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Travel Experiences for Boomers of All Ages

CONNECTED

4 Top Tips on How to Stay Connected When Travelling

Hi, I'm Sue Henderson. I've spent 50 years travelling the globe, visiting and living in unique places some you may never have heard of and I help enthusiastic people discover other cultures and the wonders of the world.

I do this through my Go Your Own Way Companion, our thorough intensive review that helps our clients create experiences to last a lifetime.

Our How to Stay Connected While Traveling guide has been responsible for our client's safety and well being on the road, quick translations and, destination directions all while sharing their experiences with their friends and family back home. Below is a condensed version of this guide.

Without these tips, you will waste valuable time and money falling into common traps like WiFi charges or the never-ending search for directions while trying to find a connection for your device.

With these tips, you can know before you travel that you have a plan to stay connected wherever and whenever possible - even in the case of an emergency.

Now go make your memories!

~Sue Henderson

"It's easy to get tired of what's right outside your front door… Don't just be retired. Be inspired!" - Sue Henderson

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We're often asked how we stay connected when travelling abroad. It's one of those never-ending challenges that can sometimes turn an otherwise smooth trip into a costly and time-consuming hunt for connection.

While we sometimes travel with the hope of spending as much time "off the grid" as possible, it's often necessary to have a device on hand to pull up maps or enhance sightseeing with audio tours, call a restaurant for reservations or buy advance tickets and have them right on your phone not to mention social media connections and personal needs on the home front.

We've assembled a list of tips and tricks we, and our well-travelled friends, have discovered over the last few years to help you stay connected whether you're in downtown Munich or climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.

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TIP #1: Your Current Carrier

- Research the roaming conditions of your current phone carrier on their website and assess if it's cost-worthy to subscribe to any of them. At the very least check in which countries roaming fees apply.

- Check fees for text, voice and data usage which also vary considerably depending on your carrier and plan.

- **BAD VALUE OPTION**: Many car-rental companies, mobile-phone companies, and even some hotels offer the option to rent a mobile phone with a European number. This is a terrible value, as hidden fees (such as high per-minute charges) can add up.

TIP #2: Local Wifi

- Practically every accommodation you're likely to stay in will have a free internet connection.   Just be sure to check before you book your stay if that's important to you If you opt to stay in AirBnB or VRBO locations, you're likely to have higher speeds as you won't be sharing with dozens of people. Regardless, **CHECK BEFORE YOU BOOK.**

- We have found a few mobile apps to help locate WiFi during or before travel as a handy guide.   WifiMapper and Instabridge have both worked for us in the past. Check online before travelling which one has the greatest number of networks to the places you're going.

- **NOTE FOR CRUISERS**: If you must be connected while on a cruise, do it in port and don't get suckered into on-board rates at notoriously slow speeds. Best bet if you're not using a mapper app is to ask your server or cruise staff where the crew goes to make their connections. There is literally more than one in every port. Ask the band!

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TIP #3: Local SIM Card

NOTE: You must have an unlocked GSM phone so you can buy local SIM cards for it when in other countries. In a lot of cases your current provider will be able to unlock your phone for you -- especially if you bought your phone outright and aren't tied to a contract.

- They're available in every country around the world. Simply head to a convenience store or cellphone store, ask for a local SIM card with data (and calls if you'll need them -- most travelers don't because they can just use Skype or Facebook), and you'll be good to go. If in doubt, ask the hotel staff where you can buy one. Be sure to purchase a card with as much data as you think you need, and of course be sure it fits your phone.

- European prices on data are very low and Europe is now a combined market, so 1 SIM card works in Greece, Italy, Spain, France etc.

TIP #4: Portable Hotspots

- If you're a regular traveler overseas, a portable hotspot might be worth the cost. It's also worth considering if you are traveling with multiple devices as expenses are shared with between 5 and 10 devices.

- **Skyroam** works around the globe so no need to wonder about local access in a multi-country trip. At $150 for the device plus $9 per day for 4G connection, this can be an effective tool for multiple devices plus, you get a 20+ hour charge. As with everything, double check the countries you are visiting are covered.

- **TEP** offers a similar pocket WiFi hotspot also connecting up to five devices at once. They win the price battle at $99 purchase + $8 per day. The battery only lasts about eight hours (up to 20 on standby) and the device is available for several countries but check coverage before you travel.

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ONCE CONNECTED

Even at home you've probably noticed everything is shifting to data. Messaging and calls – both voice and video are headed this direction as it's free and easy. When combined with WiFi connection, you can access several programs anywhere and everywhere.

If you're unfamiliar with the options, they are voice over internet protocols (VoIP) that allow you to make phone calls from your phone or laptop without roaming costs. Download the app, buy some credit if it's required, and you're good to go with calls. Since we travel with a laptop and our phones, we have video conferencing with family and friends no matter where we are in the world.

