



The Best Travel Apps for the Savvy Traveler

Description

We have come to rely on the apps below for planning and while on our trips. These must-have apps are the best on the market!

I believe that people make their own luck by great preparation and good strategy
JACK CANFIELD

Successful travel is achieved through great planning and preparation. This is not to say a tight schedule is planned to the last minute. It is about having the right tools, such as the best travel apps, to attain that success. As frequent travelers, we have learned, sometimes the hard way, that the best way to keep that trip on track is to have the best resources at our disposal.

We often get asked what travel apps we use to stay on top of our itinerary, get directions, choose restaurants, stay on top of currency rates, etc. There are just a few we use that we have tried and tested on many trips. That said, there are also many terrible apps out there, and with this guide, you can avoid downloading and even paying for some. As technology improves, so do the travel apps out there, so the search for a great travel app never ends.

Below are the apps we have on both our phones and each use daily during and in the planning phases of travel. We rely heavily on them, and they each play a role in the success of all our trips.

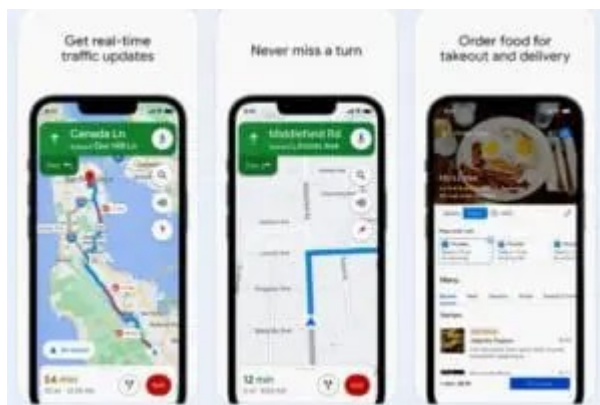
Apps are listed in the order in which we rely on them. These apps can be found in the app store on your smartphone.

1. Google Maps



This is the travel app we rely on the most and would be lost without. First and foremost, it is the best navigational app for travelers worldwide. We both have iPhones and still prefer this app above Apple Maps. It never ceases to amaze us how, in the middle of the mountains, vast rural areas, or ancient roads, Google Maps knows where we are and gets us to our desired destination. We take a wrong turn; it brings us right back on track. It monitors traffic and delays on your path and updates as needed. It also does an excellent job warning you of speed limits and radars.

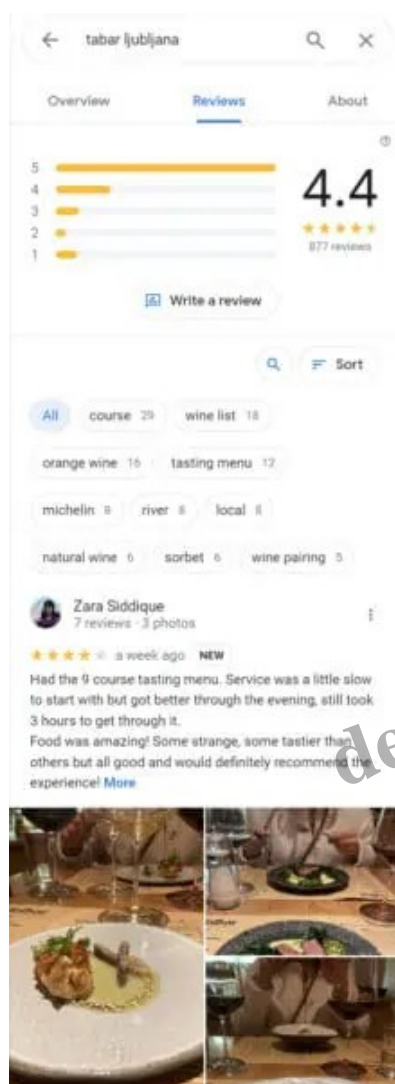
You can download maps onto your phone if you don't have internet access. [Learn how to by clicking here.](#)



Most people know how well it works when driving, but did you know it is the best app for public transportation and walking? Though we travel by car most of the time, we have taken trips to cities where we rely solely on public transportation. Google Maps provides several options along with the time to get to the station on foot. It gives an accurate time of the bus or subway arrival, the direction to go, and even what side of the street or tracks you must be on. The app will provide walking directions to get there. Once on the bus or subway, it details each stop and where you get off. Once we discovered how reliable it is, we used it for all public transportation trips. Many hotels now ask if you

have Google Maps instead of trying to show how to get there.

Did you know Google Maps has a huge database of photographs and reviews?



