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Gadgetwise

Getting Smart About Personal Technology

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Q&A: Taking the iPad to Europe

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Q. I want to take my iPad to Europe this summer. What do I need to make it work overseas?

A. Charging the iPad's battery and getting it online are the two main issues. The boxy 10-watt power adapter that comes with the iPad can handle electrical currents from 100 to 240 volts and frequencies of 50 to 60 Hertz — which [should cover pretty much all of Europe](#). Bring along plug adapters for the countries you plan to visit so you can connect your American prongs to European electrical outlets; RadioShack and travel stores sell them.

Getting the iPad connected to the Internet is the other issue. Many hotels and cafes have Wi-Fi networks you can use while traveling, although you may need to pay a connection fee.

For connecting iPads that can connect only over a wireless network — or those that have Verizon's U.S.-centric 3G service — using a mobile wireless hot spot (also known as a Mi-Fi) is one way to get the iPad online when there are no wireless networks available. Some European wireless carriers may offer mobile hot spots and [XCom Global](#) has rental options for hardware and service for less than \$20 a day.

For iPads with 3G service from AT&T (which uses more globally compatible networking technology), there are more options when a Wi-Fi connection is nowhere to be found. [AT&T has its own international data plans](#). You can even sign up for a one-time plan right in the iPad's cellular data settings; prices start at \$25 for 20 megabytes of data in a 30-day period and go up from there.

Swapping out the AT&T micro-SIM card for a compatible card and prepaid service from a European wireless carrier is another option. The unofficial [iPad Data Plans](#) site has some background information.

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