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# Windows 11: Everything you need to know

11-13 minutes



Windows 11 is the latest iteration of the world's most popular PC operating system. Microsoft [revealed Windows 11](#) a few weeks ago, and the OS is currently in beta through the Windows Insider Program. With the final release of Windows 11 set to arrive later in 2021, the beta releases are slowly releasing the promised features to the insiders.

Being a major release, Windows 11 has a lot of questions surrounding it. Ranging from whether it will cost you anything to whether it has any features that will make your life easier, we have all the answers for you here. Here's all you need to know about Windows 11!

**Also read:** [Windows 11 beta impressions](#)

## What is Windows 11?



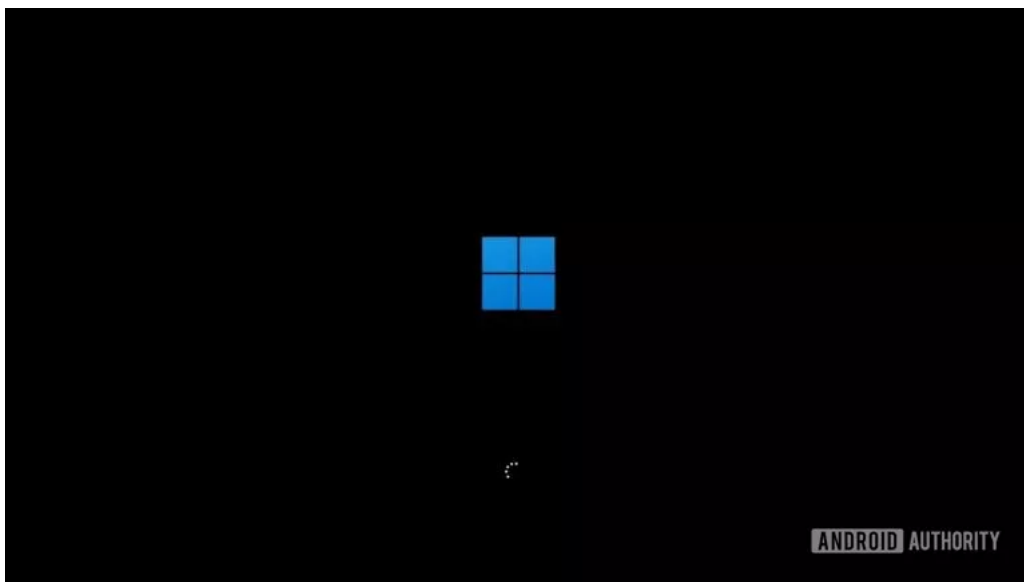
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Windows 11 is the next significant upgrade to Microsoft Windows. It follows Windows 10, which was wrongly assumed to be the last major Windows release version. Microsoft had been working on what was somewhat of a sequel to Windows 10, called Windows 10X.

Windows 10X was supposed to be an overhaul in comparison to Windows 10. The legacy features were supposed to go away or be integrated into the new system, which had a new look and feel. However, Microsoft scrapped Windows 10X a while ago, soon announcing Windows 11. It carries a lot of the good bits from Windows 10X, but at least for now, it's keeping the legacy elements as well.

