Open Source Firewall Decision Guide

Do you need a GUI-based firewall?

- **Yes** → Go to ■
- **No, CLI/scriptable is fine** → Go to ■

Do you want a FreeBSD-based firewall with a strong community?

- **Yes** → Go to ■
- **No, prefer Linux-based** → Go to ■

OPNSense or pfSense?

Option	Why Choose It?
■ OPNSense	Frequent updates, modern UI, plugin system, no vendor lock-in
▲ pfSense+	Official support and stable, but tied to Netgate hardware and requires login
! pfSense CE	Community edition, slower updates, may miss new features

Linux-based firewall with GUI?

Firewall	Highlights
🛡 IPFire	Netfilter-based, includes IDS/IPS, web proxy, QoS
⬡ Zentyal	Ubuntu-based, SMB-friendly, includes Samba/AD features
🐋 Firezone	Modern, WireGuard VPN with minimal web UI, Docker/container-friendly
🛠 Untangle	GUI-focused UTM, free core edition, marketplace for add-ons

Need UTM (Unified Threat Management) capabilities?

If **yes**, consider:

- **OPNSense** (via plugins: IDS/IPS, AV proxy, Sensei/Zenarmor, etc.)
- **IPFire** (built-in Snort, Guardian, ClamAV)
- **ClearOS** (app store model, SMB-centric)

CLI-Only, Scriptable Firewalls

Tool	Use Case
🔧 nftables	Native Linux firewall, powerful and flexible
🧩 Shorewall	High-level abstraction for iptables/nftables via config files
🚀 Cilium	eBPF-based, Kubernetes-native, advanced container networking

Summary Table

Name	Base OS	GUI	Notable Features	License
OPNSense	FreeBSD	■	Modern UI, plugins, active community	BSD
pfSense CE	FreeBSD	■	Stable, mature, slower updates	Apache
IPFire	Linux	■	IDS/IPS, proxy, VPN, logs, QoS	GPLv3
Firezone	Linux	■	Easy WireGuard VPN + web UI	Apache 2.0
Untangle	Linux	■	UTM focus, free core edition	Mixed (free/paid)
ClearOS	CentOS	■	App-based, SMB-targeted	GPL + Commercial
Zentyal	Ubuntu	■	SMB focus, includes AD/Samba integration	GPL
Shorewall	Linux	✖	Config-file based abstraction over iptables	GPL
Cilium	Linux	✖	Kubernetes-native, eBPF-based firewall	Apache 2.0

Recommendations

- For **general-purpose firewalls with GUI**:
  → **OPNSense** is the top open choice today.

- For **Linux fans needing deep UTM features**:
  → **IPFire** or **Untangle (Core)**.

- For **container-native or minimalist VPN setups**:
  → **Firezone** or **Cilium** (advanced).

- For **enterprise/Samba/AD-integration needs**:
  → **Zentyal** or **ClearOS**.