

## 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 [www.itu.int/dms\\_pub/itu-t/opb/sp/T-SP-E.164D-11-2011-PDF-E.pdf](http://www.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. 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 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.

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

#### **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.

#### **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://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/prepaid-phone-cards-what-consumers-should-know)  
(www.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 2016 for international calls to a few countries, the table below illustrates price differences between basic rates, monthly plans, and other options. For example, in September 2016, Verizon's basic rate from the United States to India was \$6.76 per minute while the rate on Verizon's monthly plan was \$0.28 per minute. AT&T's basic rate for calls to Canada was \$1.45 per minute, while its monthly plan rate was \$0.05.

#### 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	Verizon City Rates (\$4.99/month)	Skype
Canada	\$1.45	\$0.05	\$1.04	\$0.05	\$0.023
China	\$5.00	\$0.11	\$6.65	\$0.15	\$0.020
India	\$5.00	\$0.28	\$6.76	\$0.28	\$0.015
Mexico	\$3.25	\$0.09	\$0.05	\$0.17	\$0.010
UK	\$3.25	\$0.08	\$2.89	\$0.08	\$0.023

#### 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-Mobile	Verizon City Rates (\$4.99/month)-Mobile	Skype-Mobile
Canada	\$1.45	\$0.05	\$1.04	\$0.05	\$0.023
China	\$5.00	\$0.11	\$6.65	\$0.17	\$0.020
India	\$5.00	\$0.28	\$6.77	\$0.29	\$0.015
Mexico	\$3.40	\$0.24	\$0.05	\$0.32	\$0.035
UK	\$3.45	\$0.28	\$3.10	\$0.29	\$0.10

## 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: <http://www.att.com/gen/general?pid=11832>

#### Verizon

International Long Distance Plans:

<https://www.verizon.com/support/residential/phone/homephone/calling+plans/long+distance+plans/long+distance+plans.htm>

### Prepaid Service Providers

#### STI Prepaid

International Prepaid Calling Cards: <http://www.stiprepaid.com>

#### Union Telecard

International Prepaid Calling Cards: <https://www.uniontelecard.com/phonecards>

### U.S. Mobile Wireless Service Providers

#### AT&T Mobility

International Wireless Plans:

<https://www.att.com/shop/en/wireless/international.html>

#### MetroPCS

International Long Distance Terms & Conditions and FAQs:

<https://www.metropcs.com/terms-conditions/uild-terms-conditions.html>

<https://www.metropcs.com/international-long-distance-faqs.html>

#### Sprint Nextel

International Long Distance Rates:

<http://shop.sprint.com/en/services/worldwide/ratesfromus.shtml>



**T-Mobile**

International Services:

<http://www.t-mobile.com/International/LongDistanceOverview.aspx>

**US Cellular**

International Long Distance Rates:

<https://www.uscellular.com/services/international/long-distance-cell-phone-plans/index.html>

**Verizon Wireless**

International Solutions and Services:

<https://www.verizonwireless.com/solutions-and-services/international/>

**VoIP and Alternative Service Providers****Google Voice**

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

**Nextiva**

International Rates: <https://www.nextiva.com/resources/international-calling-rates.html>

**Skype**

International Plans: <http://www.skype.com/intl/en-us/home>

**Vonage**

International Plans: <http://www.vonage.com/personal/phone-plans/vonage-world>

**Consumer Help Center**

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at

[www.fcc.gov/consumers](http://www.fcc.gov/consumers).

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