Once, Trip Advisor was the go-to for reviews and ratings, but Google Maps is taking the crown as the most influential decision-making tool for travelers. We use Google Maps to find great restaurants, historical sites, and hotels during the planning and trip phases. Every place we eat, we check it out first on Google Maps. We simply choose “restaurants near me” and then click on the top-rated. You can even pick the cuisine and what is open now. We have found apps like Trip Advisor, Open Table, Fork, and Yelp seriously lacking. If a travel book or a hotel suggests a restaurant, we always see what the most recent reviews look like on Google Maps.

If you land up in an area you have not researched, click More on the top right corner of the app, and it will offer an extended menu with categories such as Food and Drink, Things to Do, Shopping, and Services, all with photos, reviews, and ratings. We have found some gems over the years using this method.

We were so impressed with Google Map reviews that we began submitting photos and reviews under Wanderers Compass. At this time, our contributions have had over 44 million views. We don't get added perks or money for this. Our sole goal is to help others as others have helped us.

Other cool Google features? There are too many to list

One of our favorite features is the ability to keep a trip log containing all the hotels, sites, and places you visited. It can be shared with others, and you can make notes on each entry.

A Go Back in Time feature also provides a "Timeline" of your travels.

This app does so many other amazing things; that is for another article.

Now you can see why this is the #1 app in our travel app portfolio.

Google Maps is FREE too!

2. Tripit app

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This is our collection's newest app, and we are kicking ourselves for waiting so long to download it. Nearly 20 million travelers use the world's highest-rated travel planner app for trip and itinerary organization. Triplt is a travel planning app that lets you keep all your travel plans in one place. When you receive a confirmation email from any booking, airplane flight, hotel, rental car, food tour, wine tasting, etc. The process is so simple, too; forward the email to plans@Triplt.com from your registered email, and that's it. Within seconds, they will put it into a linear travel timeline. They enter more than just the name; they provide the confirmation number, location address, check-in/check-out times, duration of stay, and phone number. You can add any additional info or notes to each item in the itinerary, including images and PDF files.

Tripit recently helped us catch a big mistake. After entering all our confirmation emails, we noticed that our hotel reservation was on the same day as our flight, though we were arriving the next day. Our hotel reservation was the wrong date, which could have cost a lot of money down the road, plus left us without a room upon our arrival.

We did upgrade to the premium version of the TripIt app. We love the pro version because it notifies you of flight delays, provides gate info, sends reminders for check-in, tracks fares, points, and more. It was an upgrade that was well worth it. Once they notified us of a delay before the airline did!

The basic app is FREE. Tripit Pro is \$49 a year.

3. Currency app



Currency provides up-to-date exchange rates for over 150 currencies and countries! We have used this app for many years and find it reliable and fast. You can save and organize multiple currencies to keep up with the current exchange rate simple and fast. It also provides charts of the rates from one day to two years. It is a must for every traveler.



You can change the base value, too, so it is easy to calculate a purchase. As an example, a hotel room in the Czech Republic is asking for 3,300 koruna. All you do is enter that into the app and see what it is in US dollars (see image). It works offline, so even if you don't have data or Wi-Fi, you can still get a rough price estimate as you shop and explore.

The basic app is FREE, which is all we have ever used. Currency+ is \$19.99 annually; the upgrade removes ads and unlocks several other features.

Check out if your destination is one of our [Country Travel Guides](#).

4. Apple or Google Pay



This is our most used app when we make purchases during our trips overseas. Europe is ahead of the game regarding cashless and touchless transactions. There are some airports now that are 100 percent cash-free. Since we have iPhones, we primarily use Apple Pay but also have Google Pay on our phones. The app is the most secure way to purchase as the transaction is encrypted, and the vendor never sees your card number or touches your card. It is fast, and your phone does not have to be connected to the internet.

Since this is the most accessible and secure form of payment, we wrote an article on the topic: [Apple Pay-The Best Payment Method When Traveling Abroad; check it out.](#)

The Apple and Google Play Apps are FREE.

5. Cost Split app

Cost Split is a great app when traveling with family, friends, or colleagues you share the cost with. It's specifically designed for tracking and splitting expenses. When we travel for blog business, we split costs right down the middle. When on a lengthy trip, keeping track of each transaction can be cumbersome. Once we found this app, we never looked back. We use it on every trip. Entries take just seconds, making it easy to do in real time. It accepts multiple currencies and converts them for you. Thanks to the cloud sync, each person can add expenses from their own devices. You do not have to have internet to add the expenses.



