Sharp MZ-800

The Sharp MZ-800 is a home computer manufactured by Sharp, released in 1984. It was primarily marketed in Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom, with a particularly strong following in Central Europe (especially Czechoslovakia). It is the successor to the MZ-700 and represents a significant upgrade in graphics and sound capabilities.

The MZ-800 features a Z80A CPU at 3.55 MHz, 64 KB RAM, 16 KB VRAM (expandable), and a Texas Instruments SN76489-compatible sound chip providing 3 tone channels + 1 noise channel. Graphics modes include 320×200 at 4 colors and 640×200 monochrome with standard VRAM, or up to 320×200 at 16 colors / 640×200 at 4 colors with expanded VRAM. Text modes support 40×25 and 80×25 characters. The system includes two ATARI-compatible joystick ports.

Like all MZ series computers, the MZ-800 follows the **“clean computer” philosophy** — only a minimal monitor program in ROM. BASIC and other languages must be loaded from cassette or disk. The machine also runs **P-CP/M** (Sharp's customized CP/M 2.2).

Model variants:

- **MZ-811** — base unit, no tape drive
- **MZ-821** — with built-in 1200-baud cassette tape drive
- **MZ-831** — with tape drive and built-in 4-color printer/plotter

European models could substitute the tape drive for a **2.8-inch Quick Disk drive**. The MZ-800 is **backwards compatible with the MZ-700** via a hardware/software compatibility switch, giving access to the entire MZ-700 software library.

The **MZ-1500** (1984, Japan only) is a related but distinctly different machine — it has two SN76489 sound chips, 320×200 graphics only, and built-in Quick Disk. It is NOT a Japanese version of the MZ-800.

This system scrapes metadata for the “mz800” group(s) and loads the `mz800` set from the currently selected theme, if available.

Quick reference

- **Emulator:** MAME, RetroArch
- **Core:** MAME, libretro: MAME
- **Folder:** `/userdata/roms/mz800`
- **Accepted ROM formats:** `.mzf`, `.mzt`, `.m12`, `.wav`, `.zip`, `.7z`

BIOS

MD5 checksum	Share file path	Description
	`bios/mz800.zip → mz800.rom`	MZ-800 system ROM

The `mz800.zip` BIOS file must match the version of MAME used in your version of Batocera. You can verify your BIOS files from the Batocera menu: **GAME SETTINGS > MISSING BIOS CHECK**.

ROMs

Place your Sharp MZ-800 ROMs in `/userdata/roms/mz800`.

Software was distributed on cassette tapes and floppy disks. The most common ROM formats are `.mzf` and `.mzt` (MZ tape images). Using MAME's software list mode is recommended for best compatibility.

Emulators

MAME

MAME (Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator) is the primary emulator for the MZ-800 in Batocera.

RetroArch

RetroArch (formerly SSNES), is a ubiquitous frontend that can run multiple “cores”, which are essentially the emulators themselves. The most common cores use the libretro API, so that's why cores run in RetroArch in Batocera are referred to as “libretro: (core name)”. RetroArch aims to unify the feature set of all libretro cores and offer a universal, familiar interface independent of platform.

RetroArch configuration

RetroArch offers a **Quick Menu** accessed by pressing `[HOTKEY]` +  which can be used to alter various things like RetroArch and core options, and controller mapping. Most RetroArch related settings can be altered from Batocera's EmulationStation.

libretro: MAME

The libretro version of MAME can be used to emulate the MZ-800. It uses the same BIOS and ROM sets as the standalone version.

Controls

The Sharp MZ-800 is a computer system that uses a **keyboard** for input. It also has two **ATARI-compatible joystick ports**. A physical USB keyboard is strongly recommended.

See also

- Sharp MZ-80K — the original MZ series computer (1978)
- Sharp MZ-700 — predecessor, backwards compatible (1982)
- Sharp MZ-2000 — business-oriented MZ (1982)
- Sharp MZ-2500 — the most powerful 8-bit MZ, “Super MZ” (1985)

Troubleshooting

Black screen on boot

Make sure the BIOS file (`mz800.zip`) is in `/userdata/bios/` and matches the MAME version. Use **GAME SETTINGS > MISSING BIOS CHECK** to verify.

MZ-700 software won't run

The MZ-800 has a compatibility mode for MZ-700 software. Make sure the correct mode is selected in MAME's machine options.

Further troubleshooting

For further troubleshooting, refer to the generic support pages.

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