

iPhone, I Travel: Take Your Trip to the Next Level With iPhone

by Jennifer Marx, Author of [PassPorter Travel Guidebooks](#)

Are you ready to take your travels to the next level? Try an Apple iPhone. An iPhone on a trip is like Internet on a computer.

With iPhone along, you're virtually always connected to a myriad of resources that can improve your travel and enrich your experience. I became an iPhone user in October 2007 and fell in love with it within a week. This was no mere toy or fun gadget. When I took the iPhone on our next trip to Walt Disney World and the Disney Cruise Line, I was amazed at how useful and essential my iPhone quickly became.

You've probably heard of the iPhone already. If not, on the surface the iPhone is a cell phone with a sophisticated touchscreen, built-in iPod, and Internet access via wi-fi as well as the phone carriers (AT&T or Verizon in the U.S.). (Between wi-fi and the 3G/4G data network, there's almost always a way to connect to the Internet without fuss or added cost.) I think the iPhone name is a bit of a misnomer, because it's the iPhone's non-cellphone features that I use the most. The iPhone is really so much more than a cell phone, and so unlike other cell phones, even those with touchscreens, media players, or web browsing. If you haven't seen the iPhone, you haven't seen anything yet. (More on how to see an iPhone at the end of this article.)

So how does the iPhone improve your travels? Allow me to relate my personal experience on my recent travels:

Checking the Weather FAST: The iPhone has a built-in weather checker (based on [Yahoo.com weather data](#)) that you can set for a multitude of locations. Before I left, I added Orlando as one of my locations and got the six-day forecast within seconds. While I was there, I checked the weather frequently -- the iPhone was so much faster than waiting for the Weather Channel (on TV) to display the local forecast (which meant more time in the parks!). If you're the type who wants more detailed weather data, you can either search for it via the Safari web browser on the iPhone or just bookmark this nifty [Weather for iPhone](#) web app.

Tracking Important Events: The iPhone's Calendar function allowed me to enter the dates and times of important events that I didn't want to forget in the excitement and distraction of MouseFest. I could determine how far in advance I wanted to be reminded of each event.

When the event time drew near, the iPhone alerted me by vibrating and chirping.

Watching the Time: Speaking of alerts, the iPhone's Clock feature is really useful when travelling. I used the iPhone's Clock to set wake-up alarms for various days (different times for different days with different alarm sounds). I also used the Clock's Timer function to keep track of when my washer and dryer cycles at the guest laundry would finish and alert me that it was time to change loads. There is also a World Clock, so you can see what time it is around the world, and a Stopwatch, so you can see how it really takes to get through Haunted Mansion.

Finding My Way: The iPhone's Map feature helps you locate addresses, which is convenient when you need to make a last-minute Walgreens run. You can also use it for driving directions and satellite views. I even used it once as a geography cheat when I couldn't remember which state Boston was in (to my own defense, I was very tired at the time). The iPhone would have saved me earlier this year when I got lost driving around Orlando to a Toys 'R Us store!

Checking Park Times and Menus: While most of us pre-plan our trips to the best of our abilities, sometimes unforeseen events require us to make a u-turn... and the iPhone is so helpful in these instances. For example, we changed our plans one evening and scrapped the "adult's night out" to spend more time with Alexander. But we hadn't planned for it and didn't know what parks might be open. I pulled out my trusty iPhone, tapped the Safari icon, tapped my DisneyWorld.com bookmark, and within moments had pulled up the park hours (and happily discovered that there were Extra Magic Hours at Magic Kingdom). I used the iPhone later in the trip to check out the menu (thanks to AllEars.Net) at Yak & Yeti. I did this countless times during the trip, quickly and simply. I'll even admit to a little recreational reading on the web during some downtime.

