

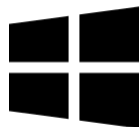
[Donate](#)[Home](#) [How Tails works](#) [Install Tails](#) [Documentation](#) [Support](#) [News](#)[Install](#) [Install Tails from Windows](#)[English](#)

Install Tails from Windows

You need



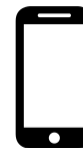
1 USB stick
Only for Tails!
8 GB minimum



Windows 8
or later



2 GB of RAM
64-bit



Smartphone
or printer
to follow the instructions



1 hour in total
1.9 GB to download
½ hour to install

[System requirements and recommended USB sticks](#)

Your steps



Download Tails



Verify your
download



Download *Rufus*



Install Tails using
Rufus



Restart on your
Tails USB stick



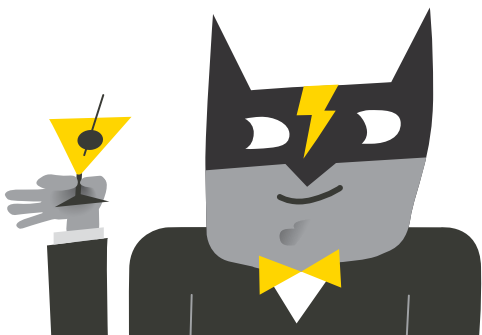
Welcome to Tails!

Warnings: Tails is safe but not magic!

Tails is safer than any regular operating system. But Tails, or any software or operating system, cannot protect you from everything—even if they pretend to.

The recommendations below will keep you even safer, especially if you are at high risk.

Protecting your identity when
using Tails



Limitations of the Tor network



Tails is designed to hide your identity.

But some of your activities could reveal your identity:

- Sharing files with metadata, such as date, time, location, and device information
- Using Tails for more than one purpose at a time

Protecting your identity

Tails uses the Tor network because it is the strongest and most popular network to protect from surveillance and censorship.

But Tor has limitations if you are concerned about:

- Hiding that you are using Tor and Tails
- Protecting your online communications from determined, skilled attackers

Limitations of Tor

Reducing risks when using untrusted computers



Tails can safely run on a computer that has a virus.

But Tails cannot always protect you when:

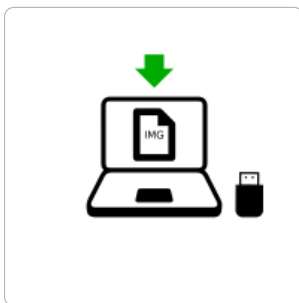
- Installing from an infected computer
- Running Tails on a computer with a compromised BIOS, firmware, or hardware

Using untrusted computers

Because you always have to adapt your digital security practices to your specific needs and threats, we encourage you to learn more by reading the following guides:

- [EFF: Surveillance Self-Defense](#)
- [Front Line Defenders: Security-in-a-Box](#)

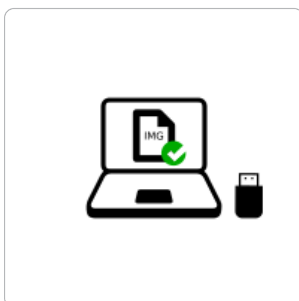
1/8 Download Tails



[Download Tails 7.7.3 USB image \(2.0 GB\)](#)

Save your download to your usual *Downloads* folder and not to the USB stick.

2/8 Verify your download

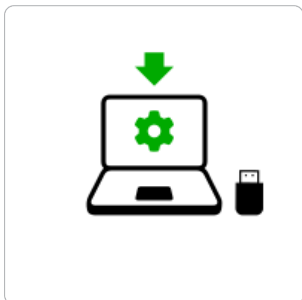


Verify your download to make sure that it is safe and was not corrupted during download.

Select your download to verify...

or verify using the [OpenPGP signature](#)

3/8 Download *Rufus*



Rufus is the Free Software tool that we recommend to install Tails from Windows.

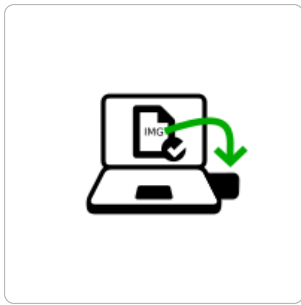
1. Click on the following button to download *Rufus*:

Download *Rufus* for Windows

Save your download to your usual *Downloads* folder and not to the USB stick.

We stopped recommending *balenaEtcher* to install Tails from Windows in 2025 because *balenaEtcher* shares sensitive information to the Balena company that allows identifying who is installing Tails.

