



TRAVELLING WITH TECH  
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## Smart travellers

I hit the road a lot for work, so I know travelling can be a pain. Because of this I'm always on the lookout for ways to make trips easier. So here are my top tech travel tips so you can get back to enjoying the journey.



### WHERE TO STAY

If you're after good, cheap accommodation, then check out Airbnb, as well as hotel listing sites. While the likes of Booking.com and Wotif offer excellent deals, Airbnb's system is less formal and often much cheaper. However, using this service means you have to do your homework.

Always read the description as well as reviews by other users. Before you click/sign up, check the area you'll be staying in and whether the listing is for a whole house or just a room.

The lack of regulation around these listing services has also seen the rise of scammers, so consumers beware.

A workmate has just booked a house in Tokyo through Airbnb for a fortnight over Christmas and New Year. It's going to cost \$2800 for four people (considerably cheaper

than a hotel). He's also fond of the extra conveniences it offers, such as a kitchen.

Airbnb also offers "experiences". These are generally tours hosted by locals. I went on a food tour in Rome, booked through Airbnb, and had a fantastic time. Sometimes the cost is just for the host, other times the fee includes food and drinks. Again, always read the reviews.



### BEFORE YOU GO

Before travelling, I make sure to have Google Maps and, if needed, Google Translate at the ready.

With Google Translate you can download language packs that can translate without needing to go online. The app has four ways of translating, including a "conversation" with two people speaking in their language. It can also translate using your phone's camera. For

example, when photographing a sign, the app does an instant translation. While these interpretations aren't always perfect, you'll get the gist. Samsung has these services built into newer Galaxy and Note phones with its Bixby assistant, but it can't be used offline.

Google Maps is a favourite tool for finding places to eat and drink. You can search for places like "Chinese restaurants near me" or "bars with a rooftop garden". It also has an offline function, so you can download full maps of the area you'll be staying in. A map of Sydney's metropolitan area took only 75MB of space on my phone. Offline maps still use GPS to pinpoint your location and are searchable.

Navigating a new city can be tough, so I always have the Uber app on my phone. It's simple, incredibly useful and saves needing to figure out local cabs and payment options as it charges the card on your account. I used Uber in Rome, and it meant not needing to worry about language. Depending on where you're travelling, there may be other options, such as Lyft in the US.

You can also get apps, such as City Rail Map (Android and iOS), which offer offline maps of rail and subways. In many big cities, the best way to travel is underground.



### ROAMING

Phone roaming can be expensive, so make the most of local networks and deals by buying a pre-paid SIM card from a telco in whichever country you're travelling to. Most airports have stores in the arrivals area.

But what about your New Zealand SIM? Some phones have dual-SIM slots, so you can switch between them in settings.



### KEEP YOUR DEVICE ALIVE

You'll need to keep your phone charged for all your travelling. If you're going to a country with a different power-plug from New Zealand, then I recommend taking a single adapter plug and a small multiboard. This means you can charge several devices simultaneously.

If you're worried about battery life, invest in a USB power bank – but make sure you read the airline rules about taking them on board your flight.

