

How to Try Linux

Installing Linux Via a Virtual Machine (VM)

Background

Probably the easiest and most casual way to try out linux is to try it through a Virtual Machine (a.k.a **VM**). A VM is essentially a pretend computer that is running on an actual physical machine (a **host**). The software that creates and manages VMs is called a Virtual Machine Manager (VMM) or a **hypervisor**.

Hypervisors come in two types:

- Type 1 - "Bare Metal Hypervisor"
 - This type is installed on the physical hardware *en lieu* of an operating system.
 - Some examples include [Proxmox](#) and [ESXI](#)
- Type 2
 - This type of hypervisor is a program that is installed on, and run through, a host operating system like Windows or OSX
 - Examples: [Hyper-V](#) and [Virtualbox](#)

This tutorial will show you how to install and use Virtualbox, which is a free and easy to use type 2 hypervisor available for all major operating systems.

Installing Virtualbox

Download page: <https://www.virtualbox.org/wiki/Downloads>

For this tutorial, you can go ahead and leave everything default when you install it. Note: for Windows 10 Pro & Education users, you cannot use Virtualbox while Hyper-V is enabled! If you don't know if it's enabled or not on your system, then you are probably ok.

Downloading a Linux Distribution

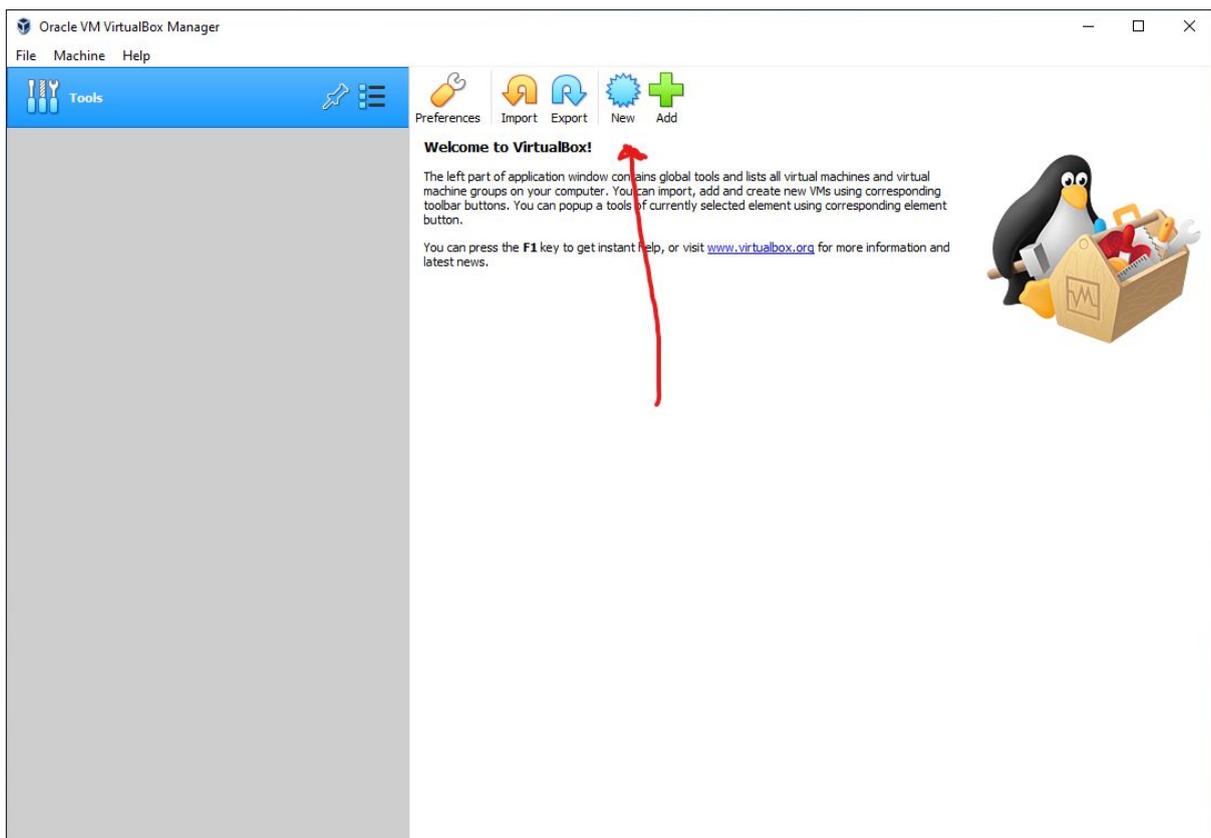
Ubuntu Linux

Linux comes in many flavours! These are called distributions or **distros** by the community. Each distro has its quirks and there isn't really a *perfect* distro, but different people enjoy different ones. If you get inspired to try out Linux more, you will probably find your own fit! This installation will cover how to install Ubuntu Linux, which is the most popular distribution among regular users, as well as developers. It is well regarded as one of the easiest distros to use for beginners. It is also the distribution that I am currently running on my school laptop.