**Also read:** [What is Windows 10X?](#)

## What are the new features in Windows 11?

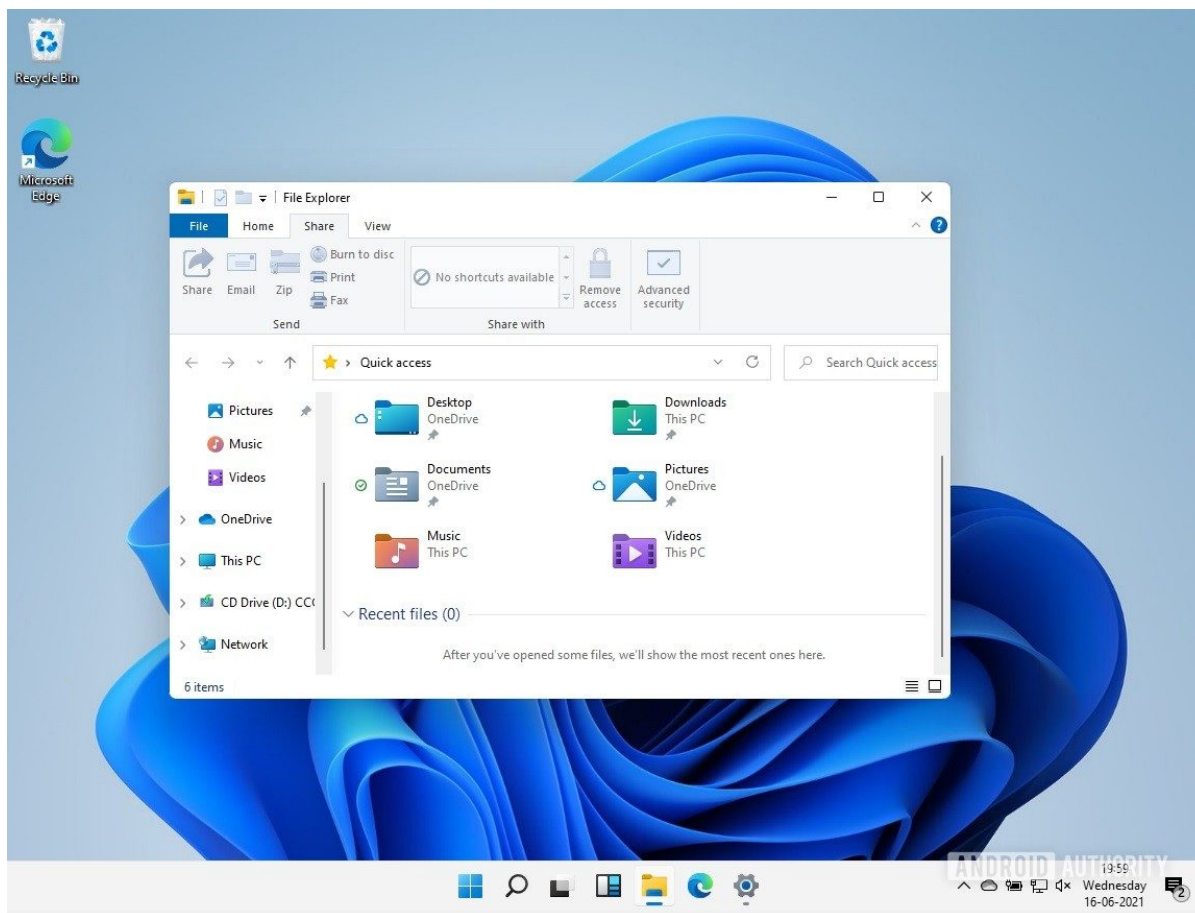


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Windows 11 is set to be a version update, which Microsoft has usually bundled with drastic or at least noticeable changes. It will have quite a few features that will set it apart. At the announcement event, Microsoft showcased the key feature upgrades we will be getting. These features are subject to change before the final release, of course, but here are a few key new features you can expect.

**Also read:** [5 big changes we can expect in Windows 11](#)

## New design



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Windows 11 doesn't get a significant design overhaul, but it does get a lot of minor design upgrades that make for a fresh look. We have a new Windows logo, as well as a new set of icons. The File Explorer has a fresh look, with new folder icons for the libraries, increased spacing between menu items, and rounded corners. The latter is consistent across the new version. Other aesthetic changes include new sounds and a cleaner Action Centre.

