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How to get Wi-Fi wherever you go

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(<https://www.verizon.com/articles/making-sense-of-data-how-much-do-you-need/>), but did you know that you can access the internet via Wi-Fi practically anywhere you go? In fact, we may be approaching a future in which universal Wi-Fi connects all mobile device users from around the world.

In the meantime, how can you get Wi-Fi access on the go? This guide will provide information on the various ways and tools you can use to access the internet, no matter where your travels take you.

Turn your smartphone into a Wi-Fi hotspot.

Most smartphones (<https://www.verizon.com/smartphones/>) can be turned into an internet access point that your other devices, such as tablets (<https://www.verizon.com/tablets/>) or other phones, can connect to. These are called Wi-Fi hotspots, and they can be indispensable when you need to access the internet with other devices.

The process to set up a personal hotspot (<https://www.verizon.com/articles/how-to-use-your-smartphone-as-a-mobile-hotspot/>) depends on the type of phone you have:

- On iOS devices, go to Settings, then toggle “Personal Hotspot” on. Once you do, you’ll be given a Wi-Fi password. Other devices will be able to connect to your phone via Wi-Fi and Bluetooth under the name of the phone, and they’ll need this password to access the hotspot.
- On Android devices, the process can differ a little depending on your phone’s model. Go to Settings, then look for a menu for networks or connections. On Samsung devices, for example, you’ll need to navigate to “Connections,” then “Mobile Hotspot and Tethering.” On Google Pixels, you must go to “Network & Internet,” then “Hotspot & Tethering.” After turning the hotspot on, you’ll be given a Wi-Fi password. Other devices will be able to connect to the hotspot by selecting your device name and entering this password.



To keep unauthorized individuals from accessing your hotspot, you’ll need to follow a couple of security best practices:

- Be sure to change your hotspot's SSID and password! The above instructions allow you to start a hotspot with [your phone's default settings](https://www.verizon.com/), but these are not ideal for security. Hackers can use tools to automatically detect and attempt to enter networks with common SSIDs. You can customize your hotspot's name and

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protecting that information from potential fraudsters.

Keep in mind that your ability to set up and use a Wi-Fi hotspot effectively will depend on your service plan — particularly in regard to data allowance. Some carriers may require an additional fee each month for the ability to create mobile hotspots. Further, if you only have a few gigabytes of data each month, you'll find that creating a Wi-Fi hotspot for multiple devices to use may drain your data allotment fairly quickly. On the other hand, if you have an unlimited plan (<https://www.verizon.com/plans/unlimited/>), you'll be able to stream and download videos, music, and games much more freely with a variety of devices.

A final limitation of Wi-Fi hotspots to consider is that they can increase your phone's battery consumption. For this reason, it's smart to have a battery or charger (<https://www.verizon.com/batteries-and-chargers/>) handy for prolonged hotspot use. If there is an area where you'll be regularly using this function, consider plugging in a wireless charger (<https://www.verizon.com/products/wireless-chargers/>) at that location as a matter of convenience.

Buy a portable router.

Whether your phone is not hotspot-enabled or your data plan is not sufficient for your needs, an alternative is to purchase a portable router (<https://www.verizon.com/internet-devices/>). These generally allow up to 10 devices to access the internet. Like your smartphone, these require inserting a SIM card (<https://www.verizonwireless.com/support/knowledge-base-84557/>) for connectivity. While using a portable router will incur an upfront fee and an additional charge for internet access, there are plenty of service providers from which you can rent them — and often at a reasonable rate.

These routers are typically powered by USB, and most models come with an extension cable to plug them in. Just remember that binging on Netflix during your travels can be a serious drain on your battery, so don't forget to bring a travel adapter (<https://www.verizon.com/products/travel-adapters/>)! As a plus, many models allow you to plug devices into the router, which can be an effective way of charging your mobile devices on the go.

There are many benefits to using a portable Wi-Fi router. They are substantially more secure than public Wi-Fi. Further, they are highly convenient while traveling. Unless you have a connected car with built-in internet access (<https://www.verizon.com/plans/connected-car/>), a portable router may be necessary. While they may incur some additional costs, they are a great way of getting reliable internet access without savaging your cellular data plan.



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Satellite internet.

One option for getting Wi-Fi anywhere is satellite internet. Much like satellite cable on your TV, this involves sending a signal through a modem to a satellite dish, then to an orbiting satellite. The signal is then bounced back to your dish, your modem, and your connected device.

Satellite internet routers are generally not as reliable or fast as a standard Wi-Fi router or broadband, but they can give you internet access in areas without Wi-Fi coverage. Given how satellite internet works, there may be interference with your connection from time to time, and this can result in unexpected latency or outages. Nevertheless, they are an effective way of getting online while traveling without putting a dent into your cellular data.

Visit locations that offer free Wi-Fi.

A variety of community locations and businesses in your area may offer free Wi-Fi. Many businesses (such as hotels and airlines) that offer coupons, special promotions, and loyalty programs may provide free Wi-Fi to consumers under specific circumstances.

These give visitors an added convenience and enable more consumers to take advantage of in-store internet features. Libraries, bookstores, public plazas, McDonald's and Starbucks franchises — the chances are pretty high that you'll encounter some free sources of internet access in your day-to-day routine.

This can be a boon to individuals with limited data plans. Understand, however, that your access to public networks may come with some restrictions. Certain websites may be blocked, and the connection speed may not be sufficient for intensive streaming or downloading.

There are also some security concerns with using public Wi-Fi. Unscrupulous individuals can intercept data being transmitted to and from devices connected to public networks, potentially allowing them to glean enough information to commit fraud. Unless you're using a virtual private network, it's not advisable to access sensitive information while on a public network.

If you have concerns about mobile pay transmitting your credit card information over a public network, have no fear; most mobile pay platforms use NFC technology, so your information is not being transmitted over any public networks.

Use a hotspot database.

Many apps can help you find hotspots for free Wi-Fi in your area. Some apps have extra features that can help you

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Again, be sure to use cybersecurity best practices when accessing free Wi-Fi networks. Be cautious about transmitting personal or financial information while on any network you find on one of these apps.

You might also be interested in:

- [Mobile hotspot devices and plans to help you stay connected on the go](https://www.verizon.com/articles/wifi-hotspot-service-data-plans/) (<https://www.verizon.com/articles/wifi-hotspot-service-data-plans/>).
- [How to use your smartphone as a mobile hotspot](https://www.verizon.com/articles/wifi-hotspot-service-data-plans/how-to-use-your-smartphone-as-a-mobile-hotspot/) (<https://www.verizon.com/articles/wifi-hotspot-service-data-plans/how-to-use-your-smartphone-as-a-mobile-hotspot/>).
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- [Internet service directory](https://verizon.com/internet-service) (<https://verizon.com/internet-service>).
- [How much internet speed do I need?](https://www.verizon.com/internet-service/what-is-a-good-internet-speed/) (<https://www.verizon.com/internet-service/what-is-a-good-internet-speed/>).
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- [What is MiFi and how does it work?](https://www.verizon.com/articles/wifi-hotspot-service-data-plans/what-is-mifi/) (<https://www.verizon.com/articles/wifi-hotspot-service-data-plans/what-is-mifi/>).

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