

Communications

Calling the United States from abroad can be very expensive. Before you leave, do some research to see if you want to use your current U.S. cellular phone abroad or if you want to use a local phone while abroad. Students may be eligible for discounts on international plans and calling cards with an International Student Identification Card (ISIC) which is available from [MyISIC](#) [1].

Mobile Phones

Your U.S. cell phones will not work abroad unless you have an international plan. The costs of international plans vary; talk to your carrier for more information. American smartphones should have the US data plan cancelled while abroad so phones are not roaming.

Carriers can also “unlock” your phone which will allow you to sign up and obtain a local SIM card and data plan with a carrier abroad. Local plans will have roaming charges once the phone leaves the country. If you are staying in the same location for a while, you can also rent or buy a mobile phone from a dealer in that location. International mobile phone plans can be prepaid or monthly minutes. Plan options can include data and text messaging.

[Cheapflights.com](#) [2] features an interesting article on how to use your smart phone abroad without going broke, including helpful information about roughly how much data basic activities typically use (hint: you might think twice before turning on your data in order to upload a photo to Instagram).

Telephones

Public phones abroad require either a phone card, coins, or both. You can buy phone cards at post offices, newsstands, and some hotels and bars. Some American phone carriers have international calling card plans.

All phones abroad require a “number code” that you dial before typing a non-local telephone number. Each country has its own number code. Local calls do not require a number code.

Internet Cafés

Internet cafés provide computer, printing and internet access to customers. The costs of internet café computers range from €0.50 to €2 an hour (in Europe). Costs are broken into 30 minute segments 15 minute segments or by the minute; consider buying an Internet Cafe card for multiple uses at a particular chain. Internet cafes are available in many cities. For a global listing of internet/cyber cafes visit

[Cybercafes](#) [3].

Internet cafes provide e-mail access so you can communicate with family and friends. Skype or MSN Messenger programs will also be installed in Internet Cafes. These programs offer free telephone service from computer to computer and computer to phone for a small fee (2-4 cents per minute). Bring your own headset

Internet Cafés also exist outside of Europe, but they vary widely in their speed, price, and programming options. Internet is also widely available through a 3G connection on most cell phones. See telephone section above for further information.

Source URL: <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/abroad/swt/travel/communications>

Links

[1] <https://www.myisic.com/>

[2] <https://www.cheapflights.com/news/avoiding-high-smartphone-bills-abroad>

[3] <http://www.cybercafes.com/>