Sleeping With Ambient Sounds: Despite how often I travel, I sometimes find it hard to sleep in a hotel room. I used to bring along a travel clock with nature sounds to lull me to sleep, but no more thanks to my iPhone! I now use the iPhone's iPod feature to store and play various relaxing music and ambient soundtracks. I just set the iPhone on the nightstand next to me, plug it in to charge it, tap the iPod icon, tap the "Relaxing Ambient" playlist I've created, and tap Shuffle for a random selection. It plays the music through its built-in speaker and turns off when all songs have been played. I've also got some audiobooks in my iPhone for more mental stimulation, as well as some Backyardigans and Mickey Mouse Clubhouse TV show episodes for Alexander (I can't tell you how useful that has been at times!). Those of

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you who use an iPod more extensively than me would probably get even more use out of this feature.

Taking Pictures With the Camera: The viewscreen on my regular camera broke a few days into the trip, so if I hadn't had the easy-to-use camera on the iPhone, I would have been a very unhappy traveller. The iPhone's camera is simple -- the newer models even have flash and zoom. I was amazed at the photos I could take with the iPhone's little camera. While I would never recommend that it replace a regular digital camera, it worked quite well in a pinch. I actually took more than 1500 photos with it while on my trip -- I noticed no slowdown or lag, found the photos really easy to browse through, and there was still plenty of room left on the 16 GB hard drive. Here's one of my favorite photos taken on my iPhone:

Staying in Touch With Folks Back Home: The iPhone's shutterbug aspect leads me into the biggest reason I love my iPhone -- the iPhone puts the Internet in my pocket. While I was on the plane ride down to Orlando, I got the bright idea to share the photos I took on my iPhone camera with the folks who had to stay behind by setting up a real-time photo blog. That evening I set it up (back then this required free a WordPress.com) and began using it immediately. Suddenly I was [sharing my experiences with thousands of people as they happened \(I called it a "Window Seat"\)](#) and I felt SO connected. My family, friends, and readers back home could see the fun things I saw, all with the touch of a button on my iPhone. I also set up the Mail app on the iPhone to forward important e-mails so I could stay on top of emergencies or important news. The Text Message app let me stay in touch with Ally, who was in school and could not join us on the trip. And the Safari app let me check in on the PassPorter web site and message board community, and respond to important issues even when I wasn't within reach of my laptop.

So what's wrong with an iPhone? Nothing's perfect, though the iPhone's list of shortcomings is short. It's not inexpensive (\$97-\$299) and you need to sign a contract with one of their carriers AT&T or Verizon (in the U.S.) or other carriers internationally. My monthly bill with fees and taxes is about \$80, but that includes unlimited data service, so I don't have to worry when using Safari, e-mail, Maps, etc. Technically speaking, I wish the Camera app took larger photos though I suspect that will be introduced in a future version (and indeed it was!). Some folks claim the data speeds on the 3G network are too slow, but I'm quite happy with them (and I'm not normally a patient person). The iPhone's design is slick in more ways than one -- that makes it a bit slippery at times and there's a tendency to drop it -- but if you put a protective case on it as I have, it can be dropped occasionally without

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breaking it (I dropped it several times without any damage).

Should you get an iPhone? I could go on and on about the iPhone's advantages while travelling, but let me sum it up with the expression I keep uttering, "I LOVE MY IPHONE." I urge you to consider getting an iPhone -- if not now, then when your current cell phone contract expires. The iPhone's price is quickly made up for by its conveniences -- I calculate that I've saved more than \$1000 so far in gained time thanks to my iPhone. You won't be disappointed.

Want to learn more? I have some tips at [iPhone, I Travel](#) with information on using the iPhone while travelling. Come check it out before you consider getting an iPhone, then come back when you've got one. If you already have one, come on by and please let me know you have an iPhone already -- I'd love to meet fellow iPhone lovers! If you want to check out an iPhone in person, drop by your local Apple Store (that's how I got hooked) or tag me next time we're at Disney together! You can also [get more information and order an iPhone online](#) -- activation is conveniently done at home on your computer!

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