



7 tips and tricks for using your mobile phone Overseas

We've all heard horror stories about people travelling overseas and coming back to find they have unknowingly run up thousands of dollars in bills thanks to their mobile phone. And we've all thought to ourselves after booking a flight abroad: can I use my mobile phone overseas?

Well, the short answer is, yes you can!

1. Buy a pre-paid SIM in Australia

If you're doing a bit of a tour, and visiting more than one country, say, France and Italy, then buying a pre-paid SIM before you leave might be the answer. This is for travellers who definitely want to make calls and receive texts on their mobile overseas. So a couple of weeks before you hop aboard your flight, purchase a TravelSIM from a participating post office. Your phone needs to be unlocked to use any of these SIM cards – visit your mobile provider for details.

2. Buy a local SIM at your destination

This is probably one of the best ways to use your mobile overseas especially if you're visiting just one country, such as the United Kingdom. You won't be subject to the dreaded hidden roaming fees, and you can choose between pay-as-you-go options, or a flat rate for a set period of time. You can also usually buy SIM cards at airports, supermarkets, and the odd corner store, making it handy for anyone who isn't big on forward planning.

However, if you do travel to another country e.g. from the UK to France, you won't be able to use that SIM card without turning on global roaming. The other slight hang-up is that if you choose to use a local SIM, you will have a new phone number and you could find yourself having to text and call people to let them know your number once you're abroad (though luckily, if they have apps like Whatsapp, this shouldn't be a problem). Again, your phone needs to be unlocked for this option.

3. Buy a local SIM before leaving home

Sorting out how to use your mobile overseas before you even leave Australia can really set your mind at ease, and it will give you some time to be picky with which carrier and plan you go with. Check out the Aussie owned and operated travelgear.com.au, as you can order local SIM cards from a range of different countries. The SIM will be with you in a few days and you can hand your number out before you go. Receiving calls from home is usually free-of-charge, but check the small print.

4. Use Wi-Fi

Looking for the cheapest way to use your mobile phone overseas? Forego all pre-paid and pay-as-you-go SIMS and simply turn off global roaming and your mobile data when you're abroad and go to free Wi-Fi hotspots! Cafes, restaurants, airports and public train stations generally offer free Wi-Fi.

You can communicate via Facebook, or use apps such as iMessage or WhatsApp, and Skype. iMessage is great for texting if both parties have an Apple device, but WhatsApp is cross-platform and you can call and messaging. Skype is also a cross-platform App that provides face-to-face calling.

5. Download information while connected to WiFi and turn off your non-essential apps

If your phone is locked into a contract, and you know you're going to need to make the odd call or use global roaming data then we suggest you download everything you need either before you leave, or when connected to WiFi. Doing simple things like this will make using your mobile overseas a lot easier (and cheaper). You'll find that an app like Google Maps is essential when travelling, but a top tip is that you can pin desired locations on the map while you're online, and these will remain in place and provide a great compass when you're offline. And importantly, when you aren't connected to WiFi, turn off automatic updates, don't use non-essential apps, and turn off your mobile data and international roaming when you're not using them.

6. Roaming Plans

If you are going to be using your cell phone internationally frequently, it might be worth investigating roaming plans with your mobile provider. Telstra, Optus & Vodafone offer roaming plans that allow you to check emails and surf the web when you are overseas. Details for Telstra's plan can be viewed at <https://www.telstra.com.au/international-roaming>. Details for Optus' plan can be viewed at <http://www.optus.com.au/shop/Mobile-Site/Promotions/Travel-Packs>. Details for Vodafone's plan can be viewed at <https://www.vodafone.com.au/plans/international-roaming>. Ensure you consult your provider for further details. The additional charge is per day, so can be an expensive option if you are travelling for a lengthy time and are using your phone daily.

7. Go without

Technology consumes our World, so to have a break from it every now and then might be nice. If you travel without a functioning device and did need to communicate, then some hotels/accommodations may have an IT area where you can access a computer. However, this is becoming less as it is more of an expectation these days that people will have their own device. Travelling without a device or form of contact at all is perhaps not the most

Happy
Travels!



reliable option.