

How to use Darktable, a free tool to replace Adobe Lightroom

RAW files are not like other images. You need some programs to open them. One of them is software called Darktable.

When taking a photo, there is an advice you may have heard: Take it in RAW format. If you do so, you will quickly discover that RAW files are not the same as other images. You need some programs to open them. One of them is software called Darktable.

Adobe Lightroom is the most popular application for RAW image processing, but there are many reasons to choose an alternative. Darktable is a free, open source option that can replace Lightroom.

Adobe Lightroom is the most popular application for RAW image processing, you can buy Lightroom at US\$9.99/month, but there are many reasons to choose an alternative.

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What is Darktable?



Darktable is a program for viewing and editing RAW image files. RAW files are photos that have not undergone any processing. Unlike JPG, RAW is not compressed. You cannot even send them to anyone and expect them to be viewable.

One main reason for using RAW and Darktable instead of JPEG and GIMP is because you can make edits without permanently changing the original file. This is called non-destructive editing.

Darktable has two main workspaces: **Lighttable** and **Darkroom**.

How to use Lighttable

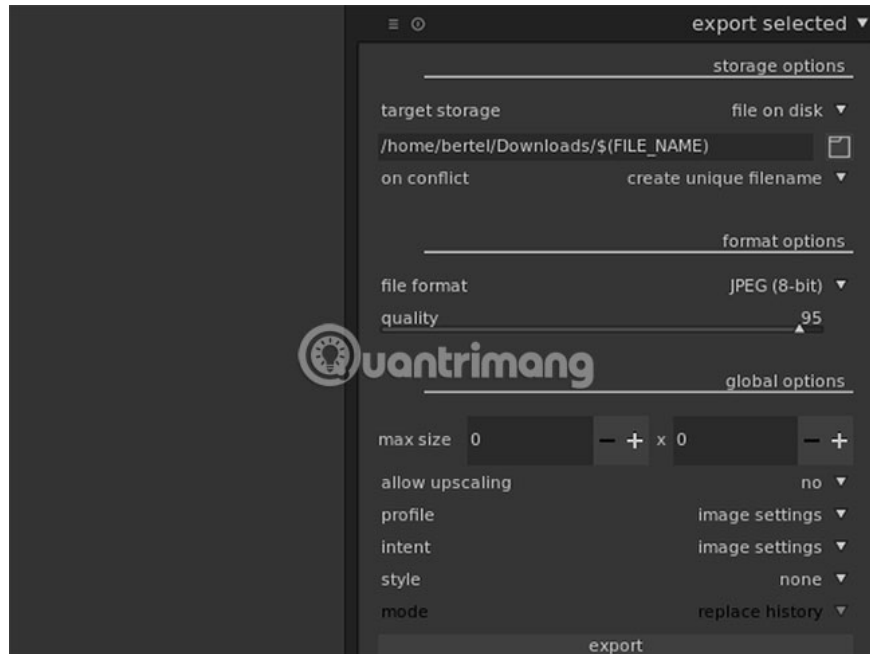


Lighttable is where you can export images, edit metadata and apply tags. This is also where you handle naming and organizing your images.

You can import images using the control panel on the left side of the screen. Just take photos from the camera and organize them into the gallery. You can also view detailed information about each photo.

Below is an overview of some of the core tasks in Lighttable.

How to export the file in Darktable



The most important option is to export RAW images to a format that you can share. To do this, select **Export Selected**. Many options will appear, asking how you want to name your file, where you want to save the file and in what format.

Even if you don't make edits, Darktable is still worth using for the purpose of converting RAW files into JPGs that you can send to family members or upload to the web.

How to edit metadata

If you share your photos, you may want to specify who took each picture. This is especially important if you are promoting photography from hobby to work.

The **Metadata Editor** section gives you the space to provide a title and describe what happens in each image. You can add the person who took the picture, who has published which photos and licenses are available in the photo.

Removing metadata from photos is important to protecting your privacy, so this is how to remove metadata from your photos before sharing them online.

How to add tags to photos

The card is useful for internal organization of files, to distinguish which images you have edited and which images are not, or perhaps you want to separate photos of your profile from landscape photography.

You can add tags by clicking on the **Tagging** section . Several cards are available. You can create your own tags or enter what you created in another installation of Darktable. From here, you can tag the selected image.

