

Escape Mobile Bill Shock – Save \$\$\$ When You Travel

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cards, VoIP providers and VPN operators. It is the responsibility of the traveller to check the web links provided in this book in order to obtain the latest offers and prices. Neither the author nor Fledersound Technology Pty Ltd accept any liability arising from the use of any of the services mentioned in this book.

INTRODUCTION With more and more people travelling internationally and taking their mobile devices with them, overseas communications costs become an ever increasing impost on travellers' budgets. Quite often unsuspecting travellers return home to telecommunications bills of several hundred or even thousands of dollars - just because they did not prepare themselves well enough before they embarked on their journey. Despite recent cost reductions in many parts of the globe, international roaming remains by far the most expensive way to use your mobile device overseas. But there are many less costly - or even free - alternatives to roaming with your home carrier's SIM card, which will be described throughout this book. I have often been asked how I manage to communicate on my overseas trips without actually expending more money than I would have spent if I had stayed back home in Australia. This gave me the inspiration to write on this subject. I will provide updated information on new developments as well as a periodic 'roaming report' at roaming.fledersound.com.

PREPARATION The effort of preparation you need to make for low-cost communications overseas using SIM cards depends mainly on the following factors:

Intended mobile phone use: It makes a big difference whether you just want to be contactable and make one or two short calls a day or whether you plan to make intensive use of your mobile, such as on a business trip. If you only use your mobile for the odd call and for sending and receiving SMS, your 'home' SIM card may suffice and no additional preparations are necessary. Very much the same applies if your home carrier offers an attractive roaming package for your destination, as further described below.

Estimated data usage: When travelling with a smartphone, tablet or laptop, mobile Internet usage with your standard SIM card can get very expensive very quickly! The same applies when using an international SIM card in certain countries.

Itinerary: Depending on the countries you visit and the length of your stay in each country, there are different solutions for cutting communications costs to a minimum.

Overseas roaming packages offered by your domestic carrier: Many carriers around the globe are starting to offer attractive international voice and data roaming packages. These may save you plenty of money and may even outperform local pre-paid SIM cards in certain situations, so remember to check the website of your current provider. After all, nothing is more convenient than keeping your usual mobile number wherever you go. The validity of these roaming packages is typically restricted to certain countries and only economical for data use of about 50MB per day. So if you plan to travel to destinations which are not covered by your home carrier's roaming offers, you may be better off using an international SIM card for very short stays such as transits, while for longer trips or very extensive data usage a local pre-paid SIM card is always the most economical solution. If you use international or local pre-paid SIM cards, it is advisable that you carry a second mobile handset with you unless you have a phone that is capable of using two SIM cards in one handset. Since most of us have an old mobile phone gathering dust in the drawer, it is unlikely that you will need to buy an additional phone. Insert your 'standard' SIM (which should have international roaming enabled by your home carrier) into your second handset for receiving and sending SMS only. You may also use this second mobile phone to set and redirect call diversions.

INTERNATIONAL ROAMING - HOW IT WORKS Before looking at cheaper alternatives, I will explain the basics of international roaming using your standard SIM card. The mobile telecommunications networks in most parts of the world share common technologies, which are fully interoperable. This led mobile communications companies to enter into agreements with each other, allowing users of one national network to use their mobiles on other national networks. Many roaming agreements were entered into during the early days of mobile phone services and their charging structures have only changed slowly over time. This applies to both voice and data communications. The European Commission has introduced regulations that severely restrict the amounts carriers can charge for voice and data roaming within the EU (see 'Some facts about 'Euroaming' in the Destination Guide). The European initiative, along with media reports of excessive roaming charges which cost customers thousands of dollars, sparked efforts to reduce roaming costs in other parts of the globe as well. Lower cost

