🎮 Gaming on Linux: Best Distributions for Gamers

This guide lists Linux distributions optimized or commonly used for gaming — whether you're running native Linux titles, emulating consoles, or using Proton via Steam. These distros focus on performance, compatibility, graphics support, and ease of use for gamers.

🥇 Pop!_OS

- **Website:** https://pop.system76.com/
- **Description:** Known for its excellent hardware support, especially for NVIDIA GPUs. Includes hybrid graphics support out of the box and works well with Steam and Lutris. Frequently updated and great for both gaming and development.

🥈 SteamOS (HoloISO)

- **Website:** https://github.com/theVakhovskeIsTaken/holoiso
- **Description:** A community rebuild of the Steam Deck's SteamOS 3.0 (based on Arch). Ideal for gaming-focused PCs and living room setups. Has the Steam Big Picture interface and Proton preconfigured.

🥉 Garuda Linux (Gaming Edition)

- **Website:** https://garudalinux.org/
- **Description:** A flashy, performance-optimized Arch-based distro with a dedicated gaming edition. Comes with tools like GameMode, Lutris, Steam, and pre-tuned performance

enhancements.

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4. Manjaro

- **Website:** https://manjaro.org/
- **Description:** Beginner-friendly Arch-based distro with great driver support and access to AUR. Supports Steam, Wine, Proton GE, and retro emulators. Rolling release keeps your drivers and kernel up to date.

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5. Ubuntu / Ubuntu GamePack

- **Website (Ubuntu):** https://ubuntu.com/
- **Website (GamePack):** https://ualinux.com/en/ubuntu-gamepack
- **Description:** Ubuntu has widespread compatibility and a massive community. GamePack is a special version with pre-installed game platforms like Steam, Wine, PlayOnLinux, Lutris, and over 85 game launchers.

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6. Fedora Games Spin

- **Website:** https://spins.fedoraproject.org/games/
- **Description:** A Fedora spin packed with hundreds of open-source games pre-installed. Great for exploring native Linux gaming and retro titles.

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7. Batocera.linux *(Bonus: Retro Gaming Console)*

- **Website:** https://batocera.org/
- **Description:** A plug-and-play Linux distro focused entirely on retro console emulation. Turns a PC, Raspberry Pi, or other SBC into a retro gaming machine. Perfect for arcade cabinets or living room gaming setups.

□□ Key Tools & Technologies for Gaming on Linux

- **Proton (via Steam Play):** Runs many Windows games natively on Linux.
- **Lutris:** Game launcher that manages Wine, emulators, and native games.
- **GameMode:** Optimizes system performance while gaming.
- **Wine & DXVK:** Enables running Windows games and applications.
- **MangoHUD:** On-screen performance overlay (FPS, temps, etc.).

□□ Summary

These distros are ideal for:

- PC gaming via Steam, Lutris, or native Linux ports
- Retro console emulation
- Living room or handheld gaming setups
- Gamers who want control without sacrificing performance

Revision #1
Created 13 May 2025 22:23:31 by Nate Nash
Updated 4 June 2025 00:31:42 by Nate Nash