Anything can be entered, from a bottle of water to hotels. It does not need to be an even split either. Let us say you ordered a lobster and your travel mate a small salad; the app allows you to enter specific amounts for each person in each transaction. You can also use the app to transfer money for final payment.

At the end of the trip, it can be converted into a printed report that can be emailed to everyone in the group. It has been helpful for tax purposes and category breakdowns so you know what each aspect of the trip costs. This app works well even for people sharing an apartment or household costs.

In our article [Want to travel for free? Let us show you how](#) we talk more about using the Cost Split App.

The Cost Split app is FREE.

6. Whatsapp

Whatsapp is a free texting and calling app we have used on every trip. It's the go-to way to communicate in many countries around the world. In many places, receiving an international call or text on your cellphone is costly, so many will not take a call or respond to a text on their cell phone. But if it is coming from WhatsApp, they readily communicate. You only need an internet connection, and texts and calls are free. You can use WhatsApp for sending texts, voice messages (which many people overseas seem to like), and voice and video calls.

We learned this was essential when taking tours and hiring a car service. Without it, some of these pickups would have never happened. It is how Joelle communicates with family in France and follows up on items she had custom-made in Morocco after her visit.

WhatsApp is FREE.

7. Google Translate app

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We encourage anyone traveling overseas to learn the basic words of any place they wish to visit. It is respectful to do so; you are a guest in their home, after all.

But the days of carrying a translation dictionary are over. [Google Translate](#) lets you easily input text in your native language and then convert it to the language at your destinations. When having a back-and-forth conversation, we allow the person responding to type in their language on our phone if they don't have their own device. This serves us well in restaurants and hotels when asking for recommendations or buying tickets. We have Google Translate on our phones and laptops. You can also download languages offline, allowing you access without using data or Wi-Fi.

Another great feature is that Google Translate can read your text, which comes in handy when communicating with someone driving or who may not have glasses to read. It also helps to hear how it is correctly pronounced.

A cool and useful feature is you can use your camera to take photos of any written text, which will translate.

Google Translate App is FREE.

8. Globetips app

Europe has a tipping culture that varies from country to country; this is the case worldwide. GlobeTips is such a great and reliable resource to navigate that aspect of travel. Avoid spending too much on a tip or insulting your server because you didn't know you were supposed to leave one.

All you do is take a picture of your bill, and it automatically calculates the appropriate tip based on the country you are in. Our country travel guides address tipping per country, but that only covers a few dozen countries and not all the ones the app includes.

The basic app is free, though an upgrade is available for even more features.

Globetips Basic is FREE, and you can upgrade to a paid Pro version.

9. Airline apps

With more contactless travel and everything being digital, it's often more accessible to check in for flights and download boarding passes from your smartphone. The only apps you need are your most frequently used airlines. If you are flying an airline just once for a trip, it may be wise to download for just this one trip and delete it afterward. These apps will notify you of gate changes, boarding, delays, and flight cancellations. Many offer the ability to track your luggage on the app. We have used them to check out airport maps to plan a tight connection. This came in handy recently when our connecting

flight was delayed, and we had a tight connection in Frankfurt.

Our leading airline apps are [Alaska](#) and United Airlines. They both offer great info on the app, and we can track our mileage account and research flights.

All Airline Apps are FREE.

10. Hotel apps

Hilton

Our go-to hotel group is [Hilton](#); because of that, we are on this app often for booking reservations, contactless check-in and out, keeping updated on account status and points, getting a digital key, and checking if prices came down for an existing reservation. We rarely use a computer to interact with Hilton. One thing we love is when we get into our rental car, we can get directions to the hotel right from the app. In many hotels, you can communicate with the hotel within the app. This is the case for most larger hotel chain apps. However, we have never loaded a hotel app for only one hotel stay.

If you are making your accommodations through Expedia, Booking.com, or Airbnb, you should also have those apps on your phone.

Hotel apps are FREE.

11. Rental Car apps



Some might ask why this app; just go to the counter and sign the paperwork. In many cases, having the app eliminates that. If you are loyal to a specific rental car company, which in our case is Avis, the app becomes indispensable.

Once you have status, you rarely need to go to the counter again except in smaller locations. The app tells you the space your car is in, and you go straight to your car with the keys in the car waiting for you. A cool feature is the [Avis](#) app frequently offers a free car upgrade, and you can choose from a choice of cars if you do not like your assigned one. We check while waiting to deplane; it is a fun way to drive different cars. At Avis, the app gives us a bar code to scan to exit electronically without having our driver's license checked by a person (not available at all locations.) As a result, we are on the road within minutes of arriving at the rental car facility.

Rental car apps are FREE.