From our experience, these are the most reliable on any smartphone or device with internet access:

Skype: Mostly used as a video call tool, it can also be used as an instant message service by over 600 million users.   You just need an email to create your username and no need to associate to any phone number.

Whatsapp: A multi-platform instant messaging app which allows you to exchange text, image, voice or video messages with only data costs involved.   Video and audio calls aren't as good as the other options but it's easy to use and, in a pinch, you can even borrow a local cell phone and it's likely connected.   A mobile number is required to register.
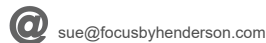
Facebook Messenger: Attached to Facebook, this instant connection is used by over 1 billion (and counting) to send text, images and video but can also be a direct ability to talk over the internet.   The only requirement is both connections need to be registered with a free Facebook account.

Finally, we can all use some internet dieting. Common tasks we do when we're abroad can take a big chunk of available data. The idea is to find ways to accomplish the same tasks but offline. As an example, Google Maps now allows you to store maps for offline use.   Data isn't required for the GPS function on a smart phone so you can check surroundings without paying roaming charges. **Maps.me** does the same with the caveat you need to download an entire map of a city or region at once, taking up more space on your device.

For those concerned with WiFi and international web security, we have learned of an app called **Onavo** which promises to notify you of data rates and reduces usage by compressing your data downloads to contribute to worry-free roaming. It's free (for now) and is available in 90+ countries around the world. We haven't used it but it has come highly recommended by reliable sources.

And let's not forget our favorite standby: *sending a postcard or a letter*. It's surprisingly easy to do overseas to let someone know you're thinking about them. We've never struggled to find a post office anywhere in the world and can usually purchase stamps when picking up a postcard. It's a throwback thought.

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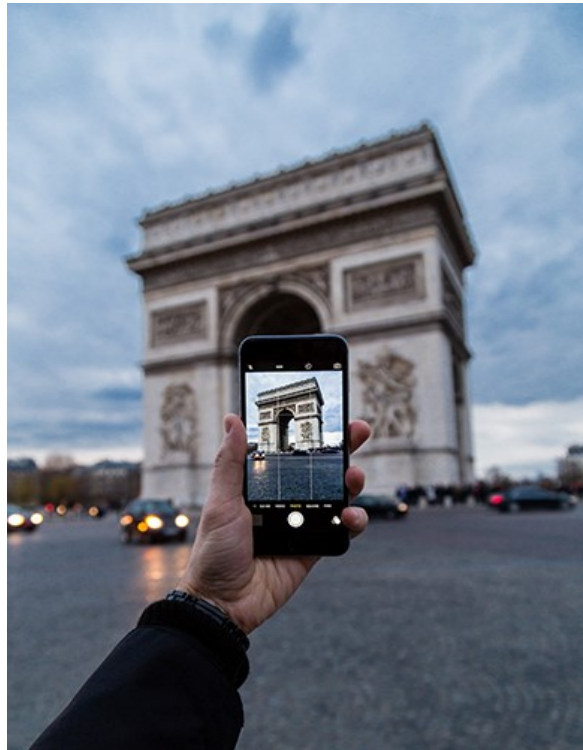
THE BOTTOM LINE

While there are many, many options to stay online while travelling, with a little planning you can avoid horrifying roaming charges and still stay connected on the road. WiFi networks are still the easiest and cheapest option allowing you to use data-oriented applications for free.

For a backup plan, the best choice is subscribing to a decent roaming plan from your provider. Finally, purchasing a local SIM card can be a great option.

TRAVEL THE WORLD CONNECTED

You are in possession of a tool that will help create the experiences of a lifetime. But, unless you understand how to implement the information, it'll only remain an underutilized tool that sits on your device. It's like having the keys to a convertible and not knowing how to put the top down.

So, if you'd like to use this tool at its fullest potential, I want to show you how through an in-depth thirty-minute call where I deep-dive into exactly how to implement these strategies for your travel, providing you everything you need to know to maximize your results.
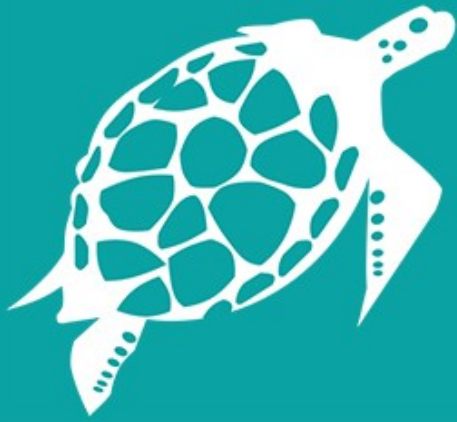
During our free thirty-minute call, I also give insights into what we have learned about travelling the world and talk about some strategies you can deploy immediately to help make your travel dreams come true.

My promise to you – *NO SALES PITCH WHATSOEVER*! If you would like to talk about how I can help you with your travel dreams, ask me and we will set up a separate time and date to chat.

Click here to schedule your time → http://bit.ly/30-with-sue

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