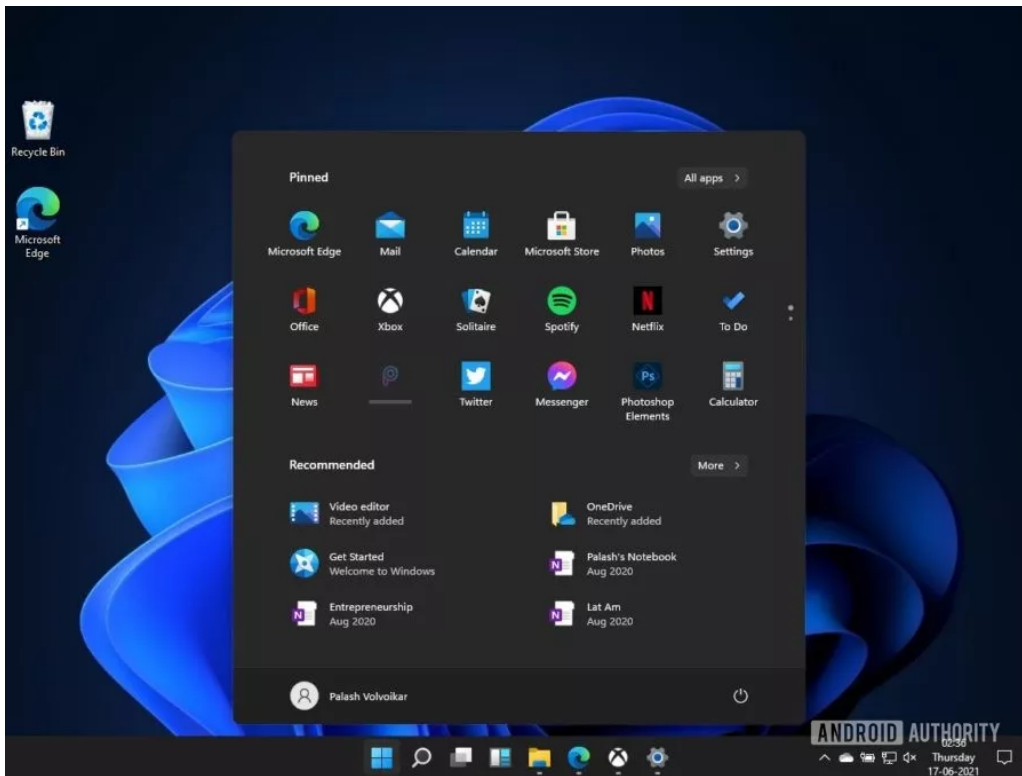
## Changed Taskbar



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The taskbar is now centered by default, changed from the default left alignment we're used to seeing in Windows. It's also a bit taller, but a few things worsen the taskbar experience in general. The taskbar is now locked, and there is no option to adjust the height. You can also no longer move the taskbar to the left, right, or the top. Left-clicking on the taskbar also doesn't give you the classic menu anymore, but instead just an option to go to the Taskbar settings.

