
30 Ultimate Travel Resources & Apps

Essential Apps, Booking Engines, and Gear Checklist

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Must-Have Mobile Apps

- Google Maps: Download offline maps before arrival to navigate without cellular data.
- Google Translate: Download offline language files for local communication.
- XE Currency: Quick offline currency conversion to check prices instantly.
- Airalo: Electronic SIM cards (eSIM) for cheap mobile data globally.

Top Booking Engines & Tracking Utilities

- Skyscanner: Best search engine for budget airlines and flexible dates.
- Booking.com: Keep track of loyalty reward tiers for free room upgrades.
- Rome2Rio: Shows all bus, train, and transit connections between any two cities.
- Flightradar24: Real-time flight tracking to monitor departure delays.

Minimalist Packing Checklist

- Clothing: 5 neutral t-shirts, 2 pairs of shorts/pants, 1 light jacket, swimwear.
- Electronics: Universal adapter, power bank, charging cables, phone camera.
- Toiletries: Solid shampoo bar, mineral sunscreen, basic travel pharmacy.
- Documents: Passport copies, digital insurance PDF, international driver's permit.

Global Budget Airline Sizer & Sizing Rules

Budget carriers enforce bag sizing strictly. If your bag exceeds limits by even 1cm, you pay \$50–\$100 at the gate. Here are the limits:

- Ryanair: Personal Item 40 x 20 x 25 cm (Free). Cabin Bag 55 x 40 x 20 cm (10kg max).
- EasyJet: Personal Item 45 x 36 x 20 cm (Free). Cabin Bag 56 x 45 x 25 cm (Unlimited weight).
- Wizz Air: Personal Item 40 x 30 x 20 cm (Free). Cabin Bag 55 x 40 x 23 cm (10kg max).
- Spirit Airlines: Personal Item 18 x 14 x 8 in / 45 x 35 x 20 cm (Free). Carry-On 22 x 18 x 10 in / 56 x 46 x 25 cm.
- Frontier Airlines: Personal Item 18 x 14 x 8 in / 45 x 35 x 20 cm (Free). Carry-On 24 x 16 x 10 in / 61 x 41 x 25 cm.
- AirAsia & Jetstar: Cabin Bag + Personal Item combined must be under 56 x 36 x 23 cm and weigh under 7kg (strictly enforced at boarding).

Worldwide Rideshare Directory (Avoid Local Taxi Cartels)

Using local rideshares ensures transparent pricing, app-tracked routes, and payment card security. Download these apps before landing:

- North America: Uber, Lyft.
- Europe: Bolt (widely used in Eastern/Central Europe and London, cheaper than Uber) and FreeNow (for hailing official city taxis at fixed app rates).
- Southeast Asia (Bali, Thailand, Vietnam): Grab (all-in-one transport/food) and Gojek (excellent local motorbike and car rides).
- South & Central America (Mexico, Colombia, Peru): Cabify (highly safe, professional drivers) and InDrive (allows you to bid/negotiate fares with drivers, preventing meter-tampering scams).
- Middle East: Careem (primary rideshare app in Dubai, Egypt, and Jordan).
- East Asia: GO (primary app for Japan), Kakao T (South Korea), and DiDi (China).

Ground Transit Portals

Bypass overpriced private shuttles and travel locally with these portals:

- Rome2Rio: Shows all possible connections (trains, local buses, ferries, budget flights) between any two points globally, with approximate pricing. Indispensable for planning route alternatives.
- Busbud: The premier booking portal for South America. Perfect for booking safe, luxury long-distance buses (like Cruz del Sur in Peru or Copetran in Colombia) featuring lie-flat seats, GPS tracking, and strict security checks.
- Trainline: The best app for booking train and coach tickets across Europe (UK, Italy, France, Spain) bypassing local station queue wait times.

Native Phone Hacks & Hidden Tools

Maximize your phone's built-in tools without downloading extra paid apps:

- Built-in iPhone Currency Converter: Swipe down on your home screen to open Spotlight Search. Type '100 EUR to USD' or '5000 MXN to USD' for instant conversion rates that work offline based on the last cached rate. (For iOS 18, open the native Calculator app, tap the calculator icon on the bottom-left, and toggle the 'Convert' switch to access live rates).
- Offline Camera Translators: Download destination language files inside the Google Translate app before leaving. Point your camera at menus or signs for instant visual translation without cell service.