


## Data information center / How to calculate distances



# SunEarthTools.com

Tools for consumers and designers of solar

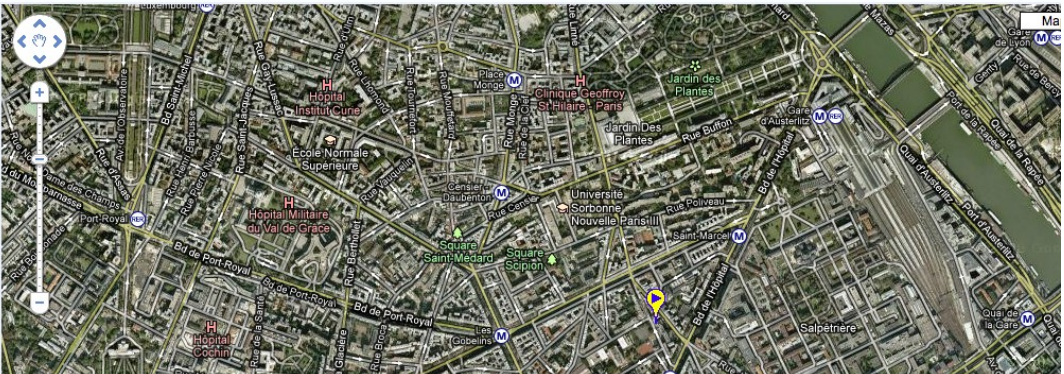

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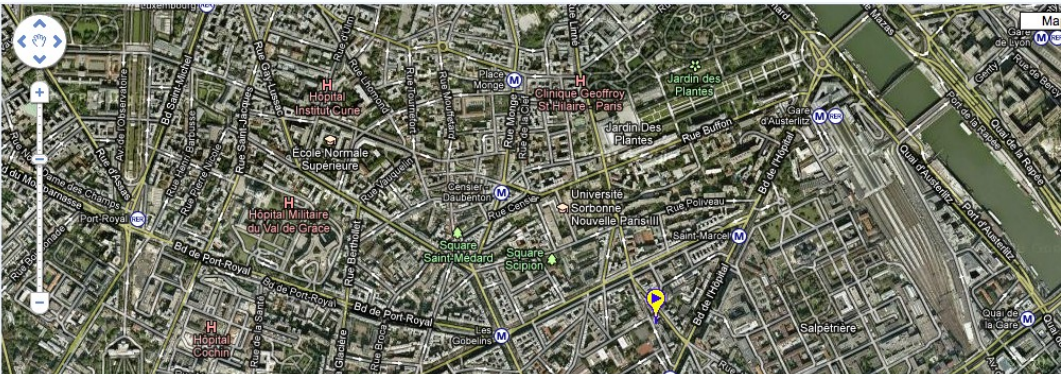
polyline   
km - mt 

search:


48.8370858, 2.3579631  
GPS: 48 50.225 2 21.47  
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← → ↻ ⌂ [www.movable-type.co.uk/scripts/latlong.html](#)  
(lat/lon in radians!)

This uses just one trig and one sqrt function – as against half-a-dozen trig functions for cos law, and 7 trigs + 2 sqrts for haversine. Accuracy is somewhat complex: along meridians there are no errors, otherwise they depend on distance, bearing, and latitude, but are small enough for many purposes\* (and often trivial compared with the spherical approximation itself).

### Bearing

In general, your current heading will vary as you follow a great circle path (orthodrome); the final heading will differ from the initial heading by varying degrees according to distance and latitude (if you were to go from say 35°N,45°E (Baghdad) to 35°N,135°E (Osaka), you would start on a heading of 60° and end up on a heading of 120°!).

This formula is for the initial bearing (sometimes referred to as forward azimuth) which if followed in a straight line along a great-circle arc will take you from the start point to the end point:<sup>1</sup>

Formula:  $\theta = \text{atan2}(\sin(\Delta\text{long})\cos(\text{lat}_2), \cos(\text{lat}_1)\sin(\text{lat}_2) - \sin(\text{lat}_1)\cos(\text{lat}_2)\cos(\Delta\text{long}))$

JavaScript: 

```
var y = Math.sin(dLon) * Math.cos(lat2);
var x = Math.cos(lat1)*Math.sin(lat2) -
    Math.sin(lat1)*Math.cos(lat2)*Math.cos(dLon);
var brng = Math.atan2(y, x).toDeg();
```

Excel: 

```
=ATAN2(COS(lat1)*SIN(lat2)-SIN(lat1)*COS(lat2)*COS(lon2-lon1),
    SIN(lon2-lon1)*COS(lat2))
```

  
\* Note that Excel reverses the arguments to ATAN2 – see notes below

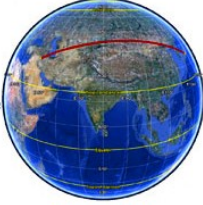
Since atan2 returns values in the range -n ... +n (that is, -180° ... +180°), to normalise the result to a compass bearing (in the range 0° ... 360°, with -ve values transformed into the range 180° ... 360°), convert to degrees and then use  $(\theta + 360) \% 360$ , where % is modulo.

For final bearing, simply take the *initial* bearing from the *end* point to the *start* point and reverse it (using  $\theta = (\theta + 180) \% 360$ ).

### Midpoint

This is the half-way point along a great circle path between the two points.<sup>1</sup>

Formula:  $Bx = \cos(\text{lat}_2)\cos(\Delta\text{long})$   
 $By = \cos(\text{lat}_2)\sin(\Delta\text{long})$



Baghdad to Osaka

GeoNames Web Service Documentation

http://www.geonames.org/export/web-services.html#findNearbyPlaceName

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### GeoNames Web Services Documentation

GeoNames is mainly using REST webservices.

**Important:**

- The parameter 'username' needs to be passed with each request. The username for your application can be registered [here](#). You will then receive an email with a confirmation link and after you have confirmed the email you can enable your account for the webservice on [your account page](#)
- Don't forget to **url encode** string parameters containing special characters or spaces. ([Faq entry on url encoding](#))
- Use the [JSON services](#) if you want to use GeoNames from javascript, as most browsers do not allow to call xml services from ANOTHER server.
- [all web services on one table](#).
- [client libraries](#)
- Service Level Agreement** is available for our [commercial web services](#).
- [Exceptions - error handling](#)

<http://www.geonames.org/export/web-services.html#findNearbyPlaceName>

