

Guide to using an iPhone abroad



Roaming with an iPhone:

One of the most expensive things you will ever do is take your iPhone abroad and continue to use it as if you were in Ireland. Roaming (using your phone abroad) can build up a huge bill as your iPhone will continue to try to pick up emails and do so at exorbitant rates offered by international mobile operators.

The key to avoid this is to differentiate between the ways in which your iPhone connects to the internet to pick up your email or provide you with other web content:

1/ **WiFi:** this is the fastest and cheapest method. If you have joined a local WiFi network, this will be the preferred method for the iPhone to pick up email. You know when you are connected to a WiFi network as the symbol at the top of the iPhone screen changes to one of these icons:



- icon on Home screen, indicating that WiFi is available



- icon when using an application indicating that WiFi is in use

Once you are successfully connected to a WiFi network and you remain within range of its signal, the iPhone will choose to use this connection instead of the mobile signal (3G or EDGE). Once you walk away and go out of range, the iPhone will switch back to using your mobile data signal.

2/ **Mobile data signals:** this will either be an EDGE or GPRS signal (for original iPhone users) or 3G (for users with an iPhone 3G handset). Here are the symbols you will see on your screen when the iPhone uses EDGE or 3G. EDGE is slightly faster than GPRS and is more common in the US. 3G is the fastest of the three, but only available on the newer iPhone 3G.

Inactive	Active	Description
A black square with a white circle in the center.	A blue circle with a white dot in the center.	symbol on screen, indicating that the mobile carrier's GPRS network is available White- available but not in use; blue- available and in use.
A black square with a white 'E' in the center.	A blue 'E' in the center.	symbol on screen, indicating that the mobile carrier's EDGE network is available. White- available but not in use; blue- available and in use.
A black square with a white '3G' in the center.	A blue '3G' in the center.	symbol on screen, indicating that the mobile carrier's 3G network is available. White- available but not in use; blue- available and in use.

Don't let the table above baffle you- all of these symbols represent connections to the local mobile operators data network and all involve charges. If the symbol on your phone is any of the above and has turned blue, then you are connected. Therefore when this happens when you are abroad, you are being charged! When you use this connection at home, you are using part of your data package which is part of the iPhone price plan.

What can I do to avoid data charges when abroad?:

On the following pages we take you through the set-up required, and a quick bit of preparation work you can do before you leave.

What to do before you go:

The first thing to do is ensure that you set up your phone before your step on the plane. If you switch a couple of settings off, it will mean that you can use your phone when abroad for calls and WiFi, but data roaming will be disabled.

STEP 1: On the iPhone, go to Settings -> General -> Network

Here is how you should set up your iPhone...

Original iPhone



iPhone 3G



The key part here is to ensure that Data Roaming is turned off, and that 3G is turned off on iPhone 3G handsets.

STEP 2: for original iPhone users: for extra security and peace-of-mind, original iPhone owners should do the following. Tap on "Cellular Data Network" and from this screen, write down the three settings beside APN, username and password. Then delete all three and leave this screen blank. This way, if data roaming was accidentally turned back on, the connection settings have been removed and so a connection will fail.

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Having followed the steps above, you should now be safe to go abroad, free from building up roaming data charges. You will still be charged heavily for making voice calls or listening to voice mail when abroad, as with any mobile phone, but all mobile data internet connections on the iPhone have been disabled.

But how do I pick up my email or use the web cheaply when abroad?:

The key to this part is to use WiFi instead of data roaming. Having disabled roaming on the last page, we can now focus on using a WiFi network.

3 things to consider:

1/ does your hotel have WiFi for its guests?

2/ if they do, is it free or is it charged?

3/ if they do have WiFi available, do you need a password to connect to their network?

Once you know how their WiFi service operates, here is how to connect and test it out:

1/ on the iPhone, go to Settings -> WiFi

2/ make sure WiFi is set to "ON"

3/ in the "Choose a Network..." list, you should see the name of the network you are trying to join.

If the network has a padlock symbol beside its name (as in the picture to the right) then it requires a password and you will need to ask the hotel reception for this.

If there is no padlock symbol, or you already have the password required, tap on the name of the network to join it. If you need a password you will be asked to enter it at this point (see below).



4/ you should now be connected to the WiFi network, and any internet enabled application on your phone (Safari, Mail, Maps etc) will try to use the WiFi signal to connect to the internet.



However.....

Evil Hotels (!):

Many hotels, pubs and cafés have WiFi, but there is one more sneaky step added on to WiFi use. They will allow you to connect to their WiFi without a password, and you may think you are in luck and now have access to the web, but they now want you to pay for this connection.

Therefore, having followed the steps on the last page, open Safari on your phone and try to load a standard web page such as www.apple.com:

- If this works correctly and Apple.com loads up, then you are in luck and you can go ahead and use your iPhone to receive mail or browse pages.
- If instead of Apple.com loading, you are redirected to a sign-up page, then the owner of the wireless network is normally trying to get you to pay for access. Many hotels redirect you to a credit card sign-up page, where you have to enter your card details and pay for access at an hourly or daily rate. Evil hotels!

Therefore if you see a WiFi network in your “Choose a Network...” list and it does not have a padlock, it does *not* guarantee that it is “free”. Many times you are free to join, but not free to use this service.

Free WiFi:

Some hotels, restaurants and other places offer free WiFi access. Examples include the Apple Stores in the US (in almost all major cities), and JetBlue WiFi in airports. There are also groups such as www.wififreespot.com who provide a list of hotspots in the US for free access.

So it may require a bit of looking around to find a free WiFi hotspot, but cities such as London, New York and Paris do have a number of free locations. It might be worth your while looking up a few of these on the web before you travel, as it can save unexpected charges when you get there.