12. Bank and Credit Card apps

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We check these apps often to verify there are no unauthorized credit card or bank transactions occurring. We both have the Chase app, which has worked very well with no issues. When you want to withdraw cash during your travels, confirming your balance before seeking an ATM is a good idea. On longer trips, we need to go onto the app to pay our bills, and the banking app makes that super easy.

When logging on, though, be sure you are using a secure server since you are accessing sensitive and private information. This is usually done with a VPN (Virtual Private Network). Some cellphone companies include that in your service, or you can subscribe to services like [ExpressVPN](#).

Banking and Credit Card apps are FREE.

13. Uber or Lyft apps

Anyone who uses Uber or Lyft knows it is all done through the app, so that needs little discussion. Many areas of the world use Uber and Lyft, and if you have the app ready to go, it makes travel much easier and safer than hailing a cab in a country you don't speak the language.

Remember, though, that some countries have banned these car companies. Do a quick Google search before you leave on your trip to see which rideshare companies are in business there. The common one in Europe is Bolt, for example.

These apps are FREE to download.

14. Viator app

Viator is our favorite app for booking tours and activities. One of our favorite activities is food tours, which offer many great options at reasonable prices. Viator is part of the Trip Advisor family. This online marketplace offers a wide diversity of things to do and have usually flexible cancellation policies. We find the app easy to use, and all options have ratings and reviews unless recently added. You also have your bookings at your fingertips in the app if you need to verify meeting details or make changes. To date, we have never had an issue with a [Viator](#) booking.

The Viator app is FREE.

15. Priority Club or Airport Lounges you use

Many of us have airport lounge access, whether through our airline or credit card, during our travels. It is our favorite thing to do while waiting for a flight and even has us spending more time at an airport. We purposely book long layovers in Europe to ensure we don't miss our flight; those lounges are our happy place. But not all lounges allow access at all hours of the day. The app is a great help to determine which lounges are near your gate and what time they are open. In some cases, if there is any at all at the airport, you will be at. These airport lounges are well-used for travelers like us who spend a lot of time in lounges!

The PP app is FREE.

Are you traveling overseas soon? Check out our blog post on the [Top 25 Tips for Successful Travel Abroad](#).

Honorable Mentions

There are apps we know are loved by many friends and fellow travel bloggers. We may not have found them helpful for us, but they could be unique to our situation. We will list them as they may serve our readers well.

Flush

This helps you find restrooms during your travels. We tried it several times without much success. Many bloggers love this app, so maybe we were in the wrong places to try it.

Skyscanner

This is a good flight search app for getting great deals on airfare. We use it on our computers, so we are fans, but we don't feel the smartphone app has not been helpful in our case.

Loungebuddy

This is an airport lounge platform that can help you search, compare, and book a lounge visit.

GetYourGuide

App for booking tours and activities

AllTrails

Offers comprehensive trail maps and information.

Final Thoughts

Apps have made our travel so much easier and more efficient. They take many unknowns away and make essential information easily accessible. When you find other exciting apps, our suggestion is to try the free versions first. If they ask for a price upfront, avoid those.

What travel apps are your favorite? Please feel free to share them with us in the comment section below.

Thanks for spending time on Wanderers Compass Travel Blog today and learning about the best travel apps. Come back and visit us again soon,

Happy Travels!

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Our Top Recommended [Travel Products and Resources](#)

[Squaremouth.com](#)

Our favorite travel insurance site!

If you book a trip, don't forget to get travel insurance within 14 days of your first booking. We could not be stronger advocates of being well-insured. Not just for the little stuff but the big things like medical emergencies. We never leave home without it. Over the years, we have used many sites but have now found our go-to place. [Squaremouth.com](#) does a fantastic job; it has a user-friendly interface, uses top-rated and reputable insurance carriers, and most policies cover COVID-19 medical issues and cancellations. They also mediate on your behalf if you have problems with your policy.

To empower you as a consumer, we suggest you read our [blog post](#) on the importance of travel insurance and how to get the best coverage from top-rated companies for an affordable price.

[MedjetAssist](#)

Medical transport back home from anywhere in the world

They are the premier global air medical transport. One caveat to travel insurance is that medical evacuation usually gets you to the closest facility to care for you. Medjet gets you back to the U.S. to the hospital of your choice once you are stable enough to fly. They cover COVID-related transport as well.

[Medjet](#) carries its own policies. These policies are only for transport and do not cover other aspects of travel insurance. They have individual trip policies starting at \$99 and annual policies for around \$300. Most of their policies limit the age to 74 and younger. Prices are not based on age below that.