How to add geotags to photos

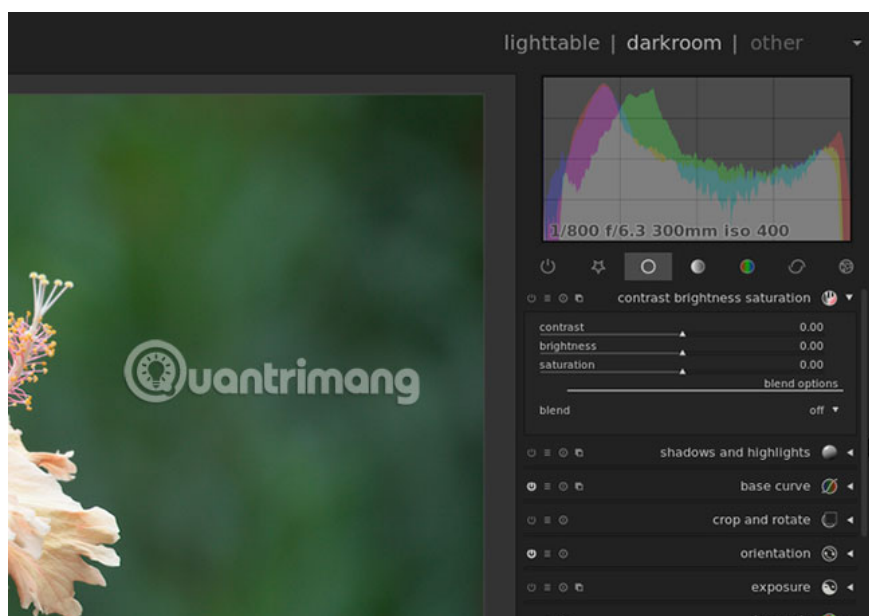
When you travel somewhere, places may look quite similar and make you confused. So, mark the geographical location where an image was taken.

If this sounds appealing to you, go to the **Geotagging** section to add GPX tracking files to your photos.

How to use Darkroom

Darkroom is the image manipulation part of the application. Here, you can work on images to create the final finished product.

How to make edits



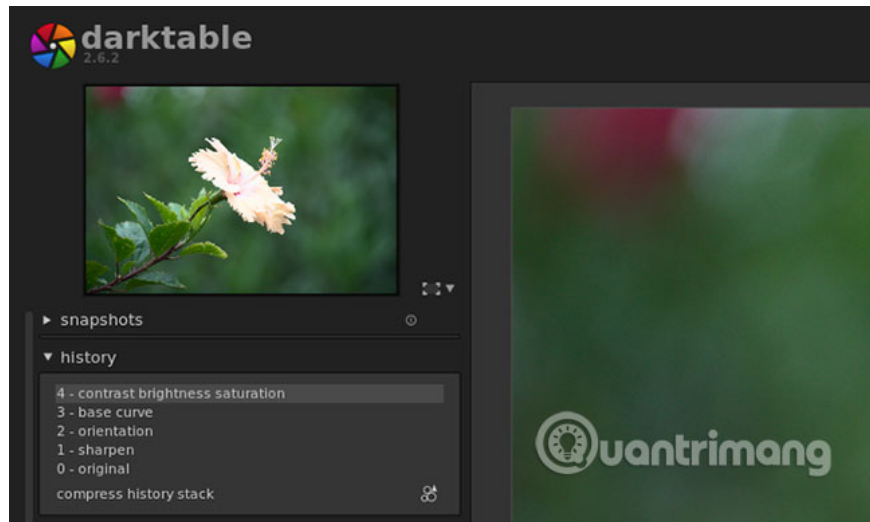
On the right-hand side, you can perform touch operations to improve imperfections, such as sharpening blurry images, adjusting white balance and cutting off excess elements accidentally. into the frame.

Or you can use your imagination to blow new life into a shot. Adjust the contrast to make the subject stand out, experiment with the color part and adjust the brightness. Then add effects.

Darktable organizes all these tasks into modules. Some are displayed by default and sorted into sections, such as **Favorites, Basic, Tone, Color, Correction** and **Effects** .

Many modules are listed in **More Modules**. Clicking on a module will automatically add it to the aforementioned sections. Click the module again to remove it. This allows you to make the features you often use easily access and hide features you don't use. It keeps the application from clutter and forces you to dig into menus to perform any task.

