted to *Restart* the desktop session. To do so, you must log out of your session and log back in afterward.
- *Formats*. To change the formats for date, number, currency and related options, choose a country from the list. For the change to take effect, you must log out of your session and log back in afterward.



Note: Settings made using **ibus-setup** do not take effect


On GNOME, settings made using **ibus-setup** do not take effect. **ibus-setup** can only be used to configure IceWM. Instead, always use the *Settings* application:

- To change input methods, open the *Settings* dialog, then select *Keyboard* from the navigation pane.
- To change the key combination that switches between input methods, use *Keyboard > Keyboard Shortcuts*. Then select the category *Typing* and the entry *Switch to next input source*.

5.3 Configuring the keyboard

Refer to [Section 4.3, “Assistive technologies”](#) for additional settings, such as key auto-repetition and cursor blink rate, and accessibility features. To configure your keyboard layout, refer to [Section 4.3.4, “Typing assistance”](#).

To modify keyboard shortcuts, right-click the desktop and choose *Settings*. Now select *Keyboard > Keyboard Shortcuts*.

This dialog shows the keyboard shortcuts that are configured for your system. To edit a key combination, click the entry that you want to change. To set a new key combination, press the respective keys. To disable a shortcut, press  instead.

5.4 Entering special characters using the Compose Key

GNOME offers the *Compose Key* that allows you to type a variety of special characters and symbols by pressing the designated *Compose Key* followed by a sequence of other keys.

To enable and configure the *Compose Key*, open *Settings* > *Keyboard*.

In the main panel, locate the *Special Character Entry* section and select *Compose Key*. Turn it on and select which key on your keyboard will act as the Compose Key.

To use the *Compose Key*, press and release your chosen Compose Key, then type a specific sequence of two or more characters. For example:

- Press **Compose Key** , then **o** – **c** to enter ©.
- Press **Compose Key** , then **a** – **'** to enter á.
- Press **Compose Key** , then **<** – **=** to enter ≤.
- Press **Compose Key** , then **1** – **2** to enter ½.

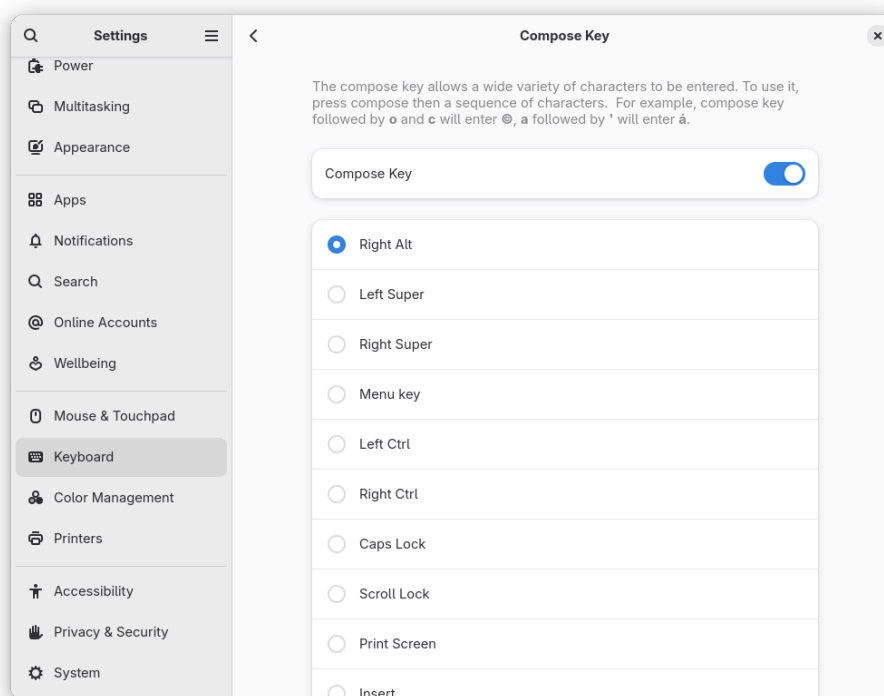


FIGURE 6: ENABLING THE COMPOSE KEY IN TWEAKS

5.5 Configuring Bluetooth settings

The Bluetooth module lets you set the visibility of your machine over Bluetooth and connect to available Bluetooth devices. To configure Bluetooth connectivity, follow these steps:

1. Right-click the desktop and choose *Settings* > *Bluetooth*.
2. To use Bluetooth, set the switch at the top on.
Your computer is visible as long as the Bluetooth panel is open.