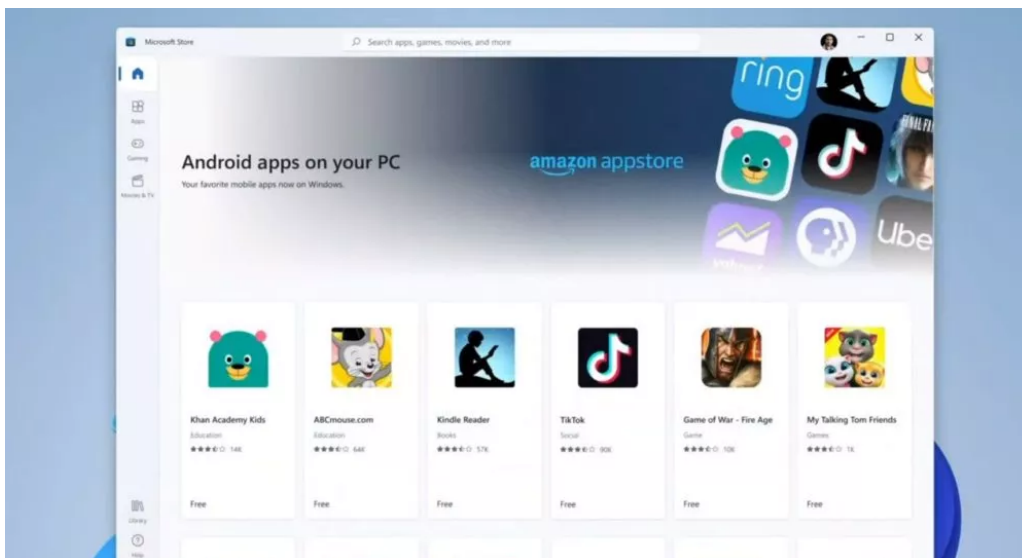
## Overhauled Start Menu



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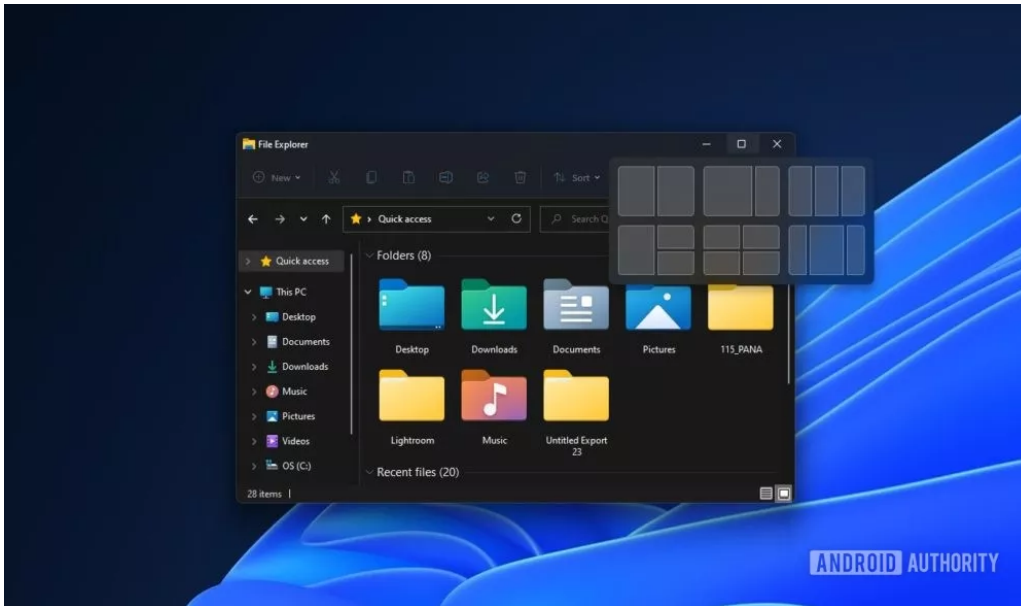
Start menu is one of the more notable changes. You now get the pinned apps at the very top, with options to have multiple pages for the same. You also get the recommended tab, which is a mix of recommended and recent apps and files. The account menu and the power menu sit at the bottom. The new Start menu rearranges old elements, with only one key element missing — live tiles. There are ways to revert to the old Start menu if you want to, but the new one seems like the better implementation.

### Native Android app support





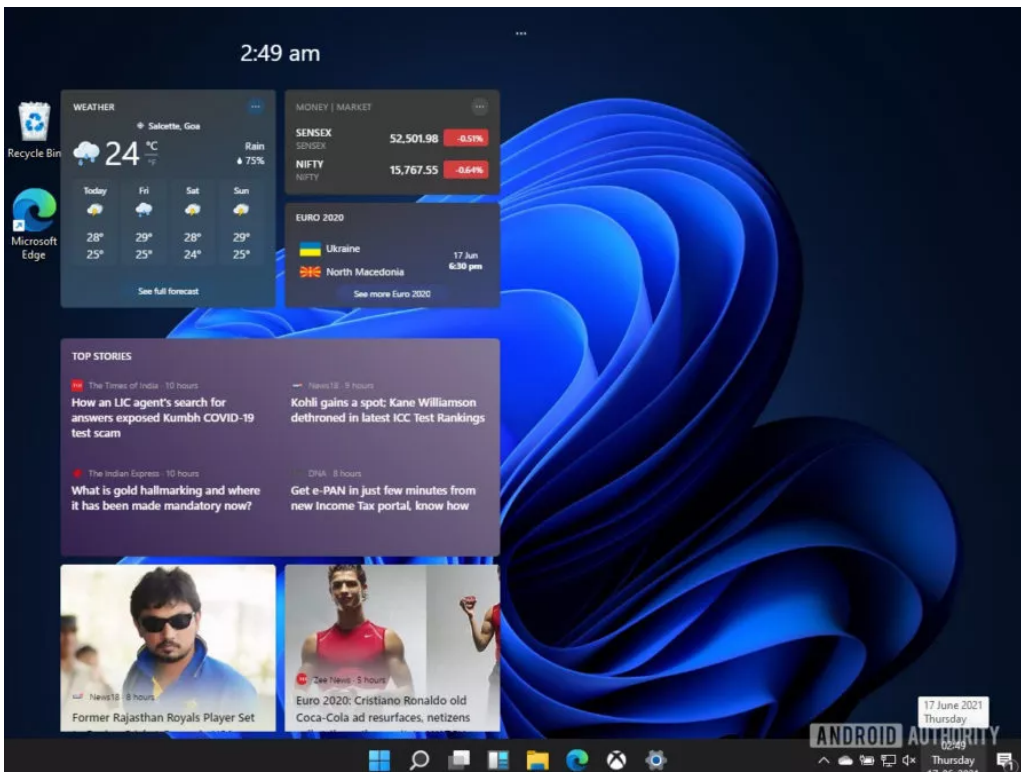
## New window snap layouts



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We're also getting a new window snap system. We've had window snapping in Windows since Windows 7, called Aero Snap. Windows 11 brings layout presets to Aero Snap. These snap layouts pop up when you hover your cursor over the Maximize/Restore button and give options between four layouts for up to four windows.

