

Check Debian Version

This guide explains several ways to check your Debian version from the command line.

Quick Reference

Method	Command
Recommended	cat /etc/os-release
Version number only	cat /etc/debian_version
Distribution summary	lsb_release -a
Hostname and OS info	hostnamectl
Kernel version	uname -r

lsb_release

The lsb_release command displays Linux Standard Base (LSB) information about the distribution. It is a clean way to print release details when the package is installed. To display full release information:

X86	Raspberry
<pre># lsb_release -a ----- No LSB modules are available. Distributor ID: Debian Description: Debian GNU/Linux 12 (bookworm) Release: 12 Codename: bookworm</pre>	<pre># lsb_release -a ----- No LSB modules are available. Distributor ID: Raspbian Description: Raspbian GNU/Linux 12 (bookworm) Release: 12 Codename: bookworm</pre>

/etc/debian_version

The /etc/debian_version file contains the Debian version number as a simple string. This file is always present on Debian systems and does not require any additional packages. The output shows the installed Debian point release.

```
# cat /etc/debian_version
-----
12.15
```

/etc/os-release

The /etc/os-release file contains operating system identification data in a key-value format:

```
# cat /etc/os-release
```

```
-----
PRETTY_NAME="Debian GNU/Linux 12 (bookworm)"
NAME="Debian GNU/Linux"
VERSION_ID="12"
VERSION="12 (bookworm)"
VERSION_CODENAME=bookworm
ID=debian
HOME_URL="https://www.debian.org/"
SUPPORT_URL="https://www.debian.org/support"
BUG_REPORT_URL="https://bugs.debian.org/"
```

hostnamectl

The `hostnamectl` command displays the hostname and other system information, including the operating system version. The Debian version is shown on the “Operating System” line.

```
# hostnamectl
-----
Static hostname: pcwerkkamer
    Icon name: computer-desktop
    Chassis: desktop 
    Machine ID: 006d83905710476d87e31bb1d873c52f
    Boot ID: 863769c34bfc4c14ae25cab5a5acd495
Operating System: Debian GNU/Linux 12 (bookworm)
    Kernel: Linux 6.1.0-52-amd64
    Architecture: x86-64
    Hardware Vendor: Gigabyte Technology Co., Ltd.
    Hardware Model: Z77MX-D3H
Firmware Version: F17b
```

uname

The `uname` command does not show the Debian version directly, but it displays the kernel version, which can help identify the release.

```
# uname -r
-----
6.1.0-52-amd64

# uname -a
-----
Linux pcwerkkamer 6.1.0-52-amd64 #1 SMP PREEMPT_DYNAMIC Debian 6.1.180-1
(2026-08-03) x86_64 GNU/Linux
```

Debian Releases and Codenames

Debian codenames come from characters in the Toy Story movies, and each release keeps its codename for life. The table below lists recent releases and how long each one receives security support:

Version	Codename	Released	Status
Debian 14	forky	Not yet released	Current testing
Debian 13	trixie	August 2025	Current stable (13.6)
Debian 12	bookworm	June 2023	Oldstable, LTS until June 2028
Debian 11	bullseye	August 2021	LTS ends 31 August 2026
Debian 10	buster	July 2019	LTS ended, ELTS until June 2029
Debian 9	stretch	June 2017	LTS ended, ELTS until June 2027
Debian 8	jessie	April 2015	End of life

Each release gets roughly three years of regular security support, after which the LTS team takes over for about two more years.

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