Note: Temporary visibility

The *Visibility* switch is meant to be used only temporarily. You only need to turn it on for the initial setup of a connection to a Bluetooth device. After the connection has been established, turn off the switch.

3. On the device you want to connect, turn on Bluetooth connectivity and visibility, too.
4. If the device has been found and is shown in the list, click it to establish a connection to it.
You are asked whether the PINs of the two devices match.
5. If the PINs match, confirm this on *both* your computer and the device.
The pairing is now established. On your computer, the device in the list is shown as *Connected*.
Depending on the device type, it is also now available in other applications, for example, as a storage device in GNOME Files, or a sound device in playback applications.

To connect to a paired Bluetooth device, select the device in the list. In the dialog that appears, turn the *Connection* switch on. You can send files to the connected device by using the *Send Files* button. If you are connected to a device such as a mobile phone, you can use it as a network device by activating the appropriate option.

To remove a connected device from the list on your computer, click *Remove Device* and confirm your choice. To remove the pairing, you also need to do so on your device.

5.6 Configuring power settings

Settings available in this dialog depend on your hardware. In the following, the options that are typically available when using a laptop are described. On a workstation, many of the described options are not available.

1. Right-click the desktop and choose *Settings*.
2. In the navigation pane, select *Power*.
3. In the *Power Saving* section, set after how many minutes to blank the screen (or to not blank it at all).
4. In the *Automatic Screen Blank* section, configure the time after which the computer is paused after a certain period of inactivity.

5.7 Configuring mouse and touchpad

To modify mouse and touchpad options, right-click the desktop and choose *Settings*. Then select *Mouse & Touchpad*.

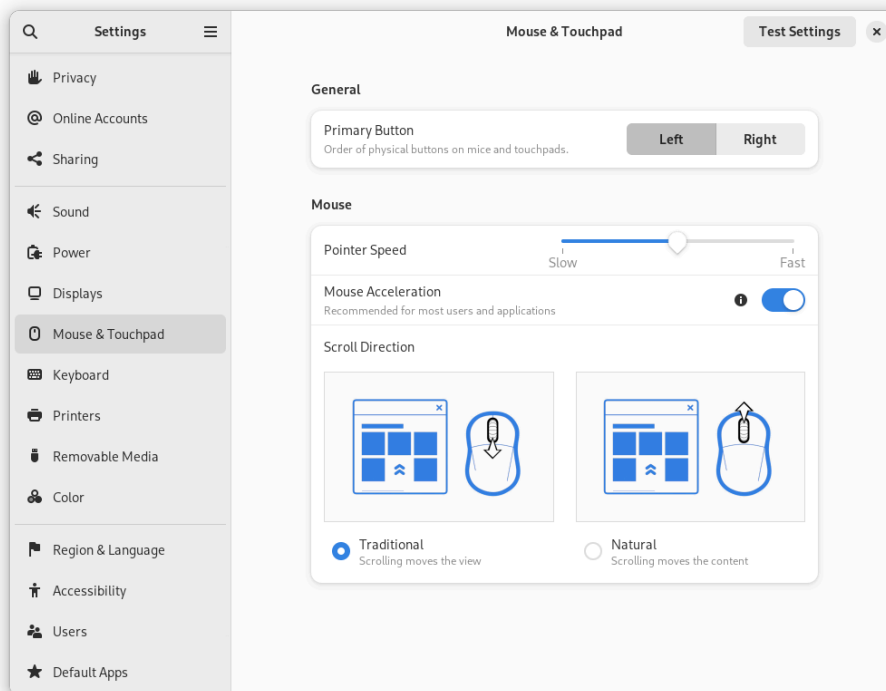


FIGURE 7: *MOUSE AND TOUCHPAD SETTINGS DIALOG*

- In the *General* section of the dialog, you can set the *Primary Button* orientation (left or right).
- In the *Mouse* section of the dialog, use *Pointer Speed* to adjust the sensitivity of the mouse pointer.

With *Natural Scrolling*, you can set the direction in which the content moves when scrolling with the mouse. When natural scrolling is turned off, the content moves *up* while pushing the scroll wheel *down*. When natural scrolling is turned on, the content moves in the same direction as the mouse wheel.

- To test your settings, click *Test Settings* and try the pointing device.

For the configuration of mouse accessibility options, refer to the [Section 4.3.5, “Pointing and Clicking”](#).

