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Thread: [\[Beginner Guide\] How to Install Linux as a Second OS Alongside Windows \(Dual Boot\)](#)

techpacket - February 6, 2026, 10:31 pm

A lot of people want to try Linux but don't want to remove Windows.

Dual boot is the safest way to use both OS on the same PC, and it's easier than most people think.

This guide explains everything from zero, assuming you already have Windows installed.

? What You Need Before Starting

A PC with Windows already installed

Minimum 20–30 GB free disk space

A USB drive (8GB or more)

Internet connection

? Step 1: Choose a beginner-friendly Linux distro

If this is your first time, avoid complicated distros.

Good beginner choices:

Ubuntu

Linux Mint

Pop!_OS

Download the ISO file from the official website only.

? Step 2: Create a bootable USB

You can't install Linux like a normal app.

Steps:

Download a USB boot tool (Rufus or Balena Etcher)

Select the Linux ISO

Choose your USB drive

Start flashing

Once done, the USB becomes a Linux installer.

? Step 3: Prepare space from Windows

Linux needs its own partition.

From Windows:

Open Disk Management

Right-click your main drive

Shrink volume

Leave the space unallocated (don't format it)

This space will be used by Linux later.

? Step 4: Boot from the Linux USB

Now restart your PC.

Press Boot Menu key (F12 / F9 / ESC depending on PC)

Select the USB drive

Linux installer will load

You'll usually see an option like "Try Linux" or "Install Linux".

? Step 5: Start Linux installation

Choose Install.

When asked about installation type:

Select "Install alongside Windows" (recommended for beginners)

The installer will automatically:

Detect Windows

Use the unallocated space

Configure dual boot safely

? Step 6: Set user and timezone

Now you'll be asked to:

Choose keyboard layout

Set timezone

Create username & password

This is similar to Windows setup.

? Step 7: Finish installation and reboot

After installation completes:

Remove USB

Restart PC

You'll now see a boot menu where you can choose:

Windows

Linux

Congrats ? You now have dual boot.

? Important Things New Users Should Know

Windows updates won't delete Linux

Linux files are separate from Windows

You can uninstall Linux later without reinstalling Windows

Secure Boot may need to be disabled on some PCs

? Why Dual Boot Is Worth It

Learn Linux without risk

Keep Windows for gaming/software

Great for programming, networking, security learning

ramikkon - February 7, 2026, 4:57 am

I did a similar thing, but instead of using an internal hard drive, I just bought an M.2 case supporting UASP and TRIM (this is important for long-term performance compared to a regular cheap enclosure) and USB 3.2 Gen 2, and then put a fast NVMe SSD in it. So I got a "portable Linux NVMe bay" which is almost as good as an internal one.

You just need to be careful to buy the correct enclosure and a matching SSD which can operate at decent temperatures so you don't get thermal throttling.

techpacket - February 7, 2026, 9:54 pm

Thanks for your information