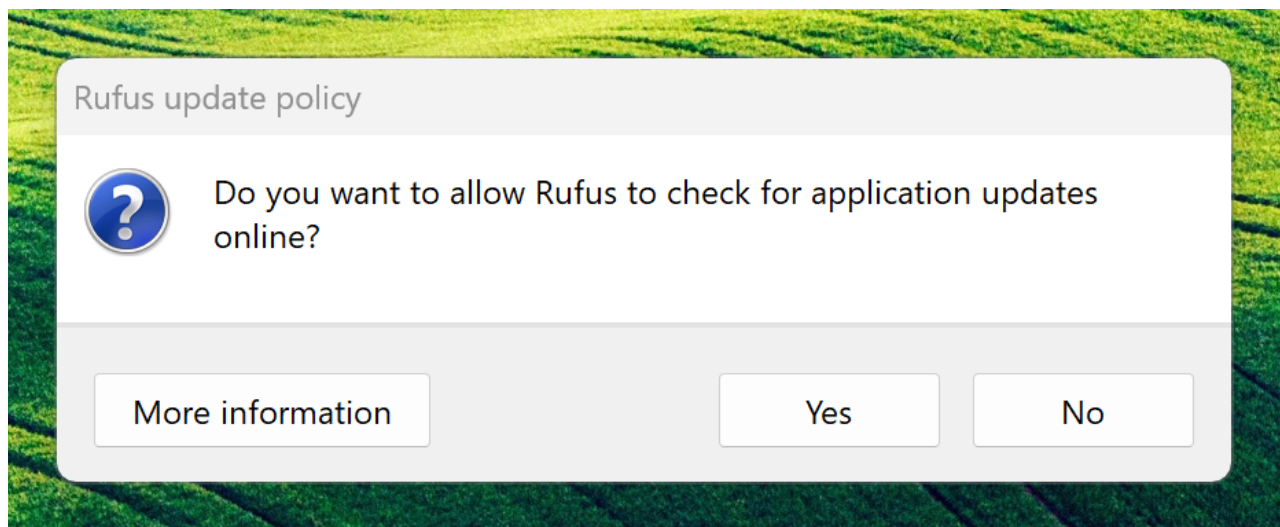
4/8 Install Tails using *Rufus*



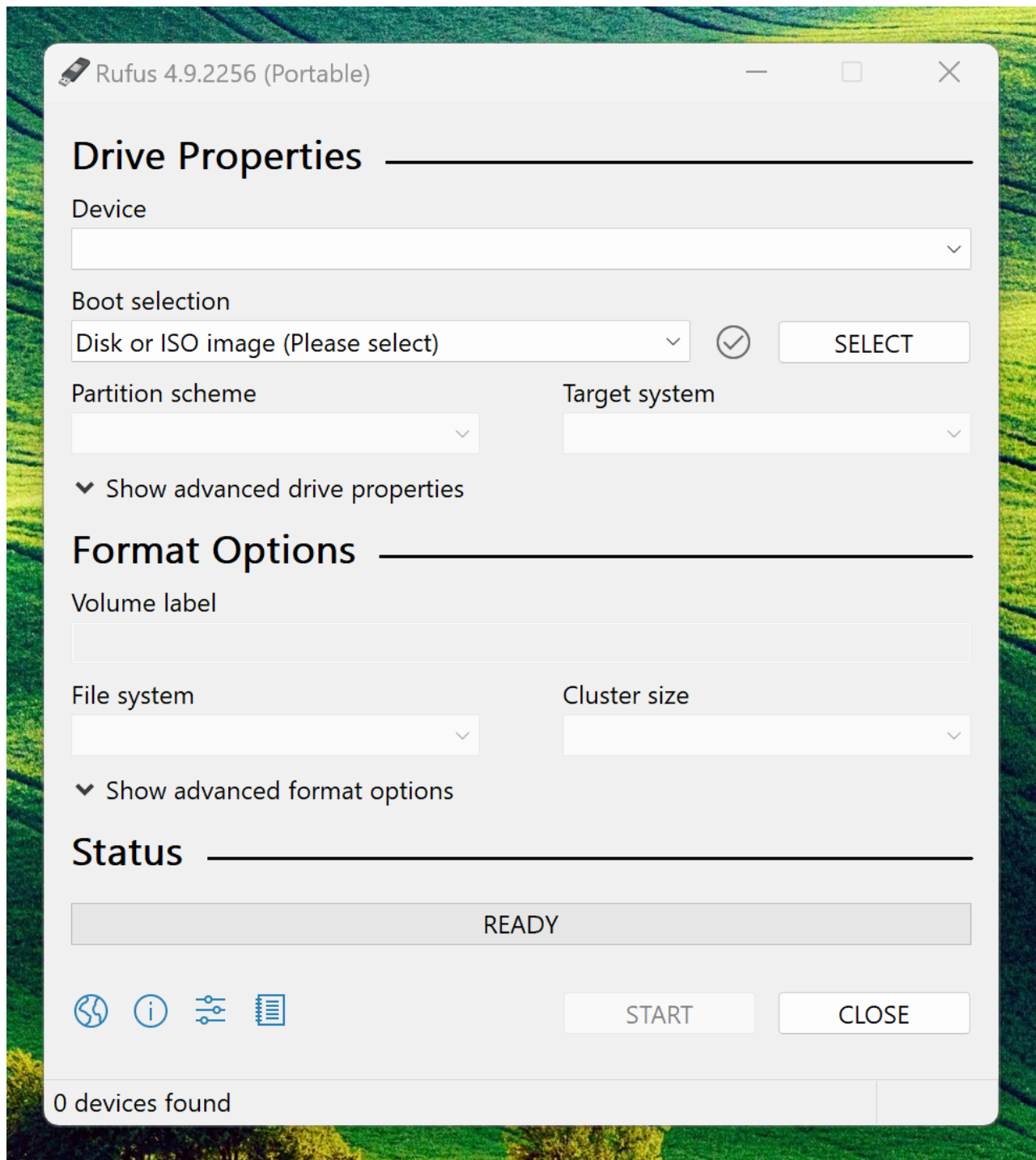
1. Open the *Rufus* download.

At the security warning, confirm that you want to open *Rufus*.

2. In the update policy dialog, click **No**.



Rufus starts.



3. Plug in the USB stick on which you want to install Tails.

All the data on this USB stick will be lost.

Some data might still be recovered using advanced forensics tools.

Wait a few seconds until *Rufus* detects your USB stick.