To learn more about how Medical Evacuation membership with Medjet Assist works, check out our [blog post](#) for a more detailed review.

[Expedia.com](#)

Hotels, home rentals, BNBS, flights, and other transportation & tours

[Expedia](#) is a US-based company whose mission is to power global travel for everyone and everywhere. Whether planning a family vacation, booking for business, or organizing the trip of a lifetime, they are a fantastic resource. Wanderers Compass focuses on independent travel, and using sites like [Expedia](#) makes that possible. Every aspect of travel you need, from airfare, accommodations, rental car, and cruises to activities to do at your destination, can be booked on [Expedia](#).

[Booking.com](#)

Hotels, Home rentals, BNBS, Flights, and other Transportation & Tours

[Booking.com](#) connects millions of travelers to memorable experiences, various transportation options, and incredible places to stay – from homes to hotels and much more. It is one of the world's largest travel marketplaces for established brands and entrepreneurs of all sizes.

We always check Expedia and Booking.com to verify prices. At times, one is sold out of rooms while another at the same place has rooms. We also often find some European hotels, especially smaller ones, on Booking.com but not on Expedia. It could be they are a Europe-based company. Try both before booking accommodations.

[Vacation Rental By Owner \(VRBO\)](#)

Are you traveling with a family or having an extended stay at your destination?

With over 2 million bookable vacation rentals, [VRBO](#) connects homeowners with families and vacationers looking for something more than a hotel for their trip. The [VRBO](#) community offers families or groups various rental property types such as condos, cabins, lake rentals, beach houses, etc.

[VRBO](#) is now under the Expedia group's ownership, which many were worried about, but it hasn't panned out to be a concern. It is a massive network with access to all lodging forms should issues arise. Joelle has used VRBO for many years with her family and has had no problems with it.

[Viator](#)

As the leading marketplace for travel experiences, [Viator](#) believes that making memories is what travel is all about. And with 300,000+ experiences to explore—everything from simple tours to extreme adventures (and all the niche, interesting stuff in between)—making memories that will last a lifetime has never been easier.

With industry-leading flexibility and last-minute availability, it's never too late to make any day extraordinary. This one site has it all and has experiences throughout the world. We use them often during our travels, especially for food tours. We especially take the time to read the reviews provided.

[Amazon.com](#)

An excellent source for travel essentials and guides

We now have our own Amazon Storefront with all our favorite travel accessories and gear in one place. Check out our travel store at the link below.

[Wanderers Compass Amazon Storefront](#)

Amazon is one of the most comprehensive online shopping sources in the world. Teams worldwide provide lower prices, better selection, and rapid delivery on behalf of customers. They offer a vast inventory, and their 1.7 million small and medium businesses worldwide selling on Amazon.com offer extensive options to customers.

We buy most of our travel books, accessories, and luggage from Amazon. We have ordered up to two days before travel and get what we need.

[HYDAWAY](#)

This is not your ordinary drinkware company. The **HYDAWAY** difference is what their products do when you're not using them. Practical and portable, HYDAWAY doesn't take up unnecessary space in your already-packed life or pile up in landfills. We all know that trying to pack light while being environmentally conscious can be difficult. Having the right items can make a world of difference.

[HYDAWAY](#) provides that.

We have used their collapsible water bottle, carrying case for the water bottle, and collapsible insulated drink tumbler. They are all lightweight and durable. A conservation-focused product you can be proud to buy.

Use our Promo Code. WANCOM15, at checkout for 15% off your Hydaway order

[Welcome Pick-ups](#)

(Airport and sightseeing service)

A global leader in ground transportation for travelers. They help hundreds of companies worldwide enhance their services and boost their revenue with our 5-star ride experiences and hassle-free automation.

Founded in 2015 in Athens, Greece, [Welcome Pick-ups](#) goes above and beyond the standard transfer service as the first company to deliver a holistic, in-destination travel experience. From the moment a traveler arrives at a new destination until they return home, Welcome accommodates all their travel needs (transfers, travel products, things to do, information) as the easiest, friendliest, and most personalized solution.

[PhotoAiD](#)

Do you feel like you are wasting time visiting an on-site photographer only to be embarrassed by the photo? Would you like control of the final product? Get the perfect VISA or passport photo online with PhotoAiD.

When traveling, you often need to apply for official documents such as a passport, ID, and different kinds of licenses or cards. Those applications require a picture that must meet specific conditions to be accepted, depending on the country. Now, it is possible to take this picture at home without the help of a professional photographer. PhotoAiD allows you to take the perfect biometric photo you approve without leaving home.

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