Download an ISO Image

The first step to install a Linux distro is to download a .iso file. A .iso file is traditionally used to burn a CD-ROM, but in practice this is usually just emulated on a USB drive. When using Virtualbox, this is not needed as Virtualbox is smart enough to just use the raw .iso image file. We are going to be using Ubuntu version 20.04 LTS for this example. 20.04 means that the version is from April 2020, while LTS stands for *long term support* and means that updates are guaranteed for 5 years following release. The download and more details can be found here: <https://ubuntu.com/download/desktop>. Note: Linux .iso files are usually pretty big and can take a while to download.

Creating an Ubuntu Virtual Machine in Virtualbox



← Create Virtual Machine

Name and operating system

Please choose a descriptive name and destination folder for the new virtual machine and select the type of operating system you intend to install on it. The name you choose will be used throughout VirtualBox to identify this machine.

Name:

Machine Folder:

Type: 

Version: 



← Create Virtual Machine

Name and operating system

Name:

Machine Folder:

Type: 

Version: 

2



3

Memory size

MB

4 MB 16384 MB

Hard disk

Do not add a virtual hard disk

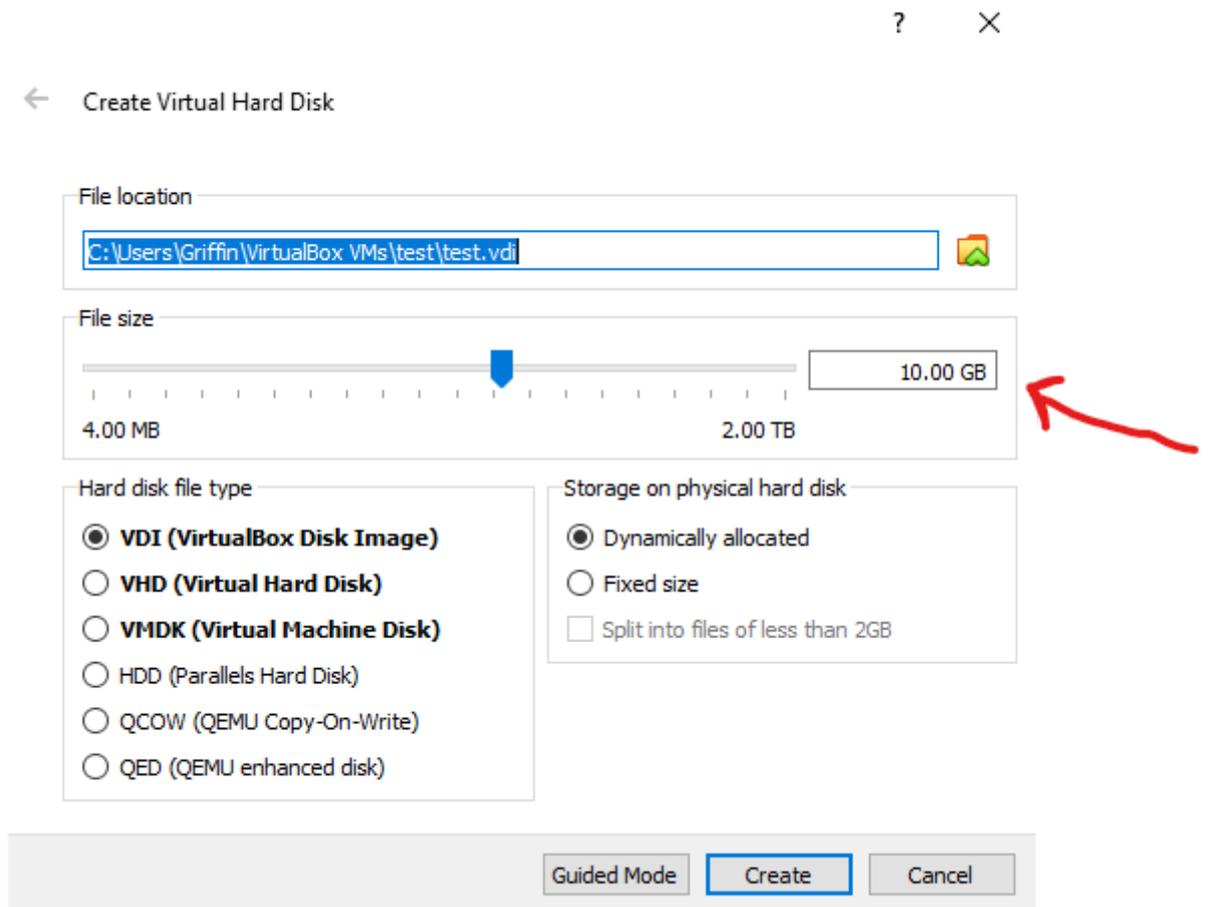
Create a virtual hard disk now

Use an existing virtual hard disk file

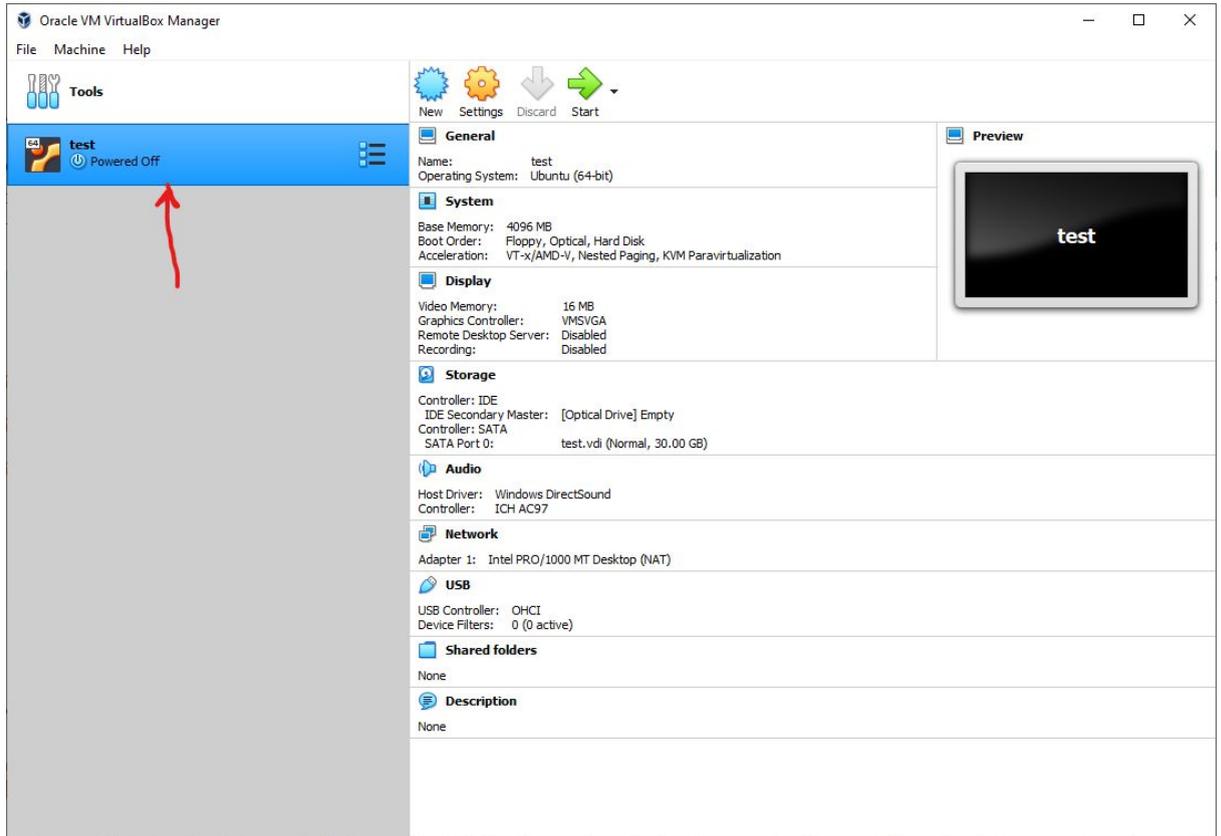
4

1. Name your VM anything you'd like

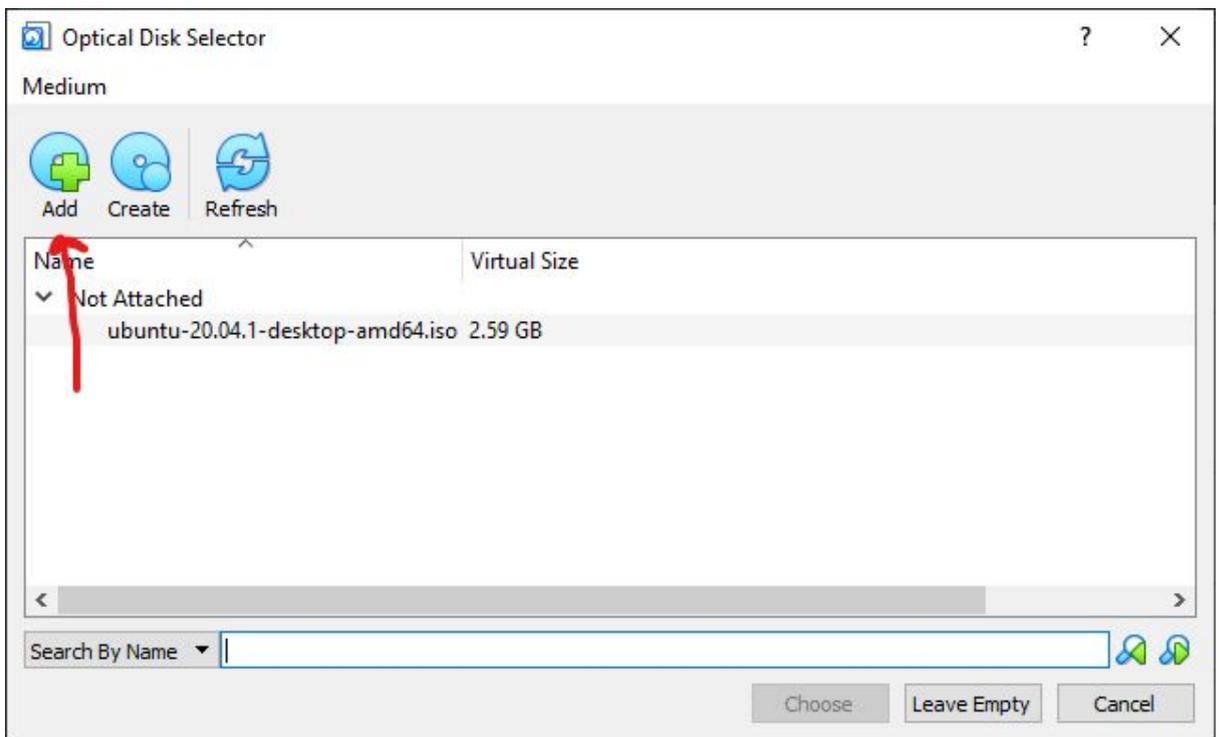
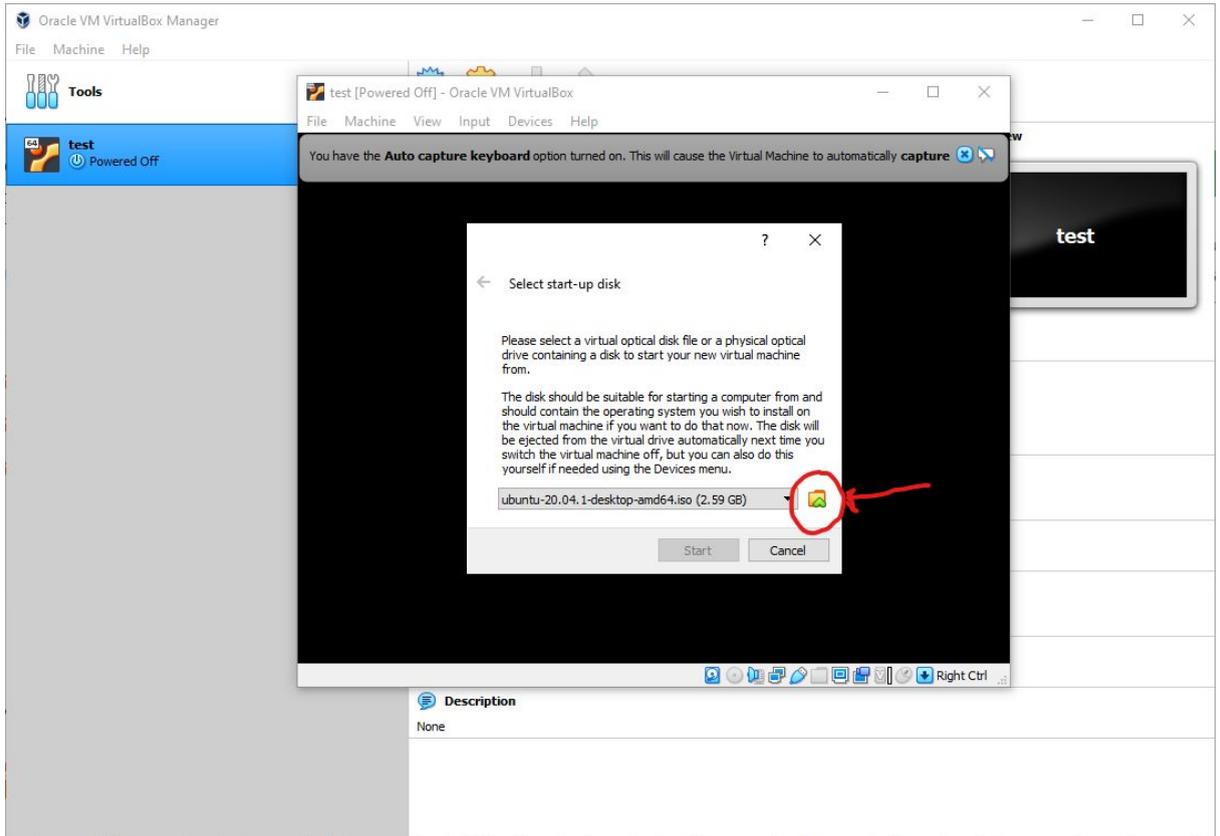
2. Choose 'Linux'
3. Choose 'Ubuntu 64 bit'
4. Canonical recommends at least 4GB of memory for running Ubuntu, so make sure this value is at least 4096 bits.