4. Choose your USB stick in the **Device** menu.

If your USB stick doesn't appear in the **Device** menu, make sure that you saved *Rufus* to your usual *Downloads* folder and not to the USB stick itself.

5. Click the **Select** button.

Choose the USB image that you downloaded earlier.

Make sure that the USB image is called *tails-amd64-7.7.3.img* and has an *.img* file extension.

If the image has an *.iso* file extension, it is the wrong image. Please go back to the [download step](#).

6. Click **Start**.

Enter your password if you are asked for it.

The installation takes a few minutes.

7. Close *Rufus*.

After installing Tails, the USB stick no longer appears in the *File Explorer* app of Windows.

You can still see the USB stick in the *Settings* app. Choose **System** ▶ **Storage** ▶ **Advanced storage settings** ▶ **Disk & volumes**.

See also how to [uninstall Tails from Windows](#).



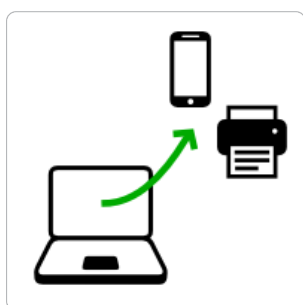
Well done!

You have installed Tails on your USB stick.

In the next step, you will make your computer start on this USB stick.

Tails might not work on your computer, so good luck!

5/8 Open these instructions on another device



In the next step, you will shut down the computer. To be able to follow the rest of the instructions afterwards, you can either:

- Scan this QR code on your smartphone or tablet:





- Print these instructions on paper.
- Take note of the URL of this page:

<https://tails.net/install/windows?back=1>

6/8 Restart on your Tails USB stick

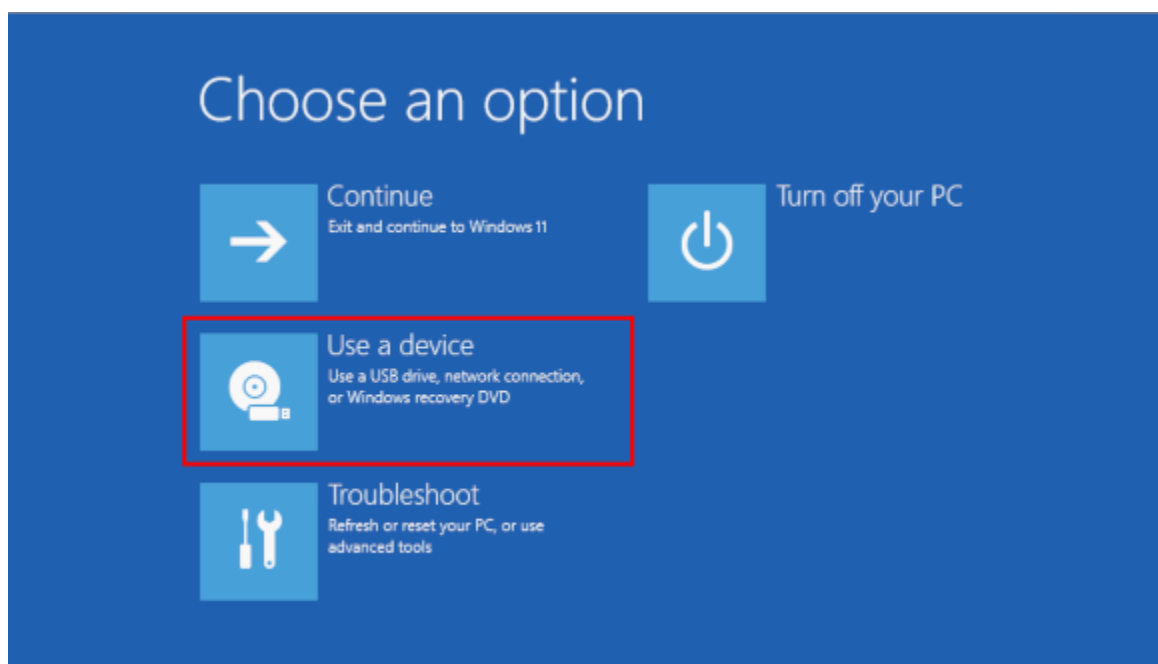


Make the computer start on the USB stick

1. Select the **Start**  button.
2. Press and hold the **Shift** key while you select the **Power**  button and then **Restart**.

Windows shuts down and restarts on the **Choose an option** screen.

