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# • AVOIDING 'BILL SHOCK'

*Smart phones can be wonderful travel companions. Not only will they help you stay in touch with friends and family, they'll guide you through unfamiliar cities, enlighten you on local attractions, translate foreign languages and produce great photographs.*

But left unchecked they can also wreck havoc with your travel budget.

The reason is that some (but not all) of the fun and useful functions smart phones perform require the downloading of data via an internet connection. Unfortunately, if you're paying for this so-called 3G or 4G data roaming it can be an expensive exercise and you run the risk of returning home to a nasty shock.

If you want make the most of your mobile device, while avoiding unexpected and unpleasant charges, next time you head off on holiday keep in mind the following tips.

## 1. Turn off global roaming

The problem with data roaming is not simply the exorbitant costs travellers are charged for downloading megabytes, it's the fact that this data is often being sucked down without you even being aware of it.

To be safe, the easiest thing to do is simply disable data roaming:

- **iPhone:** Tap Settings > Cellular > Roaming > Data Roaming > Off
- **Android:** Tap Settings > Wireless and network > Mobile networks > uncheck 'Data roaming'

Without data roaming there are still plenty of things your mobile gadget can do, including make calls, take photos, record videos and play music and podcasts. There are also lots of travel-related apps – offering everything from maps to translation services - that do not require you to be connected to the internet. Others apps will allow you to download (and save to your phone) information before you leave, which you can then view off-line when you're travelling.

## 2. Rely on Wi-Fi

If you do need to go online - whether to check your emails, use a handy app (for example to find a great restaurant) or make an online booking – your best option is to find free or affordable Wi-Fi. Hotels, airports and cafes will often offer this service.

- **iPhone:** Tap Settings > Wi-Fi > On
- **Android:** Tap Settings > Wireless and network > check Wi-Fi

## 3. Reduce your load

If reliable Wi-Fi is difficult to track down and it's vital you have an internet connection, you can always turn your data roaming back on for a short time. To minimize the amount of data you do download when you're back online, consider:

- ❖ preventing your phone from automatically downloading all your email messages every time roaming is enabled:
  - **iPhone:** Tap Settings > Mail, Contacts, Calendars > Fetch new data > Push > Off
  - **Android:** Tap Settings > Accounts and sync > Uncheck Auto-sync
- ❖ disabling automatic downloads of new or updated apps:
  - **iPhone:** Tap Settings > iTunes & App store > Automatic Downloads off
  - **Launch Android Market > Menu > Settings > uncheck Auto-update apps**

### LIMIT YOUR EXPOSURE

If there is a good chance you will need/want to re-activate data roaming when overseas, think about buying an international roaming data pack from your phone network before departure in order to access cheaper rates.

Another option is to remove your regular SIM card (put it somewhere very safe) and replace it with a pre-paid SIM either purchased before departure or upon arrival. Not only will you benefit from better prices for data, voice calls and SMS, but there will be a pre-set limit on how much you can spend (giving you some piece of mind). The only drawback is that a new SIM means a new telephone number, which you will have to pass on to friends and family.