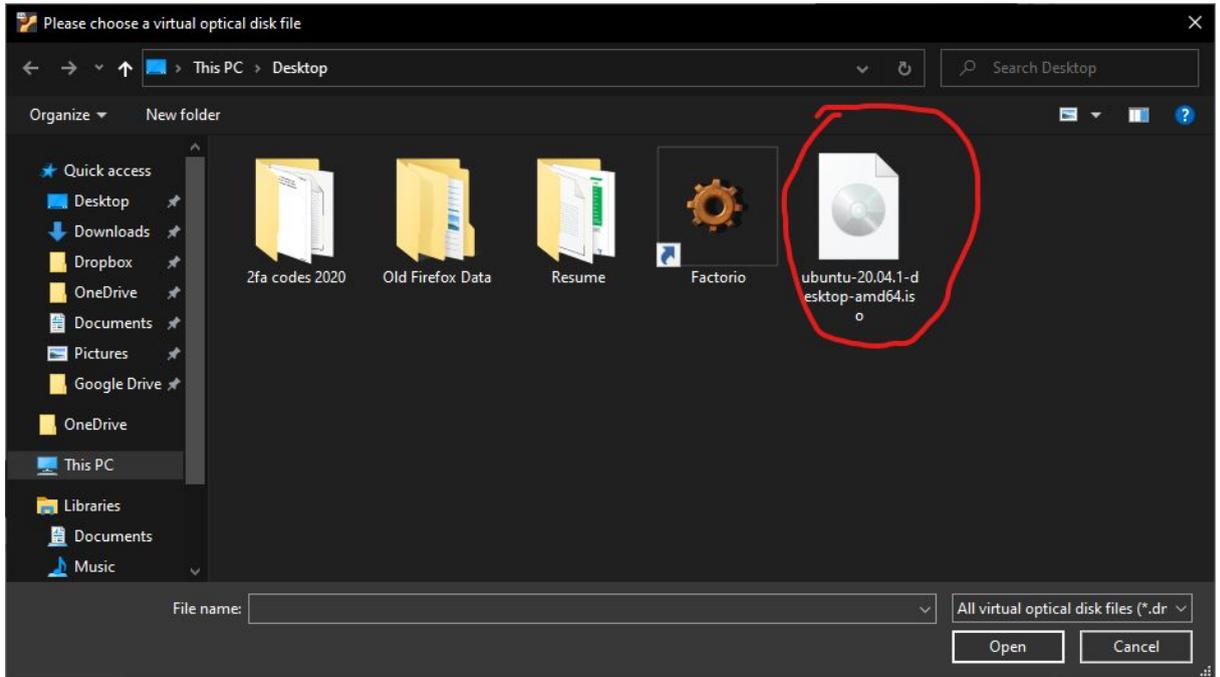


It is also recommended to have at least 25GB of disk space for your Ubuntu installation. Put a little bit of padding, I chose 30GB personally.

