Using your US cell phone in London

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Can I use my US cell phone in London?

The short answer is yes. There are four main options to use your US cell phone when traveling to London from the United States.

1. **Check if your wireless carrier offers an international plan.** This option may be best suited for travelers looking to use their cell phone resolutely to how they would domestically. This is likely the simplest way to stay connected when traveling abroad, but depending on the length of your trip, it may not be the most affordable. If you are an AT&T Wireless customer with an unlimited plan, AT&T International Day Pass is an easy way to stay connected when traveling to London.

2. **Buy a UK SIM card for your US cell phone.** This option may be ideal for travelers looking for affordability and limited usage. SIM cards can be physical or digital eSIMs. If you have a physical SIM card, you can swap it with an international SIM card from a UK wireless carrier. You can even pick up SIM cards at Heathrow Airport. Keep in mind that switching to an international SIM will mean that your cell phone number from the US will be unavailable until you switch back, and you will have to pay for the service you used in the UK separately from your US wireless bill.

   If your device supports an eSIM, you may be able to download and activate an eSIM for the UK without having to go out of your way to purchase a physical SIM card. If you own an iPhone 14 or newer iPhone purchased in the US, your iPhone was activated with an eSIM. Many other popular phone models also support eSIM. When returning from a trip using eSIM services, all you have to do is go back into your phone's settings app and switch your domestic phone line back on. This simplicity makes eSIM a great option for travelers. Learn more about what an eSIM is and how it works.

3. **Use Wi-Fi on your US cell phone for internet access and buy a throwaway phone with a UK SIM card for calls.** This option may work best for frequent international travelers. You can buy an unlocked cheap device, like a flip phone to bring with you on international trips. Take that unlocked phone with you and buy a local SIM card once you arrive. Depending on the phone you choose, some advanced features (like 5G) may not work like they would on a smartphone. When you return home, just turn off the device until your next trip.

4. **Pay roaming fees on your US cell phone.** This is an easy option for travelers who are not concerned about affordability. If not without an international calling feature, you can still access data, voice, and text when you're traveling internationally, but you will be charged at pay-per-use rates. If you are an AT&T customer traveling to England, the pay-per-use talk rates are $2/minute, while the text rates are $.50/message and $1.30 to send pictures and videos¹. Data rates are $2.05 per megabyte on land and $10.24 per megabyte on airlines. Learn more about AT&T's pay-per-use rates.

To enable data roaming for international use, you'll need to go to your phone's settings and activate both voice and data roaming to access cellular coverage.

Can I use my US cell phone in London for free?

It may be tricky to avoid all charges on your US cell phone when traveling to London, but there are a couple of things to try. First, if you are traveling to London with a US cell phone and you haven't enabled an international data plan or purchased a UK SIM card or UK cell phone, you will want to put your cell phone *in airplane mode to avoid charges*. Some phones and apps automatically download data when the phone is on and connected, which can lead to charges.

You can still use your phone when you can connect to Wi-Fi. Some features, such as the camera, will work while your phone is in airplane mode. Be sure to use Wi-Fi calling apps, like FaceTime, WhatsApp, etc. to place calls when connected to Wi-Fi.

Will I be charged roaming fees if I use Wi-Fi internationally?

When traveling to London, there will be plenty of hotels, restaurants and public spaces that offer free Wi-Fi. You can connect to their network and use data on your US cell phone without incurring roaming charges. Just be sure to set your cell phone back to airplane mode when you disconnect from the Wi-Fi hotspot.

London's Heathrow Airport offers free Wi-Fi for travelers.

More details on AT&T International Day Pass

What is AT&T International Day Pass?

AT&T International Day Pass lets you use your phone as you do at home, giving you unlimited data[1], talk and text with your eligible AT&T unlimited plan.

International Day Pass allows you to access your eligible plan in over 210 destinations, including London.

Get started with AT&T International Day Pass.

How much does AT&T International Day Pass cost?

If you are an AT&T Wireless customer with an unlimited plan, AT&T offers International Day Pass for $12 per day. It costs $6 for each additional line used on the same calendar day, and you only pay for the days you use.

The first time you use data, send a text, or make or accept a phone call, your 24-hour International Day Pass begins and you will be charged a daily fee. You won't trigger another daily fee until the next time you use your device in an included country after that 24-hour period ends. The daily fees are calculated and charged to your bill at the end of your billing cycle.

If you're in an International Day Pass country, such as England, you can call within England, any other International Day Pass country and back to the US for no additional charge. Calls to countries not included in International Day Pass will be billed at International Long Distance rates. Per-minute pay-per-use rates apply unless an International Long Distance package is added to the device placing the call. Go to att.com/internationalcalling to review rates and options.

