

Debian

Community driven.

Software versions tend to move more slowly in favor of stability over cutting edge.

Uses the [dpkg](#) package manager.

Widely supported CPUs and hardware.

Supported Desktop Environments: [KDE Plasma](#), [Cinnamon](#), [MATE](#), [LXQt](#), and [LXDE](#).

Debian has a two year release cycle. Has 2 years of support with point releases, 5 years of support in total for security updates.



Ubuntu

Based on Debian. Corporate owned ([Canonical, Ltd](#))

Popular distro with beginners. Has a large community with good documentation, support, and software selection.

Canonical sets its direction such as pushing its [Snap](#) software manager, and has exclusive control over the one and only [Snap app store](#).

LTS releases every two years with free support for 5 years.

Linux Mint

Derived from Ubuntu. Community owned.

Its audience is for people switching from MS Windows with its [Cinnamon](#) DE.

Zorin OS

Derived from Ubuntu. Corporate owned ([Zorin Group](#)).

Its audience is for people switching from MS Windows and MacOS.

Preferred DEs are [GNOME](#) and [Xfce](#) customized to feel more like MS Windows and MacOS.

Pop!_OS

Derived from Ubuntu. Corporate owned ([System 76](#)).

Audience is for “STEM and creative professionals”.

Pop!_OS has their own DE, [COSMIC](#), but also supports [GNOME](#) and [Xfce](#).

Elementary OS

Derived from Ubuntu. Small group / developer supported.

Its audience is for people switching from MacOS and MS Windows.

Has their own DE, Pantheon, based from GNOME.

Fedora

Community owned, but with occasional influence from Red Hat.

Leans more towards cutting edge, but staying one major release behind is a way to have more stable release.

Has spins (releases) for [GNOME](#), [KDE Plasma](#), [Xfce Cinnamon](#), [MATE](#), [i3](#), [LXQt](#), [LXDE](#), [SoaS](#), [Sway](#), and [Budgie](#).

Has a major release about every 6 months with rolling between releases. Supports one major release behind.

RHEL

Derived from Fedora and CentOS Stream. Corporate owned ([Red Hat](#))

Uses the DNF (rpm) package manager.

Its audience is often businesses with a focus on stability and security.

Though typically requires paid support for business use, it is no cost for personal use (up to 16 machines).

A common misunderstanding is that RHEL is for servers. That's simply not true. Red Hat has fully supported desktop and workstation versions of RHEL, and with the [EPEL](#) repository, has about the same amount of packages available as Ubuntu.

RHEL has a major release every 3 years, with minor releases about every 4-6 months. Each major release has a 10 year support cycle.

Rocky and AlmaLinux

Both are managed by communities and are built from CentOS Stream to be binary compatible with RHEL.

Use one of these if you want to avoid having to deal with RHEL's subscription manager.

OpenSUSE

Community owned, but sponsored by [SUSE](#).

Tumbleweed is openSUSE's rolling release, while Leap is its point release version. Leap is more beginner friendly.

RPM-based, but uses Zypper instead of DNF.

Manjaro

Derived from [Arch Linux](#).

Still Arch under the hood, but provides a more user-friendly, graphical installation and setup process.

EndeavourOS

Also derived from Arch Linux with a user-friendly, graphical installation and setup process.

Provides these DEs and window managers: [Xfce Plasma](#), [MATE](#), [Cinnamon](#), [LXDE](#), [LXQt](#), [Budgie](#), [i3](#), and [GNOME](#).