

Tip Sheet: International Long Distance Calling Made Simple

1. 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. Don't be surprised if the number you are trying to call has more or less than three plus seven digits. Call or check the website of 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 also find country codes on the web, for example at: www.itu.int/itudoc/itu-t/ob-lists/icc/e164_763.pdf.

2. 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. For example, when calling a mobile phone in Mexico, you must add a '1' to the country code. So, if you are calling a mobile in Mexico City, Mexico (country code 52, and city code 55), you would dial 011 - 52 - 1 - 55 - XXXX-XXXX.

Also, in some countries it costs more to call a mobile number than a landline (fixed) telephone number. 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.

3. Consider the total cost of international calling plans before you sign up.

If you plan on making regular calls to certain countries, ask your service provider for a discount plan. Keep in mind that 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 \$9.99 per month. If you get that plan, you can call India for 60 minutes per month without paying a per-minute rate. If you go over that limit, you will pay only \$0.17 per minute. To get that rate, you also have to sign up for a domestic long distance plan, starting at \$5.00 per month, meaning your total monthly fee for calling India will be \$14.99. So, if your calls to India total 60 minutes per month, under the plan you'll end up paying about \$0.25 per minute, which is much cheaper than the basic, non-plan rate of \$6.67 per minute. But if you get the plan and only call 15 minutes per month, you'll pay approximately \$1.00 per minute, which may cost more than other some options.

4. 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. Find out more about such fees by visiting the Federal Trade Commission website at www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/alt183.shtm.

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. Shop around on the Internet to find a service that works for you. No matter which option you choose, make sure you understand all the terms and conditions of the service before you make a call.

Country Codes and Selected Provider Contact Information

[This section includes a few selected 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 the list.]

Country Codes

List of Country Codes

www.itu.int/itudoc/itu-t/ob-lists/icc/e164_763.pdf

Selected Wireline Service Providers

AT&T

International long distance plans and rates: www.att.com/gen/general?pid=11832

Qwest

Home phone service: www.qwest.com/residential/phonelanding/

Verizon

International long distance plans and rates: www22.verizon.com/?lid=//global//residential

Selected Prepaid Service Providers

STI Prepaid

International prepaid calling card rates: www.stiprepaid.com

Union Telecard

International prepaid calling card rates: uniontelecard.com/phonecards

Selected U.S. Mobile Wireless Service Providers

AT&T Mobility

International Wireless Rates:

www.wireless.att.com/learn/international/long-distance/in-the-us.jsp

MetroPCS

International Long distance Rate Finders:
www.metropcs.com/rates/findrate.aspx
www.metropcs.com/products/world/

Sprint Nextel

International Long Distance Rates:
shop.sprint.com/en/services/worldwide/ratesfromus.shtml

T-Mobile

International Long Distance Rates:
www.t-mobile.com/International/LongDistanceOverview.aspx

US Cellular

International Long Distance Rates:
www.uscellular.com/uscellular/common/common.jsp?path=/services/international/countries.html

Verizon Wireless

International Wireless Rates:
b2b.vzw.com/international/inside_us.html

Selected VoIP and Alternative Service Providers

Google Voice

www.google.com/googlevoice/about.html
International Rates: <https://www.google.com/voice/rates>

Skype

www.skype.com/intl/en-us/home
International Rates: www.skype.com/intl/en-us/prices/payg-rates

Vonage

www.vonage.com/
International rates: www.vonage.com/international_per-minute_rates/?lid=sub_nav_international_rates&refer_id=WEBSR0706010001W1

Consumer Help Center

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

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