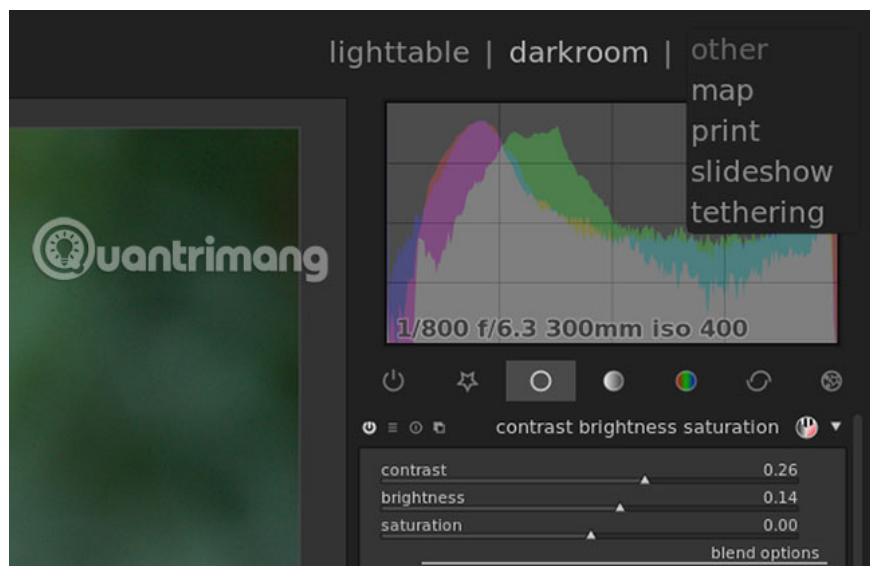
How to track editing operations



On the left, you can see the timeline of the changes made on the current image. When you click on the **History** section, you might be surprised to see that Darktable has automatically applied some adjustments to your images. You can undo them by returning to the original. When you work, you also have the option to create your own snapshots.

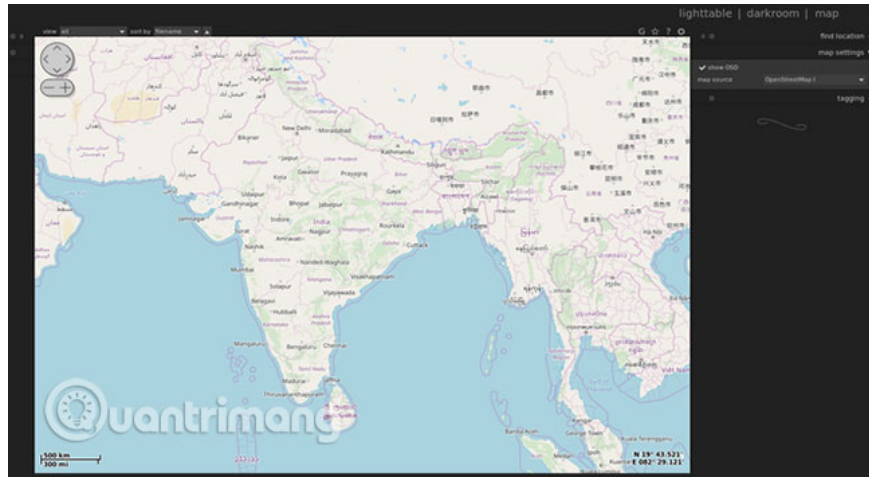
Several tasks from the Lighttable workspace are also available here, such as **Tagging** and **Image Information**.

Other features in Darktable



Now that you have finished editing the image and exported your file, you can click on **Other** and find a few more ways to present your work, etc.

Use Darktable's Map feature



This section shows the location of your geotagged photos on the map. You can add map sources from different websites. **OpenStreetMap** is the default, but **Google Maps** is also an option.

Use Darktable's Print feature

Print gives you the tools to print your images. Choose your printer, set the paper size, configure color, etc. Darktable provides a live preview, so you can see how your photos appear on the page.

Use the Slideshow feature of Darktable

You do not need to download another application to present your photos in the Slideshow. Darktable also has the function to do this. But don't expect more options. This feature is quite basic.

Use the Tethering feature of Darktable

Tethering allows you to connect directly to the camera and use Darktable as a viewfinder to take photos. Darktable uses **gphoto2** library to manage the connection, this is something to note if you have a problem or need to check if your camera is supported.

Should you use Darktable?

Darktable is a great application, not only because it is available for free. Many open source applications provide a large number of functions but come with the interface that many users are not really satisfied with.

Unlike some other applications, Darktable is a tool developed by photographers for those who are intellectually oriented. You can adjust the interface according to your workflow and be ready to perform your tasks.

This is not the only open source and free tool for photographers. Although Darktable is one of the best free RAW editors, there are many free apps for managing and editing your photos. Refer to the following articles for more details:

1. Photo editing software for Lightroom alternative
2. Alternative graphic editing software for Illustrator
3. The best free Photoshop replacement software

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