3. In the **Choose an option** screen, choose **Use a device**.

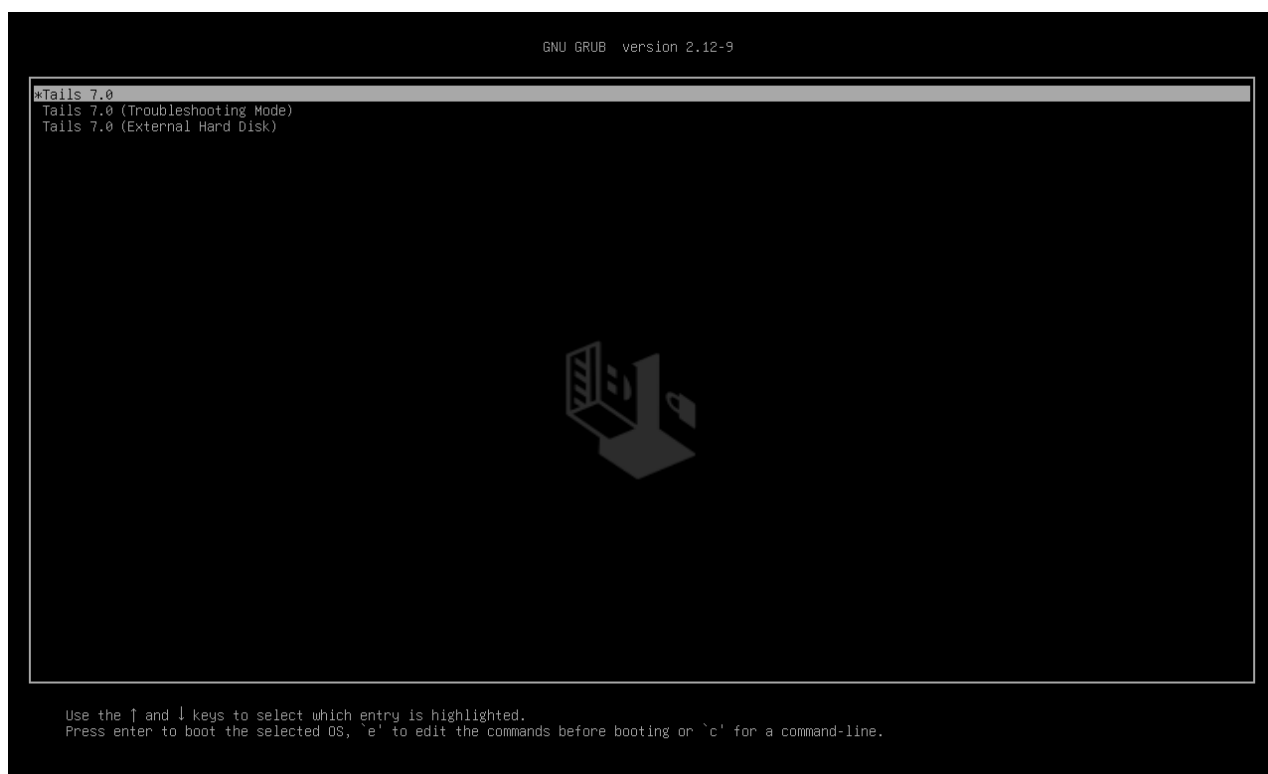


If the **Choose an option** screen or the **Use a device** option don't appear, refer to the [instructions on starting Tails using the Boot Menu key](#).

4. In the **Use a device** screen, select **USB HDD**.

Windows shuts down and the computer restarts on your Tails USB stick.

5. If the computer starts on Tails, the Boot Loader appears and Tails starts automatically after 4 seconds.



- The **Troubleshooting Mode** entry disables some features of the Linux kernel and might work better on some computers. You can try this option if you think you are experiencing hardware compatibility errors while starting Tails.
- The **External Hard Disk** entry makes it possible to [start from an external hard disk](#) and some [problematic USB sticks](#).

Troubleshoot Tails not starting

- If the computer doesn't restart on your Tails USB stick:

1. Wait 2–3 minutes and try again. Some USB sticks need some rest after installing.
 2. Try other options in the **Use a device** screen, for example **USB FDD** if available.
 3. Try all other USB ports on the computer. Some USB ports cannot be used to start from.
 4. Refer to the [instructions on starting Tails using the Boot Menu key](#).
- If the computer restarts on your Tails USB stick, but the Boot Loader doesn't appear:
 1. Make sure that you have [verified your download](#).
 2. Try to [install again](#) on the same USB stick.
 3. Try to install on a different USB stick.
 4. Try to use the same USB stick to start on a different computer.

If your computer still does not display the Boot Loader, it might currently be impossible to start Tails on your computer.

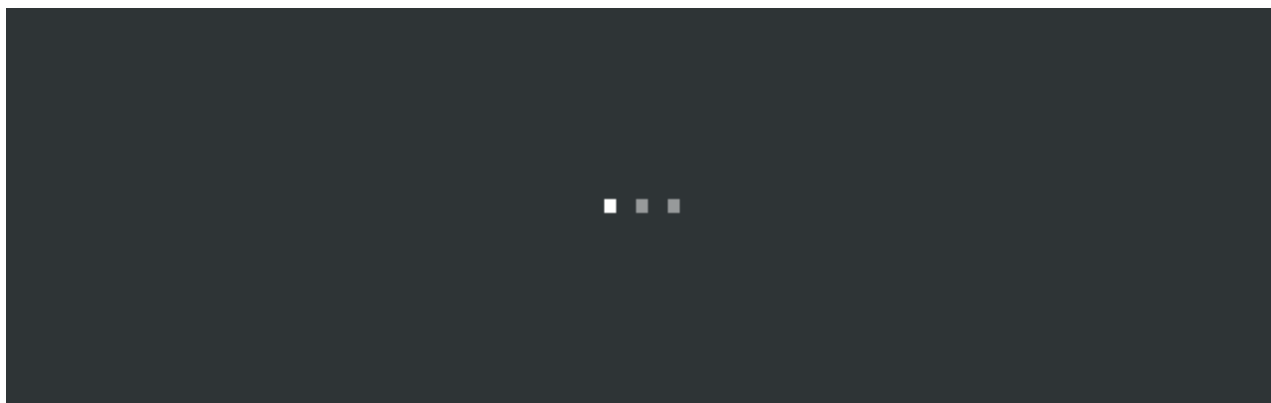
- If the Boot Loader appears, but Tails fails to start after the Boot Loader, refer to the [troubleshooting section about Tails not starting after the Boot Loader](#).