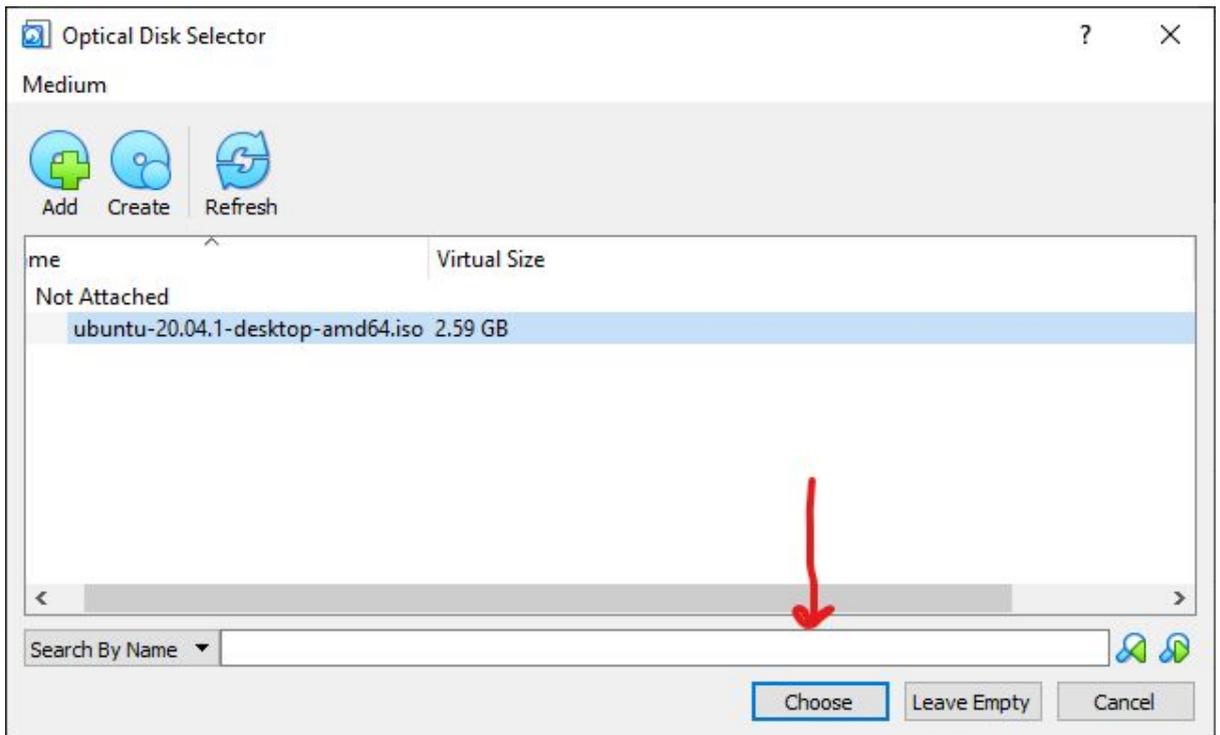


Double click on the VM





Locate your .iso file.



← Select start-up disk

Please select a virtual optical disk file or a physical optical drive containing a disk to start your new virtual machine from.

The disk should be suitable for starting a computer from and should contain the operating system you wish to install on the virtual machine if you want to do that now. The disk will be ejected from the virtual drive automatically next time you switch the virtual machine off, but you can also do this yourself if needed using the Devices menu.

ubuntu-20.04.1-desktop-amd64.iso (2.59 GB) 

Start

Cancel



test [Running] - Oracle VM VirtualBox

File Machine View Input Devices Help

Oct 8, 03:51

You have the **Auto capture keyboard** option turned on. This will cause the Virtual Machine to automatically **capture** the keyboard every time the VM **install**

The Virtual Machine reports that the guest OS supports **mouse pointer integration**. This means that you do not need to **capture** the

Welcome

- Čeština
- Cymraeg
- Dansk
- Deutsch
- Eesti
- English**
- Español
- Esperanto
- Euskara
- Français
- Gaeilge
- Galego
- Hrvatski
- Íslenska
- Italiano
- Kurđi
- Latviski



