

Review: OpenMandriva Lx 4.0

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OpenMandriva is a desktop-oriented distribution that originally grew from the Mandriva family of Linux distributions. Like other community projects which rose from the ashes of Mandriva, OpenMandriva places a focus on providing a polished desktop experience that is easy to install. Unlike most other community distributions in the Mandriva family, OpenMandriva uses the Calamares installer, its own custom settings panel for managing the operating system, and builds packages using the Clang compiler instead of the GNU Compiler Collection.

OpenMandriva 4.0 introduces some other changes too, including using Fedora's DNF command line package manager and switching from using Python 2 to Python 3 by default. Python 2 is still available in the distribution's repositories for people who need to use the older version of the language.

The project's latest release is available in two builds and both of them feature the KDE Plasma desktop and run on 64-bit (x86_64) machines. One build (called "znver1") is for modern CPUs while the other is a generic 64-bit build. I was unable to find any precise information on what the minimal requirements were for running "znver1" and so used the generic build for my trial. There are mentions of ARM support in the project's release notes, but at the time of writing there is just one tarball for an ARM build on the distribution's mirrors.

Curiously, on release day, the release notes also mentioned a LXQt build of OpenMandriva and a minimal desktop build. Neither of these were available on release day and it seems the release notes are out of date (or premature). The release announcement also offers a link to torrent downloads, but there were no torrents available on the server, even a week after OpenMandriva 4.0 was launched. (The following week torrent files were made available.) All of this is to say the documentation did not match what was actually available when version 4.0 became available.

The generic 64-bit build of OpenMandriva was a 2.4GB download. Booting from the project's ISO seemed to get stuck for a minute after passing the boot menu, but eventually a splash screen appeared, followed by a welcome window. The welcome screen offers us information on package versions and displays links to on-line resources. The welcome window also offers to help us change settings, which we can probably skip until after the distribution has been installed.

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