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> How to use apps to save money abroad

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Your mobile can save you cash, says Jill Starley-Grainger. Get downloading...



For fee-free spending

'Rewards' credit cards — which earn you anything from cashback to air miles on your purchases — are great at home, but less so abroad. Typically they offer poor exchange rates and levy non-sterling transaction fees of three to five per cent. But there's a way to dodge the fees and still get your rewards. Download the free Travelex Supercard app, then apply for its accompanying Supercard Mastercard (also free). Use the app to link the Supercard with your existing rewards credit card. Every time you pay for something abroad with your new card, it moves the charge, in sterling, over to your UK-based rewards credit card using the best Mastercard exchange rate. As your rewards card sees it as a sterling purchase, you'll get fee-free spending plus all your 'perks'.

For free surfing

We all know that free wi-fi spots are the way to avoid sky-high mobile phone charges and hotel wi-fi fees. But how do you find them? Download the Free Wifi Internet Finder (Android) or Wifi Finder Free (Apple). Open these in the UK while you're still on wi-fi, and home in on your destination. Just before you travel, turn your 'data roaming' off on your phone, thus avoiding any charges from your mobile provider (GPS tracking, which will be left on, doesn't incur fees). At your destination, open the app: it'll show you the nearest spots with free wi-fi.

For cut-price hotels

No specific plans for where to rest your head? You're a prime candidate for one of the biggest bargains in travel — same-day hotel bookings. The free Hotel Tonight app offers some remarkable savings on last-minute bookings, especially with its 'Geo Rate', which shows discounts on hotels near your current location. When we checked, we found boutique hotels in London at 50 per cent off, and a central Hilton in New York at 60 per cent off. The app allows you to book several days at a time, so no need to hotel-hop once you've made that initial booking.

For data-free directions

Skip the pricey car-hire sat-nav and instead get a free one on your phone. Download the Google Maps area for your destination before you go (see goo.gl/PRPNcB (<http://goo.gl/PRPNcB>) for how to do this) and you'll find that it now includes driving directions and works totally offline. But you can download only one city or area at a time, so for longer road trips, splurge on the Sygic app. A lifetime licence for all world maps costs £19.99 on Android and £17.99 on Apple.

For thrifty guiding

Ditch the guidebook and download the free Triposo app. It pulls in data on sights, restaurants, hotels and bars from sources such as Wikipedia, Wikivoyage, World66 and Facebook, and displays it as an easy-to-use guide. Open the app and download your destination before departure. Enable GPS and you'll be able to use its free offline maps to see recommendations near your location, too.

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Five of the best lightweight cabin bags

For quick city breaks, you don't want to be lugging round heavy bags. These hand luggage suitcases are just the ticket, says Fiona Lally

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