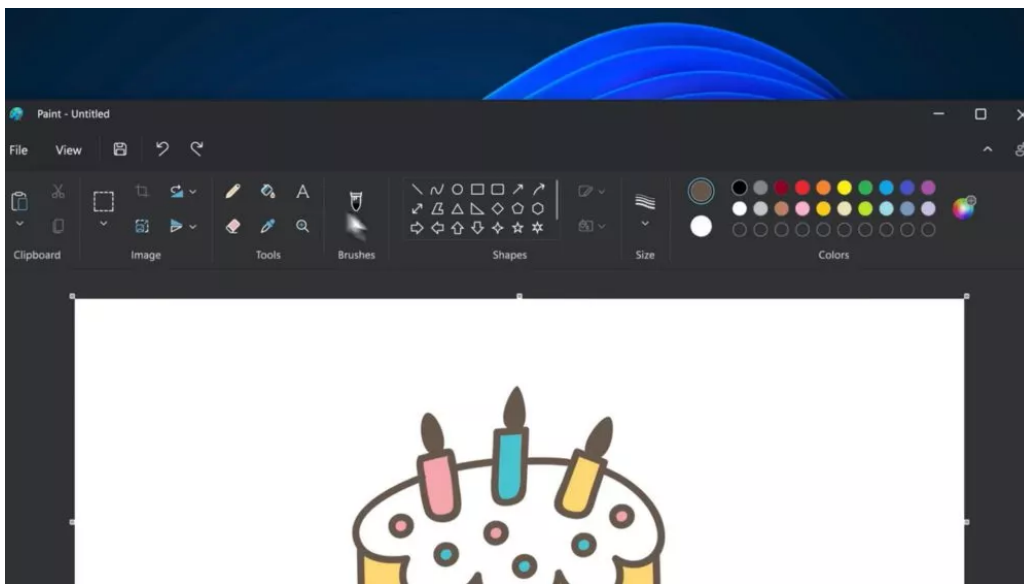
## Widgets



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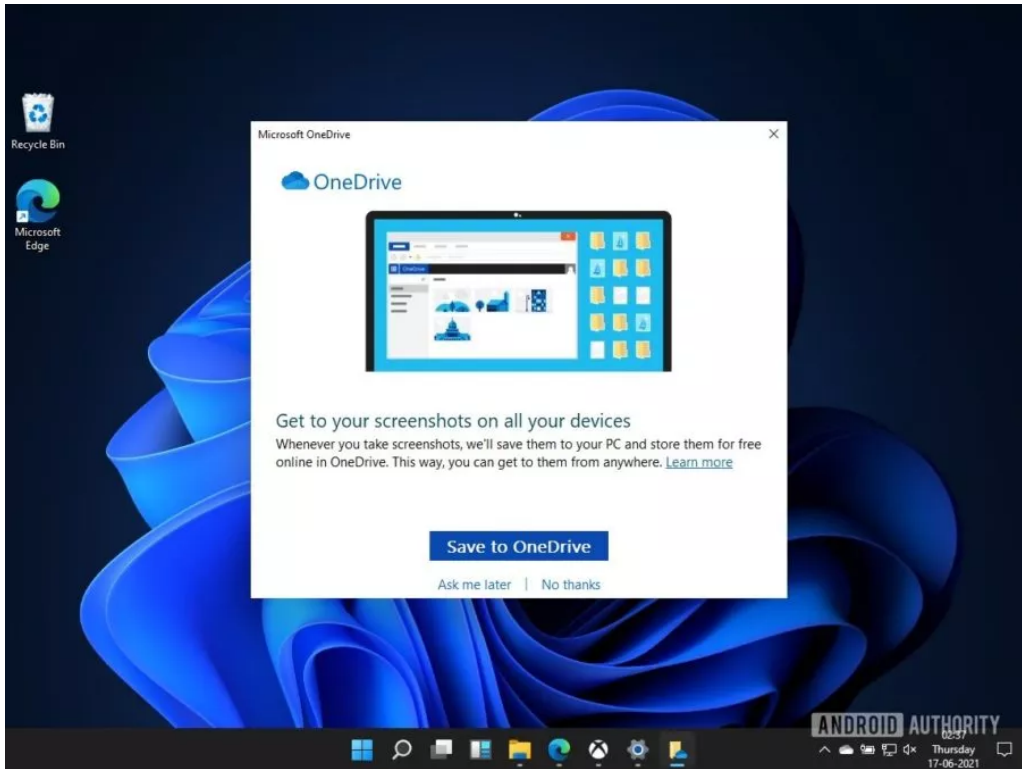
Windows 11 now has a dedicated widgets button, which is pretty much the “News and Interests” taskbar button from the newest Windows 10 update. For now, it’s just personalized content from Microsoft services like MSN, stacked up in little tiles. By far one of the least interesting new features, it doesn’t seem to have any third-party content on it yet.

