



International Calling Tip Sheet

International Calling Check List

Check with your long-distance service provider to find out how to dial internationally from the U.S.

The procedure for calling Canada and most Caribbean nations is the same as the procedure for making a domestic long-distance call. Simply dial 1, the area code, and the number you are trying to reach. To call a phone in another country, dial 011, and then the code for the country you are calling, the area or city code, and the phone number. For example, if you are trying to call someone in Brazil (country code 55), in the city of Rio de Janeiro (city code 21), you would dial 011 - 55 - 21 - XXXX-XXXX. Countries employ varying numbers of digits for area/city codes and telephone numbers. Check with your service provider to find out the country code and the area/city code, or if your provider has different instructions for international calls. You can find a list of country codes at itu.int/dms_pub/itu-t/opb/sp/T-SP-E.164D-11-2011-PDF-E.pdf

Find out if there is a different dialing process for calling a mobile phone, and if calling a mobile will cost more than calling a landline phone.

In some countries, there is a different procedure for calling a mobile phone number. It may also cost more to call a mobile number than a landline (fixed) telephone number in some countries. If you are considering calling a mobile number, ask your service provider about the dialing process and rates. Consider calling a landline phone instead, if that's an option.

- Consumer Guide: [Surcharges for International Calls to Wireless Phones](http://fcc.gov/consumers/guides/surcharges-international-calls-wireless-phones) (fcc.gov/consumers/guides/surcharges-international-calls-wireless-phones)

Consider signing up for an international calling plan.

If you plan on making regular calls to certain countries, ask your service provider for a discount plan. However, be mindful of the total cost of the international calling plan before you sign up. When you sign up for a plan, the total cost will likely include more than the advertised rate. For example, if you call India regularly, it might be best to sign up for an international long-distance plan tailored to India. One long distance provider offers a plan for \$0.28 per minute rate with a \$5.99 monthly access charge. If you get that plan, a 60 minute call to India would be \$22.79 (plus taxes and fees). This is less expensive than the basic, non-plan rate of \$5.00 per minute. In that case, a 60 minute call to India would cost approximately \$300.00 (plus taxes and fees).

Research cheaper alternatives for calling internationally from the U.S., such as using a prepaid calling card, your mobile phone, or an Internet-based service.

Whether you are going to make only a few international calls, or plan on calling regularly, look into buying an international calling card. Rates may be lower than the rates offered by long distance providers. More importantly, you pre-pay for the minutes, so you won't be stuck with a bigger bill than you planned on at the end of the month. Some pre-paid calling cards, however, have undisclosed fees.

- Consumer Guide: [Prepaid Phone Cards: What Consumers Should Know](http://fcc.gov/consumers/guides/prepaid-phone-cards-what-consumers-should-know) (fcc.gov/consumers/guides/prepaid-phone-cards-what-consumers-should-know)



Another alternative is making international calls with a mobile phone. If you have a mobile service provider, check into the international rates it offers.

Finally, voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) calling may be cheaper than calling via traditional telephone providers. In some cases, you will only need a microphone headset and a broadband Internet connection to your computer to place a call to a telephone in another country. Some other services will allow you to place a call from your regular telephone. Make sure you understand all the terms and conditions of the service you choose before you make a call.

Look Up Basic Rates

Basic rates are non-discounted rates for international calls from landline phones made by customers who have not signed up for a monthly international calling plan with their service provider or some other discounted calling option. Basic rate calling may be a convenient and cost-effective alternative for consumers who make occasional international calls because it doesn't require enrolling in a calling plan. However, the difference between basic rates and rates for other international calling options may be substantial. Consumers using basic rates for phone calls to mobile phones internationally also may incur additional charges.

Examples of Basic Rates

Taken from rates posted in September 2019 for international calls to a few countries, the table below illustrates price differences between basic rates, monthly plans, and Skype, one of several options for making an international call using an Internet app. These apps can be used to make free calls through an Internet connection or making calls to phone lines at low international call rates.

International Calls from Landline Phones Basic Rates vs. Monthly Plans vs. Skype

Calls to:	AT&T Basic Rate	AT&T Worldwide Value Calling (\$5.99/month)	Verizon Basic Rate (Fios)	Verizon World Plan 300 (\$10.00/month)*	Skype
Canada	\$1.55	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.023
China	\$5.00	\$0.11	\$0.15	\$0.15	\$0.020
India	\$5.00	\$0.28	\$0.28	\$0.28	\$0.015
Mexico	\$3.50	\$0.09	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0.010
UK	\$3.50	\$0.08	\$0.08	\$0.08	\$0.023

* Rates listed apply to minutes in excess of the 300 minutes included in the plan.

International Calls to Mobile Phones Basic Rates vs. Monthly Plans vs. Skype

Calls to:	AT&T Basic Rate-Mobile	AT&T Worldwide Value Calling (\$5.99/month) - Mobile	Verizon Basic Rate (Fios) - Mobile	Verizon World Plan 300 (\$10.00/month) - Mobile*	Skype - Mobile
Canada	\$1.55	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.023
China	\$5.00	\$0.11	\$0.17	\$0.17	\$0.020
India	\$5.00	\$0.28	\$0.29	\$0.29	\$0.015
Mexico	\$3.65	\$0.24	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.035
UK	\$3.70	\$0.28	\$0.29	\$0.29	\$0.10

* Rates listed apply to minutes in excess of the 300 minutes included in the plan.

Major Carriers' Basic Rates



Currently, both Verizon and AT&T have international basic rates for calls to every country in the world. They also have international basic rates for calls to certain specific companies like Inmarsat, Global Satellite, or Networks.

FCC rules require carriers that charge international basic rates to make them easily available to consumers on their website.

- [Verizon Basic Rates](#) (in English)
- [AT&T Basic Rates](#) (in English)

Information from Service Providers

This section includes web resources for service providers of several types. It is intended to assist consumers, and is not meant to be a complete list of all providers. Neither the FCC nor the U.S. Government is endorsing the products or services of any provider by including it on this list.

Wireline Service Providers

AT&T

International Long Distance Plans: att.com/home-phone/landline/long-distance.html

Verizon

International Long Distance Plans: verizon.com/home/phone

Prepaid Service Providers

STI Prepaid

International Prepaid Calling Cards: stiprepaid.com

Union Telecard

International Prepaid Calling Cards: uniontelecard.com/phonecards

U.S. Mobile Wireless Service Providers

AT&T Mobility

International Wireless Plans: att.com/offers/international.html

Sprint

International Long Distance Rates: sprint.com/en/shop/services/international.html

T-Mobile

International Services: t-mobile.com/coverage/roaming

US Cellular

International Long Distance Rates: uscellular.com/services/international/long-distance-cell-phone-plans/index.html

Verizon Wireless

International Solutions and Services: verizonwireless.com/solutions-and-services/international

VoIP and Alternative Service Providers



Google Voice

International Rates: google.com/voice/rates

Nextiva

International Rates: nextiva.com/resources/international-calling-rates.html

Skype

International Plans: skype.com/intl/en-us/home

Vonage

International Plans: vonage.com/personal/phone-plans/vonage-world

Consumer Help Center

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at fcc.gov/consumers.

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Last Reviewed: 08/03/20

