

Top 10 apps for travellers

The railway made traveling long distances quicker than horse-and-cart, the internal-combustion engine added to that, and inflatable tyres made road travel easier on the bones and buttocks. Air travel was changed forever by the jet engine and the Boeing 747. Technology has changed travel in more ways than we can think of.



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Huge advances in mobile technology and the proliferation of smartphone apps have made travel easier than ever, but choosing the right app for your next trip can feel downright overwhelming. Edward Frost, British Airways' commercial manager for South and East Africa says the key to convenience is simplicity when using technology to travel. "New apps are being developed and released daily, and while many have merit, you're probably best advised to combine the tried-and-tested with the flavour-of-the-month and the novelty," says Frost, who suggests the following:

- **Jetlag Genie** helps you to adjust your sleep patterns to your long-haul destination before you leave. So a week before your much-publicised TEDxSanFrancisco talk, you input your travel date, destination and usual sleeping time, and it will set alarms to ease you into California's time-zone before you fly west.
- **Pocket Yoga** helps you stay limber and "mindful" during long layovers: it's a virtual yoga instructor who guides you through postures and stretches. You choose your theme (ocean, mountain and so on), the duration of your session and level of expertise. You can get your Parivṛtta Svarga Dvijāsana (Revolved Bird of Paradise) on without having to change out of your pyjamas.

- **WalkJogRun** is useful for getting outdoors in foreign climes, whether you're just out for a stroll or training for your next half-marathon. It uses accurate GPS data to provide a variety of safe and interesting routes, new or familiar, as well as tracking your pace and distance covered.
- **iStone Travel Translator** has more than 300 phrases useful to travellers in 12 languages, so you need never again order raw jellyfish when you wanted the vegetable soup. If you're in a particular region or country regularly or for a long time, try DuoLingo, which fast-tracks learning one of more than 20 languages. It tracks your progress and helps you bone up on your weaker areas.
- **Snapchat** has soared to cellphone stardom this year as a quick way to share images and videos with your social circle. If you're – perish the thought – out of network coverage range, you can save your footage and upload in when you're back online. Snapchat also allows you to find out more about the area or event you're visiting, like a sports fixture or a music festival.
- **Airbnb** is now so ubiquitous that it almost seems passé, but it remains the preferred source of user-provided accommodation. The mighty database now extends to around 60m guests and accommodation in more than 3,400 cities in more than 190 countries. All that data in the palm of your hand means you can find an airy bolthole overlooking Antoni Gaudí's eye-boggling Sagrada Família cathedral in Barcelona, or a villa in the medieval walled town of Korčula in Croatia, as a base for your scuba-diving and swimming-with-dolphins excursions.
- **Uber**, like Airbnb, can seem so pervasive that it's scarcely worth mentioning, but the cab-hailing service provides affordable, cashless – and thus safer – transport in both familiar and more foreign climes. It means you can focus on local sights and sounds without having to navigate and negotiate local driving customs. Women-only options are also emerging, like SafeHer.
- **TripAdvisor** gives blunt, often brutal, reviews of accommodation, restaurants, and other facilities, without the travel sunny brochures' perspective. You can contribute your own experiences with as many exclamation marks as you like.
- **Pocket First Aid and CPR** provides instant, step-by-step advice on life-saving procedure and saves you and your loved ones' medical information for retrieval. It's worth having on your device even though you hope you'll never need it.
- The **British Airways app**, which has been rated the top airline app. It now allows customers to save multiple boarding passes to their devices, and is even available on the Apple iWatch. It also gives customers in Heathrow's Terminals 3 and 5 "push notifications" alerting them when their departure gate is open and when boarding has started.

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