Starting the computer using a Boot Menu key can be faster than starting the computer on Windows first and then on Tails. We recommend you learn how to [start Tails using the Boot Menu key](#) if you use Tails regularly.

7/8 Welcome to Tails!



1. After the Boot Menu, a loading screen appears.

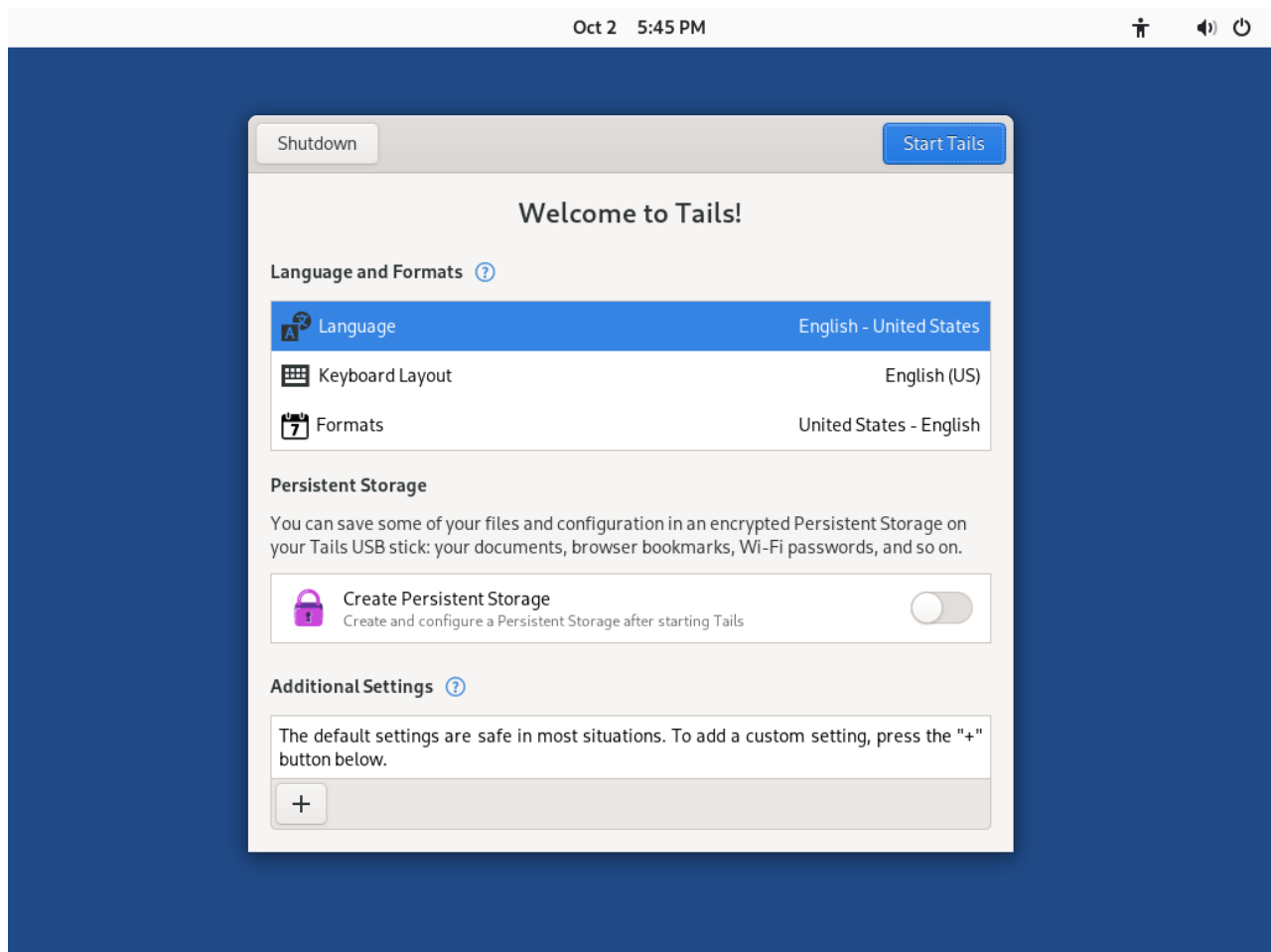


2. One to two minutes after the Boot Loader and the loading screen, the Welcome Screen appears.

If the following message about partitioning errors appears in the Welcome Screen, please start again from step 2: [Verify your download](#).