Try Ubuntu



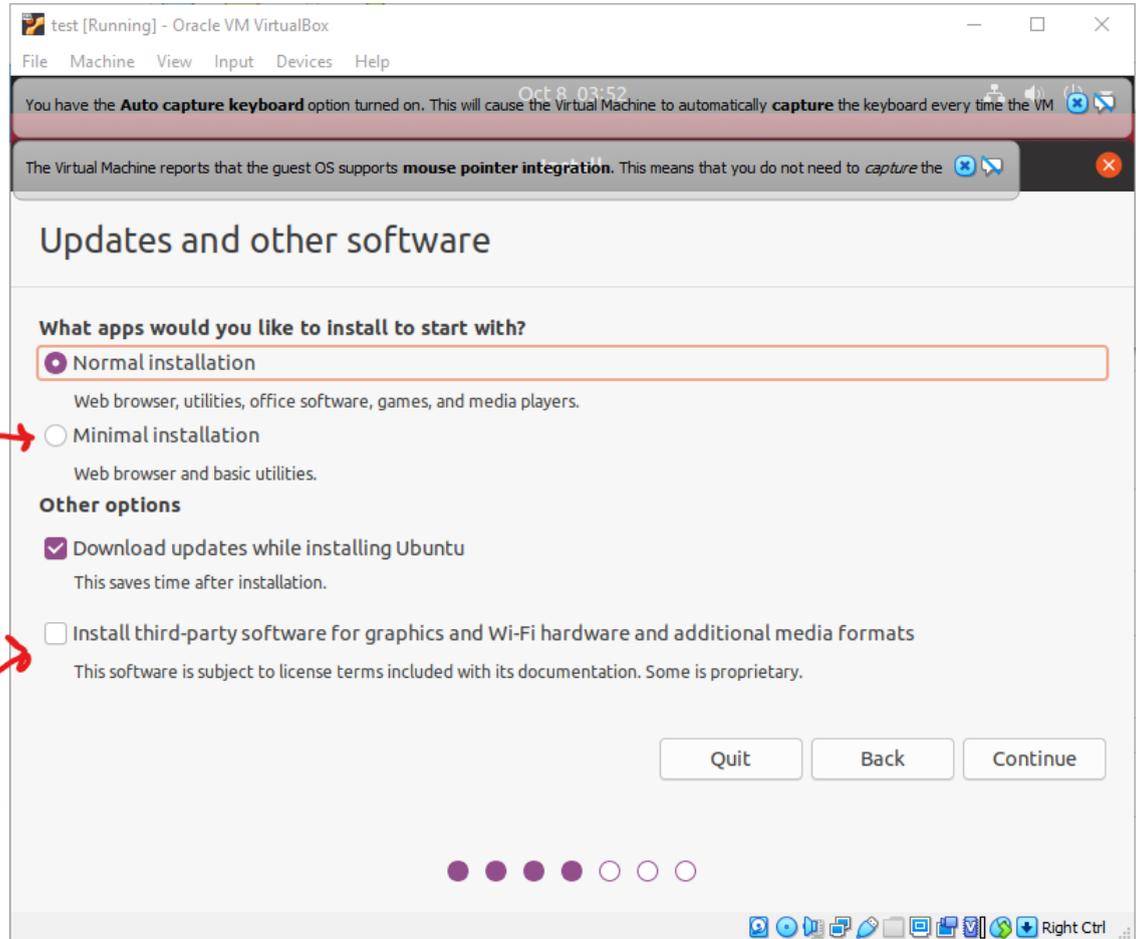
Install Ubuntu

You can try Ubuntu without making any changes to your computer, directly from this CD.

Or if you're ready, you can install Ubuntu alongside (or instead of) your current operating system. This shouldn't take too long.

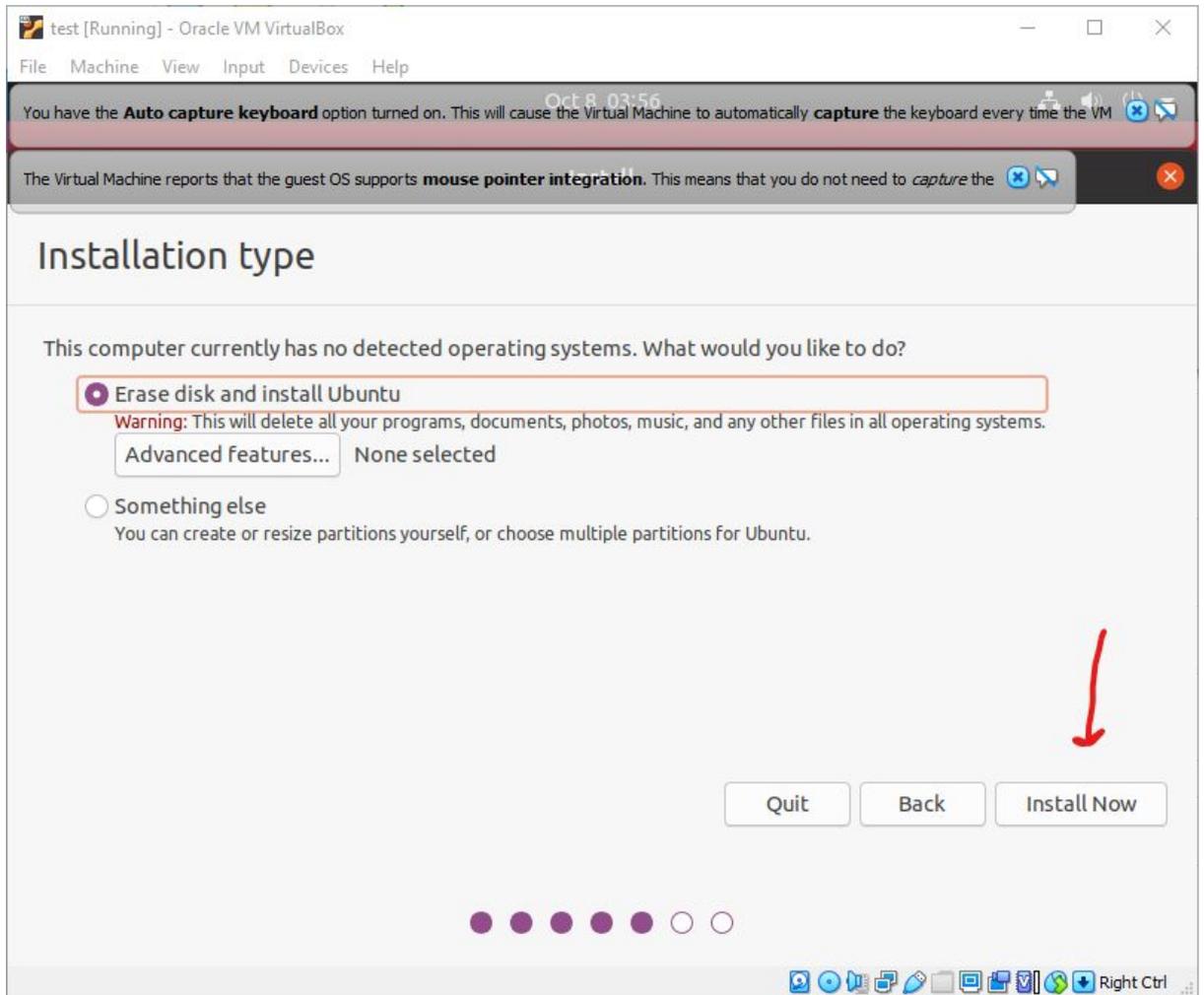
You may wish to read the [release notes](#).