5.8 Installing and configuring printers

The *Printers* dialog lets you connect to any available local or remote CUPS server and configure printers.

To start the Printers module, right-click the desktop and choose *Settings* › *Printers*. For detailed information, refer to <https://help.gnome.org/users/gnome-help/stable/printing.html.en> .

5.9 Configuring screens

To specify resolution and orientation for your screen or to configure multiple screens, right-click the desktop and choose *Displays*. The configuration options available in this dialog depend on whether you have a single or a multiple monitor setup.

5.9.1 Configuring single monitor setup

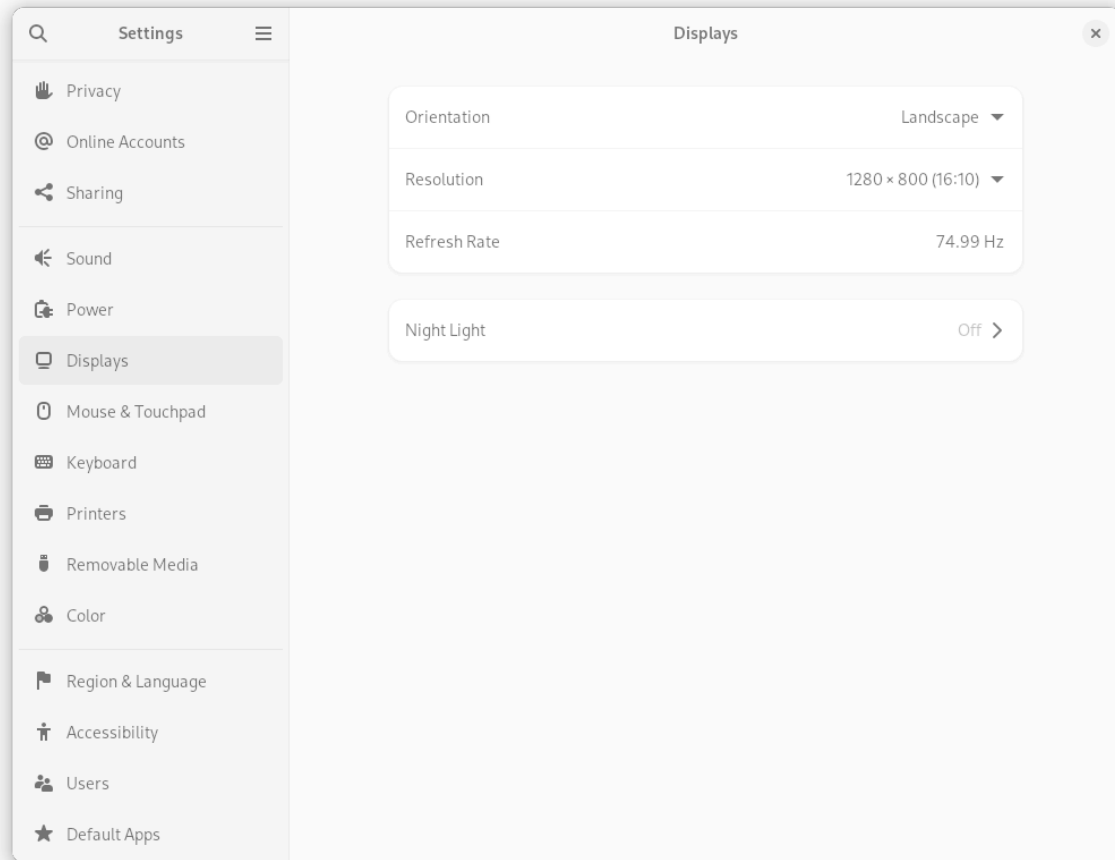


FIGURE 8: SINGLE MONITOR SETTINGS DIALOG

Orientation

If you use a monitor which can change its orientation, you need to adjust the display before turning the monitor. Use *Orientation* to do this. Choose the orientation your monitor supports, close the selection box and click *Apply*.

Resolution

To change the screen resolution, click *Resolution*. Choose a new value and click *Apply*.

Night Light

If you are working in a dark environment, your eyes can easily be strained by the monitor. To prevent this, change the screen's color palette to a warmer tone by turning on *Night Light*. Under *Schedule*, you can automate this setting by specifying at which time *Night Light* should be turned on and off.