Does AT&T turn on AT&T International Day Pass automatically?

It's best to sign up for International Day Pass before you leave, but if you forget, AT&T will automatically add it for you as soon as you arrive in London.

You do not need to remove International Day Pass when you return to the US. International Day Pass only charges a daily fee when you use your device in an included destination. And when you travel abroad in the future, International Day Pass will already be on your device, so you're all set for your next international trip.

What is the difference between AT&T International Day Pass and Passport?

You can no longer add AT&T Passport[10] to AT&T unlimited plans. AT&T Mobile Share®, or AT&T 4GB™ consumer rate plans. This feature retired on August 12, 2021. If you have an unlimited AT&T Passport on your account, you'll keep it. International Day Pass is the current international travel plan offered by AT&T.

Read more information about the legacy AT&T Passport offering.

How can I protect my cell phone while traveling to London?

You may want to consider cell phone insurance when traveling to London. AT&T customers can sign up for AT&T Protect Advantage℠[6] during the open enrollment period. Each Protect Advantage plan includes an unlimited number of claims[7], \$0 unlimited screen and back glass repairs[8], same-day replacement and set-up[9], unlimited battery replacements[8], unlimited photo and video storage[2] and access to a Pro/Tech expert.

Learn more about AT&T Protect Advantage, including pricing for a single line or up to four lines.

What happens if my cell phone is stolen abroad? Can AT&T lock a stolen phone?

If you think your cell phone has been lost or stolen while you're traveling abroad, the first step you should take is to wipe and find your device. Once you suspend service, you won't be able to use GPS apps or features to find it.

Next, you should contact AT&T's International Department at +1-314-925-6925, so the AT&T team can help suspend your service until you can get a replacement device.

The good news is if you're enrolled in AT&T Protect Advantage, your insurance covers lost and stolen phones.

Can I use my wireless service while it's suspended?

If your wireless service is suspended, you will only be able to call Emergency Services and Customer Care (611). Your number stays suspended until you reactivate it. Keep in mind, a disabled device still has data access when connected to a Wi-Fi network.

Can I use my wireless device if it's blocked?

If you block your device on the AT&T network, then it won't work, even if you swap the SIM card. AT&T will inform other carriers so they can block your device as well.

Do US phone chargers work in the UK?

Most US cell phone chargers, including iPhone chargers, can accept the higher voltage provided by electrical outlets in the UK. All you would need to charge your US cell phone in London is the UK adapter plug so you can plug it into a UK wall outlet. There are lots of affordable US to UK outlet adapters available.

If you're a frequent international traveler, you might also consider a world travel adapter.

Katherine's recommendation: When I was planning a trip to London, I wanted the simplest connectivity experience abroad that would allow me to use my cell phone like I do at home and wouldn't break the bank. I decided to add International Day Pass to my AT&T Wireless plan before I left. I also signed up for AT&T Protect Advantage, in case my phone got lost, stolen or damaged abroad. (My trip luckily happened to fall during the open enrollment window.) When I arrived in London, International Day Pass was automatically enabled, and the experience was seamless. Since my trip was only five days, the \$12 daily cost of using my cell phone abroad was worth it to me.

[1]Standard domestic messaging rates apply to text, picture, and video messages received.
[2]When added to your unlimited plan. Coverage and data speed vary by destination and may be changed.
[3]Maximum device value of $3500 per claim
[4]Unlimited Screen and Back Glass Repairs are available at select areas. Newly launched device models may not be eligible for repair. Visit phoneclaim.com/att or call 888.562.6962 to check current eligibility. Same-day repair option depends on claim approval time, part and technician availability. Eligible devices and available areas are both subject to change at any time. Repairs will be available for certain devices, in select locations, which are subject to change at any time.
[5]Available for select devices in select areas and is subject to parts and technician availability. Claims must be filed and approved by 4pm (local time). Eligibility is determined at time of claim approval and is contingent on certain criteria. Claims may be fulfilled with new or AT&T Certified Pre-Owned equipment of the same model or other models of like kind and quality and may be previously opened, used, refurbished, or remanufactured, and/or may contain original or nonoriginal replacement parts. Colors, features and accessory compatibility are not guaranteed.
[6]Subject to eligible wireless phones outside of manufacturer's warranty period that power on but fail to hold an adequate charge after ProTech diagnostic testing. Available for select devices in select areas. Battery replacements come with a 90-day limited warranty.
[7]Unlimited Photo and Video storage): Video size limitations may apply.

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