Right Ctrl

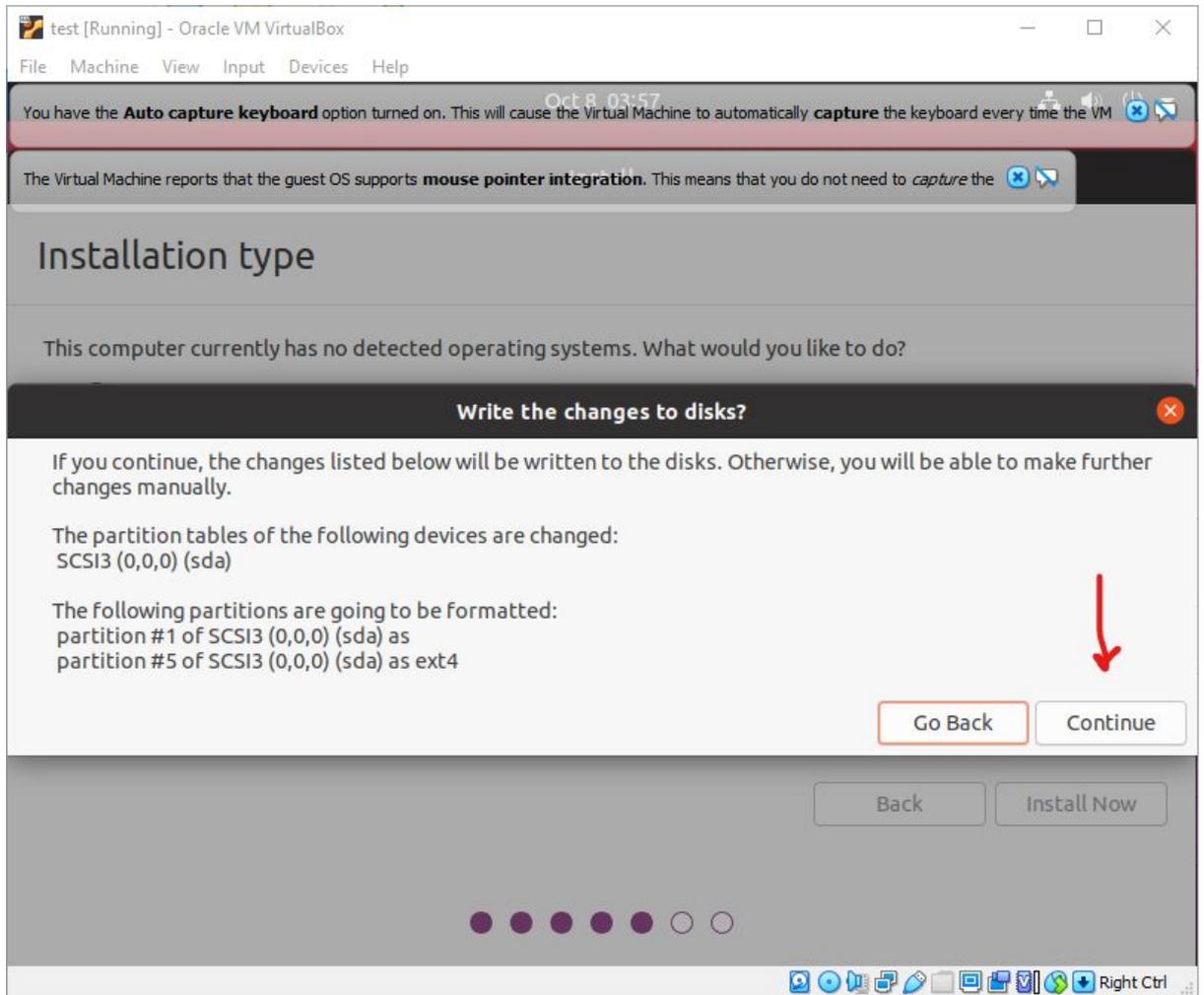


I recommend picking 'Minimal installation' since that will make the installation go faster, and none of the extra software it installs is used in the tutorial.

This ensures that our hardware will work with Ubuntu.



You are now ready to install Ubuntu on the VM.



Click continue to complete the installation. You can now grab a beverage, sit back, and wait for Ubuntu to install. Congratulations!