## Upgraded native apps



Windows is also getting a few upgraded native apps with this update. The beloved Paint app is getting a redesign. We got a Paint 3D app with Windows 10, but this will not be a drastic change like that. We’ll be getting a cleaner-looking toolbar and dark mode. Windows 11 is also getting a new Snipping Tool with more control and an upgraded editor. The new Microsoft Store, Xbox app, and visual changes to File Explorer are other notable native app changes.

## Deeper Microsoft services integrations

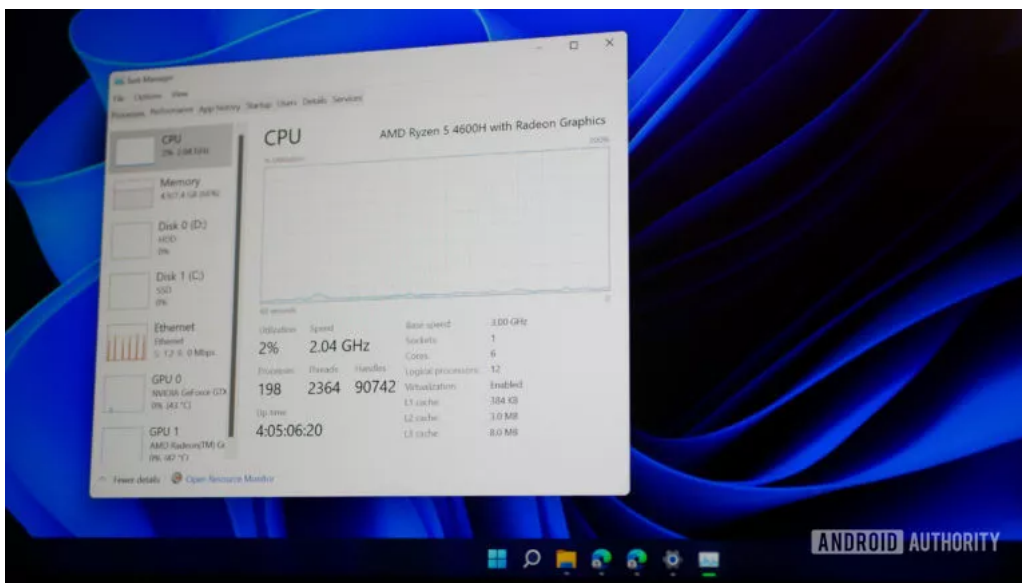


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Windows 11 will also see a deeper integration of Microsoft services across the board. OneDrive seems to be a dominant presence across File Explorer. Then there's the Microsoft Teams integration. Xbox app will also integrate better into Windows now. These are nice additions from a convenience point of view, but if you don't use these services, the integrations seem nothing but annoying.

**Related:** [Android apps on Windows gives us what Google promised all along](#)

## Will Windows 11 be a free upgrade?





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Windows 11 is set to follow in the footsteps of Windows 10 and arrive as a free upgrade. While Windows 10 was rather easy to upgrade to, Windows 11 seems like it will not be as easy of a free upgrade.

Microsoft has narrowed the upgrade path in the name of safety.

To begin with, the new version will not support 32-bit CPUs, which means that Windows 10 will be the last update for PCs that have one of those. Other than that, Windows 11 has other minimum system requirements that your system will need to match to get the free upgrade.