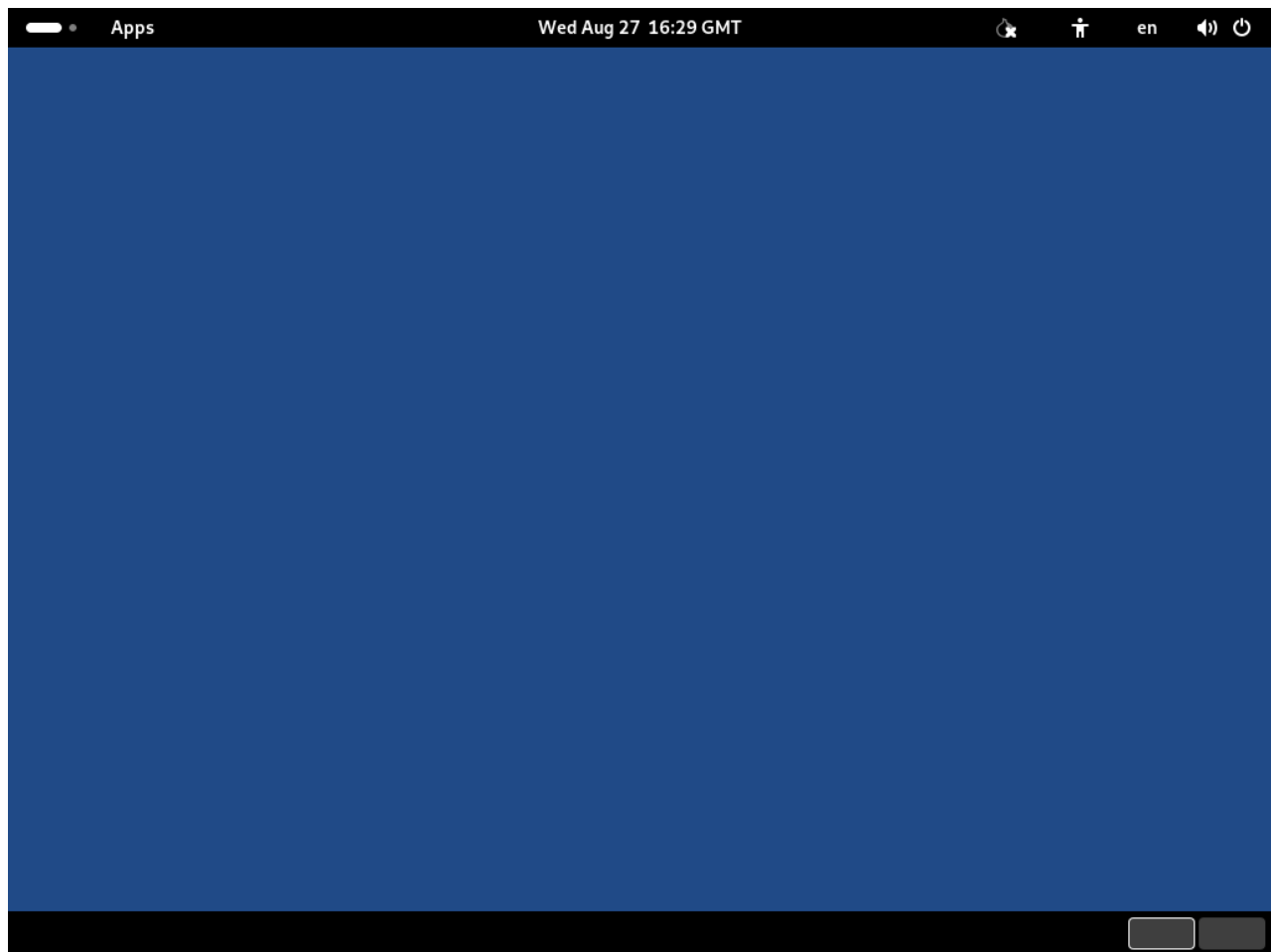
```
Errors were detected in the partitioning of your  
Tails USB stick.
```

If the error persists, reinstall Tails on one of our [recommended USB sticks](#).



3. In the Welcome Screen, select your language and keyboard layout in the **Language and Formats** section. Click **Start Tails**.

4. After 15–30 seconds, the Tails desktop appears.



You made it!

You managed to start Tails on your computer!

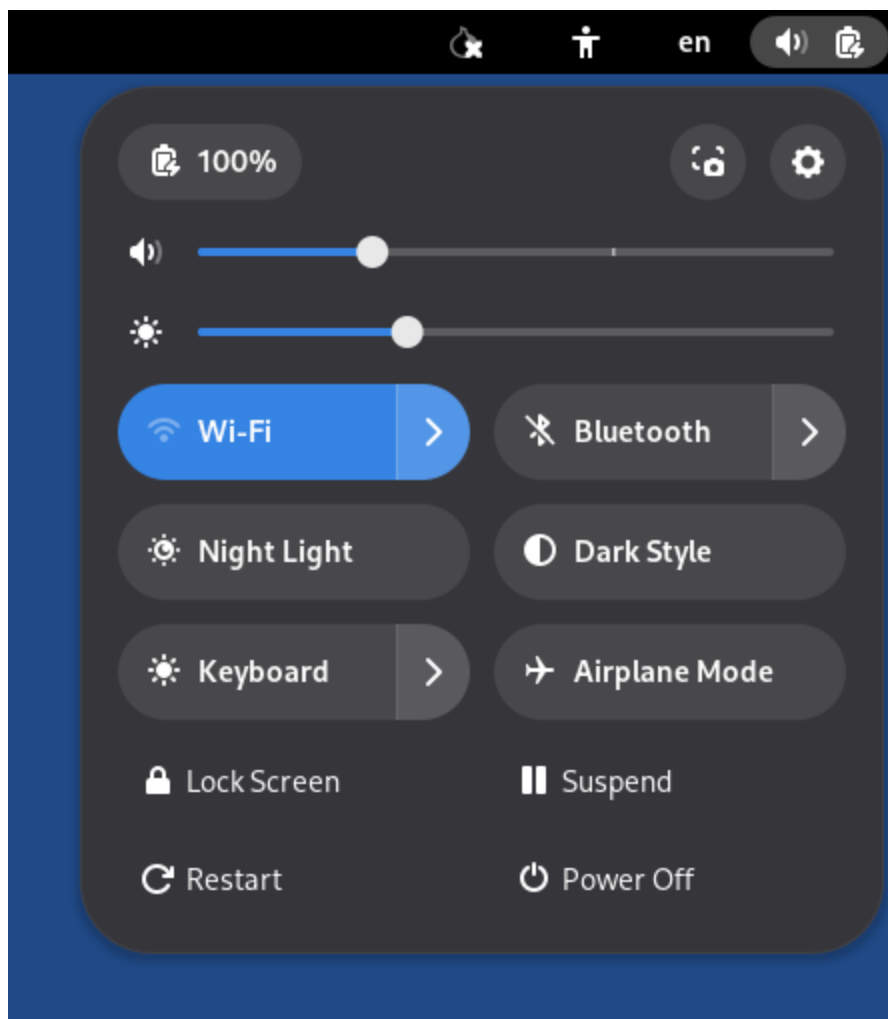
Congratulations on staying safe :)

