

What is nixpkgs?

You'll often run across the name 'nixpkgs' in this documentation. Nix itself is really just the package manager and build tool - it doesn't come with any software packages, and expects the user to point it at some sort of 'package set'.

That's where nixpkgs comes in - it's the officially maintained package set for Nix, and it's what almost every Nix user uses. It contains a [wide selection of software](#) - comparable to what you might find in most Linux distributions, and often even exceeding them - as well as all the bits and pieces for [NixOS](#).

You're not limited to using nixpkgs, of course. It's just selected as a default when you install Nix, and you're free to add other package sets, or write an 'overlay' that extends nixpkgs with additional packages. For example, Mozilla maintains [a nixpkgs overlay](#) for their Rust and Firefox projects; and many users maintain Flakes, which can provide their own package sets.

If you're in a more experimental mood, you could even totally remove nixpkgs, and write your own package set from scratch. This is something that most users won't want (or need) to do, though.

Revision #2

Created 11 December 2024 19:12:24 by joepie91

Updated 11 December 2024 19:21:06 by joepie91