5.9.2 Configuring multiple monitor setup

To set up an additional monitor, connect the monitor to your computer. If your system does not recognize it immediately, or you want to adjust the settings, do the following:

1. Open the *Activities* overview and start typing Displays.
2. Click *Displays* to open the panel.
3. In the display arrangement diagram, drag your displays to the relative positions you want.
4. Click *Primary Display* to choose your primary display.
The primary display is the one with the *top bar*, and where the *Activities* overview is shown.
5. Select the orientation, resolution or scale, and refresh rate.
6. Click *Apply*. The new settings are applied for 20 seconds before reverting. If you are happy with the settings, click *Keep Changes*.

With two or more screens, these display modes are available:

Join Display

The screen edges are joined so windows and dialogs can pass from one display to another.

Mirror

The same content is shown on all displays, with the same resolution and orientation for all.

Single display

Only one display is configured, effectively turning off the other displays. For example, an external monitor connected to a docked laptop with the lid closed.

5.10 Configuring sound settings

The *Sound* tool lets you manage sound devices. Here you can select the general output volume or turn the sound off.

To open the sound settings, right-click the desktop and choose *Settings* > *Sound*.

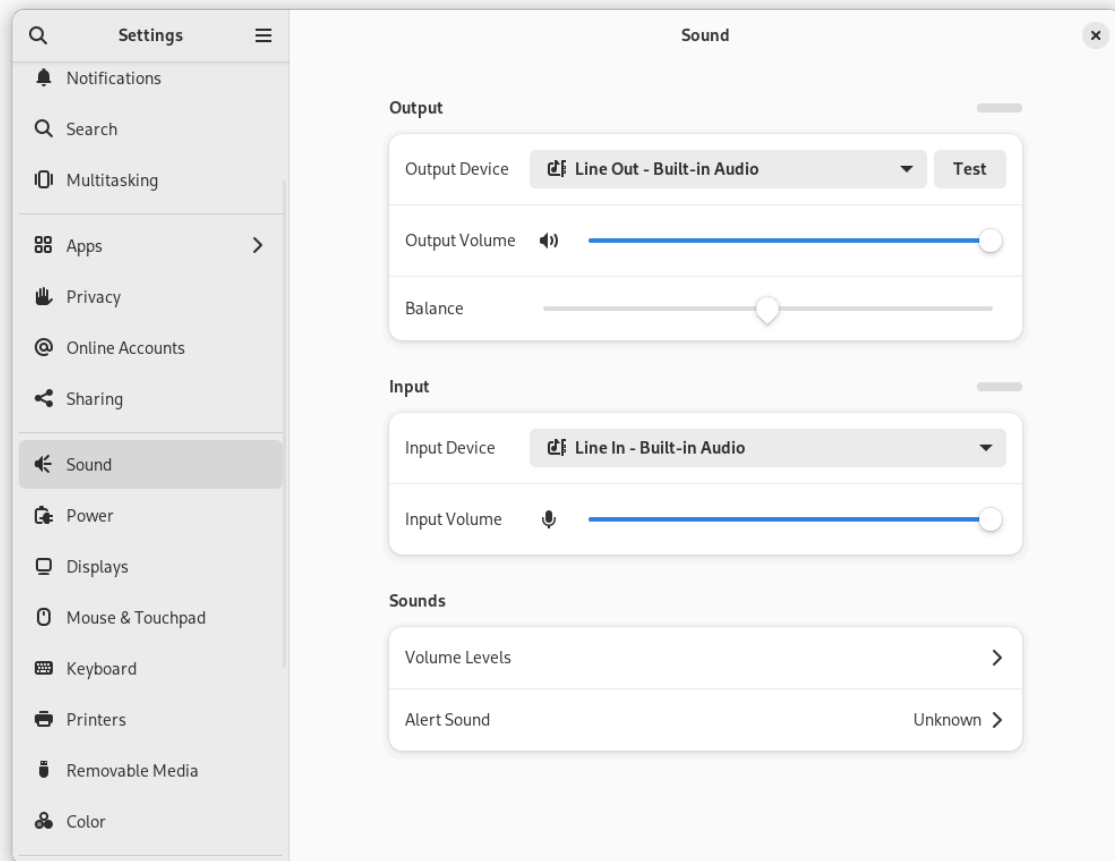


FIGURE 9: CONFIGURING SOUND SETTINGS

Use the *Output* category to select the device for sound output. Choose the *Output Volume* and *Balance* settings you prefer.

Use the *Input* category to set the input device volume or to mute the input temporarily. If you have more than one sound device, you can also select a default device for audio input in the *Input Device* list.

You can also choose an *Alert Sound*.