roaming arrangements have been made or are underway in the Americas (e.g. Digicel ® Caribbean), Africa (e.g. Safaricom / Vodacom®) Asia (e.g. Bridge Alliance®) as well as between Australia and New Zealand. Recently some major carriers have introduced roaming packages that drastically lower voice and data roaming costs. These plans are currently valid for roaming in certain countries only. When looking at international roaming costs, it is important to know that both incoming and outgoing calls can be charged at quite expensive rates (up to several dollars per minute) by the home network operator, often with an additional connection fee. Many people these days are fully aware of the costs involved in global roaming when using their mobiles for voice calls and adapt their mobile phone use accordingly. As smartphones have become more and more popular among mobile phone users, data roaming costs have come into the limelight. Many people are unaware that by just leaving data roaming enabled, they can clock up huge bills. On the following pages I will show you how to minimise the financial impact of your overseas voice and data communications. **HOW TO AVOID EXCESSIVE DATA CHARGES** These days most complaints about excessive roaming charges involve mobile Internet use while overseas. While mobile voice charges are quite simple to control, data usage often occurs without the user's knowledge, as it is easy to forget to switch off automatic software updates etc. Since data roaming charges can amount to 5.00 - 30.00 USD per MB, an automatic operating system update of around 100 MB can cost you a few thousand dollars. When travelling, I'm not always in a position to make use of cheap data plans. This happens in countries that I'm just transiting and therefore the only cellular connection option I have at hand is using one of the relatively expensive international SIM cards. In this case, I try to keep data usage to an absolute minimum. Here is my advice to you on how to accomplish this: 1. Turn Automatic Data Roaming OFF. Make sure that all automatic app and software update options are turned off as well. To add additional security, temporarily change the APN settings by adding a zero and a full stop in front of the APN string, e.g. the APN 'connect' becomes '0.connect' or 'internet' becomes '0.internet'. Consult the instruction manual of your mobile phone or tablet on how to do this. 2. Once you have worked out data charges at your destination and feel comfortable about the costs, switch Data Roaming ON again. Remember to change the APN to the correct setting as otherwise your Internet connection will not work. Automatic software updates etc. should however still be switched OFF. 3. When browsing the web on a relatively expensive connection, use the free Opera Mini® web browser from Opera Software ASA. This handy app renders web sites in a compressed format whereby the data volume being transferred to your device is reduced to a fraction of its original size. This app is available for most mobile platforms. 4. When checking your e-mail, configure your e-mail program so that it only downloads plain text. The settings for this can be found in the help section of your mobile device's e-mail client program. 5. Beware of 'unintentional' international roaming in border regions. In some areas, the network(s) of a neighbouring country provide the stronger signal and your handset will switch providers without you even noticing. Therefore it is advisable to disable international roaming when travelling in these areas. This also applies to GPS dog tracking collars with SIM cards. During the summer months, many Europeans travel with their dogs across borders (in the EU, dogs actually have passports showing their vaccination status) and use trackers so they don't lose them. Many of these trackers are designed to work anywhere in the world and therefore are prone to network switching. Even if you are very careful, your pooch may still clock up a sizeable data roaming bill!

It is amazing how much money you can save on travel costs when using your cell phone / mobile phone, smartphone, laptop or other mobile device overseas. International roaming or global roaming can cost a fortune when you use your mobile phone for calls or data. Learn how to make cheap calls overseas and reduce your roaming data costs by using international sim cards, pre-paid sim cards, WiFi internet access and VoIP connections. A must-read book for every traveller who intends to

use their mobile or cell phone overseas. This insider's guide has been written by Carl Moser, who has travelled extensively over many years for business and recreation. Cheap global roaming is easy to achieve when following Carl's simple instructions.

We all know someone who has returned from a business trip or recreational travel overseas only to experience bill shock! Carl has many tips to help you avoid breaking the bank while you are travelling. He explains how to choose the best value international sim card (or phone card) for the countries you are visiting and why you should take advantage of local sim cards. Learn how to set up and use call back services to save on the cost of international calls. Find out why you should use a dual sim (twin sim) system in your cell phone or take along a spare hand set when travelling. Discover what you need to know and what to avoid when holidaying on a cruise ship.

This is a book you should definitely read before you travel and pack in your suitcase for reference while you are away. Recommended reading for parents whose older children intend to travel with their mobile devices.

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