**Related:** [Most of you plan to upgrade to Windows 11](#)

## Will my PC be able to run Windows 11? Windows 11 system requirements

Windows 11 has a stricter set of minimum requirements for eligibility than Windows 10. The system requirements have been changed up a couple of times, and Microsoft will likely provide some flexibility to them. Microsoft [will not stop you](#) from manually installing Windows 11 on older systems as long as they meet these system requirements, but the bar is set higher for updates via Windows Update. Some system requirements, like the presence of a 64-bit CPU, are likely to remain.

For now, here are the absolute minimum system requirements needed to install Windows 11.

### Windows 11 system requirements

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Processor                                 | 1 gigahertz (GHz) or faster with 2 or more cores on a compatible 64-bit processor or System on a Chip (SoC) |
| RAM                                       | 4 gigabyte (GB)   |
| Storage                                   | 64 GB or larger storage device  |
| System firmware                           | UEFI, Secure Boot capable   |
| TPM                                       | Trusted Platform Module (TPM) version 2.0   |
| Graphics card                             | Compatible with DirectX 12 or later with WDDM 2.0 driver  |
| Display                                   | High definition (720p) display that is greater than 9" diagonally, 8 bits per colour channel                |
| Internet connection and Microsoft account | Windows 11 Home edition requires internet connectivity and a Microsoft account                              |
| Current Windows version                   | Windows 10, version 2004 or later   |

If you want Windows 11 officially via Windows Update, you'll still need to have an 8th gen or newer Intel CPU, or a Zen 2 or newer AMD CPU, UEFI secure boot, and TPM 2.0. You will also need at least 4GB of RAM and 64GB of storage.

## How to install Windows 11 beta right now

Windows 11 beta is available to install through the Windows Insider Program. Microsoft has a way for you to check if your system can run Windows 11. If your system meets the minimum requirements listed above, you can go ahead and install the beta. There is a way to double-check whether your system is eligible for this upgrade.

First off, you will need to sign up for the Windows Insider Program. Here's how you can do it.

1. Head over to the [official website](#) for the Windows Insider Program. Log in with the same Microsoft account that you use on your Windows 10 system, and proceed to register.

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- Once registered, the Windows Insider Program will give you the option to "Flight now." Click on it.

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- Now head over to the Privacy tab in the Settings app on the Windows 10 system you want to upgrade, and click on Diagnostics & Feedback. Here, you'll need to turn on "Optional diagnostic data" under the Diagnostic data setting.

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- Once done, go to the "Windows Insider Program" tab under the Update & Security tab in Settings, and click on Get started. You will get a prompt to link an account, proceed by selecting the account that you previously used to register with Windows Insider Program.

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- When prompted to "Choose your Insider settings," select the Beta Channel and confirm.

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- A final confirmation message will pop up. Hit Confirm. When prompted, you will need to restart your system to get the update, so click on Restart Now. Alternatively, you can choose to restart later.

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- Once you've restarted, head over to the Update & Security tab in the Settings app and click on "Check for Updates." Windows Update will fetch the Windows 11 beta update and start downloading it.

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- The update will finish downloading. Restart your PC and enjoy the Windows 11 beta.

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## When will Windows 11 launch?

Windows 11 is all set to launch on October 5. The OS is available for beta testing right now and is in its final stages before the final release. Manufacturers are already announcing computers that will get the free upgrade or launch with Windows 11 on board, post the release date.

The final release of Windows 11 that rolls out on October 5 may not come with all the promised features. For example, the Android app support isn't arriving at launch. Additionally, there may be some more changes that we haven't seen yet.

**Related:** [Most of you plan to upgrade to Windows 11](#)

## Frequently asked questions

**Q:** Will Windows 11 be a compulsory update?

**A:** It doesn't seem like Windows 11 will be a compulsory update, but it will likely be recommended from a safety point of view. Windows 10 will be supported until October 14, 2025, so you should keep receiving essential security updates until then. However, regarding new feature implementations and software support, Windows 11 is likely to be the priority going forward.

**Q:** How much will Windows 11 cost?

**A:** Windows 11 will be a free upgrade for eligible systems and ship with new systems. Most manufacturers should be shipping their new computers with the new OS as well. As far as how much it will cost to buy a new license, we will have to wait until the release to find out. Pricing for new licenses should be similar to Windows 10 licenses.

**Q:** Should I upgrade to Windows 11?

**A:** It's a good idea to wait a few weeks after the release to see if any critical issues pop up in the new version. If not, you should be better off upgrading rather than staying on Windows 10.