5.11 Configuring default applications

1. To change the default application for a common tasks, right-click the desktop and select *Settings > Apps > Default Apps*.

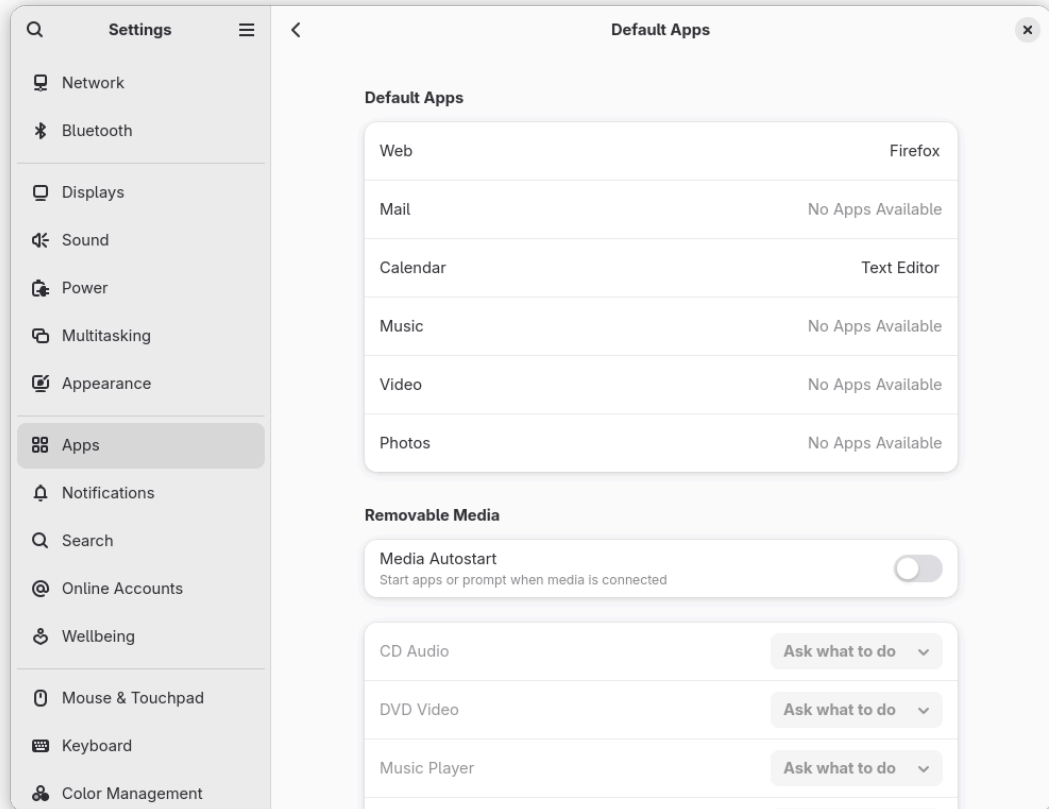


FIGURE 10: GNOME DEFAULT APPS

2. In the *Default Apps* section, you can select a preferred application. If no suitable application is installed for a category, it will be listed as No Apps Available. Click a category to view and select one of the available applications.

Below the default applications, the *Removable Media* section allows you to configure how the system handles media devices such as audio CDs, video DVDs or USB drives. You can enable or disable *Media Autostart* to control whether applications start automatically when media is connected.

For each media type (CD Audio, DVD Video, Music Player, Photos), you can choose an action from a drop-down menu, such as Ask what to do or a specific application if available.

5.12 Configuring session sharing preferences

To configure desktop sharing for remote access, right-click the desktop and choose *Settings*. In the sidebar, scroll down and select *System > Remote Desktop > Desktop Sharing*.

Before you can share anything, you need to turn on the switch in the upper part of the dialog. The switch also helps you if you quickly need to disable all sharing options.

The *Remote Desktop* interface includes a *Remote Login* tab, where you can enable or disable remote access to your session. To allow remote logins, switch the *Remote Login* toggle to the “On” position and enter the administrator password.

6 For more information

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server comes with several sources of information and documentation, many of which are already integrated into your installed system.

To enter the Help of GNOME or LibreOffice directly from an application, click the *Help* button or press **F1** key. Both options take you directly to the application's documentation in the help center.


You can also start the Help of GNOME by opening a terminal and entering **yelp** or from the main menu by clicking *Apps > Help*.

For more information on how to work with GNOME Desktop, see <https://help.gnome.org> .

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