To continue discovering Tails, read our [documentation](#).

8/8 Test your Wi-Fi

Problems with Wi-Fi are unfortunately quite common in Tails and Linux in general. To test if your Wi-Fi interface works in Tails:

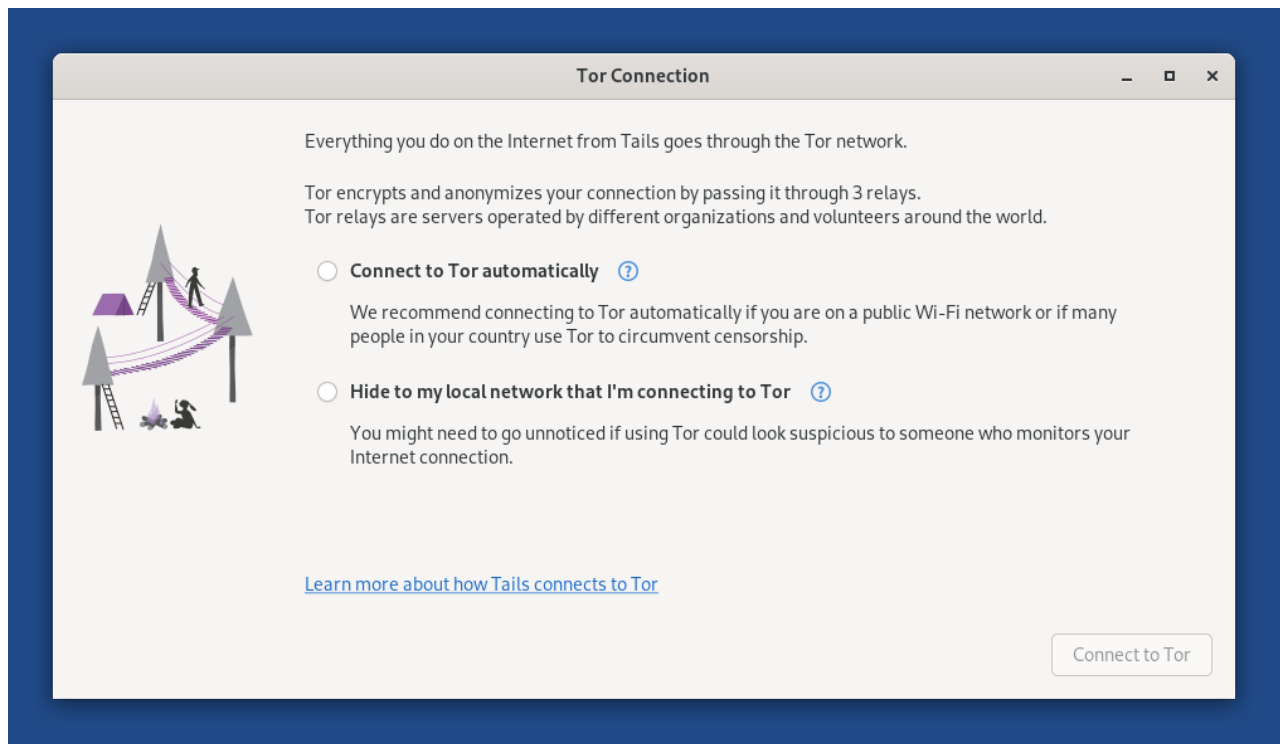
1. Open the system menu in the top-right corner:



2. Click > on the right of the **Wi-Fi** button.

A list of available Wi-Fi networks appears below the **Wi-Fi** button.

3. After establishing a connection to a local network, the *Tor Connection* assistant appears to help you connect to the Tor network.

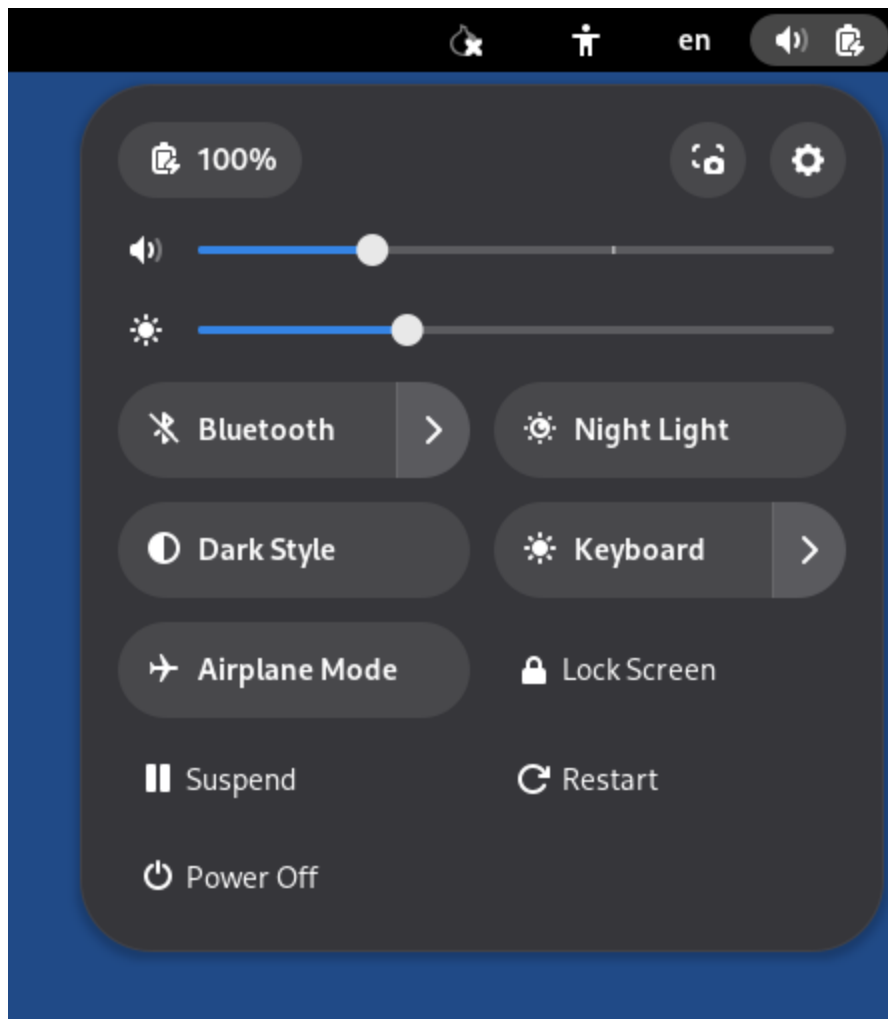


To learn more about the Tor network, go to [Connecting to the Tor network](#).

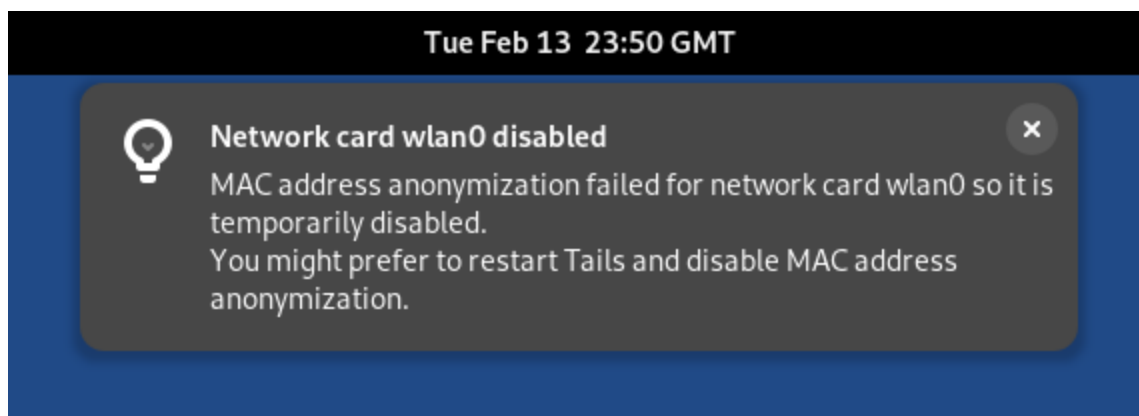
Troubleshooting Wi-Fi not working

If your Wi-Fi interface is not working, you might experience the following:

- There is no **Wi-Fi** menu in the system menu:



- There is a **Wi-Fi** menu in the system menu, but connecting to a Wi-Fi network fails.
- The interface is disabled because MAC address anonymization failed:



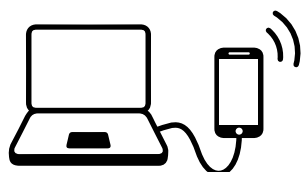
In this case, you can disable MAC address anonymization in the Welcome Screen. Doing so has security implications, so read carefully our [documentation about MAC address anonymization](#).

- The following notification appears:

Activation of network connection failed

To connect to the Internet, you can try to:

- Use an Ethernet cable instead of Wi-Fi if possible. Wired interfaces work much more reliably than Wi-Fi in Tails.
- Share the Wi-Fi or mobile data connection of your phone using a USB cable. Sharing a connection this way is called *USB tethering*.



See instructions for:

- [iPhones or iPads](#)

Only sharing mobile data works on iPhones and iPads; sharing Wi-Fi does not work.

- [Android](#)

Tails cannot hide the information that identifies your phone on the local network. If you connect your phone to a:

- **Wi-Fi network:** the network can see the MAC address of your phone.

This has security implications that we explain in our [documentation on MAC address anonymization](#). Some phones have a feature to hide the MAC address of the phone.

- **Mobile data network:** the network is able to know the identifier of your SIM card (IMSI) and the serial number of your phone (IMEI).

- Buy a USB Wi-Fi adapter that works in Tails:
 - Panda Wireless Ultra (\$25)

[Buy on Amazon](#)

- ThinkPenguin TPE-N150USB (\$64)

[Buy on ThinkPenguin](#)

- Check in our list of [known Wi-Fi issues](#) if there is a workaround to get your Wi-Fi interface to work in Tails.

English

Tails

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Tails is made by the [Tor Project](#).

