

Apps to enhance your road trip

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In the age of connectivity, driverless cars, and electric vehicles (EV), mobile app technology continues to develop rapidly – enhancing the driving experience. Once upon a time, though, we didn’t have apps. In their place were battered maps, a pile of books, and a mixtape that looped continuously as passengers bickered over the last lemon sherbet.

Times have certainly changed. Mobile apps are now part of everyday life. In fact, a staggering 149.3 billion were downloaded back in 2016. Using them, however, is a different story. How do you find the good ones so you’re not just cluttering up your phone?

Having spent thousands of miles on the road, in more than 40 countries, I’ve created a list of the eight best apps to improve your road trip, blogs Abigail King.

Roadtrippers

As the name suggests, this app was made for road trips. It’ll give you recommendations for breakfast, a quick lunch, and unique things to do that you may not have factored into your itinerary. Filter its map view for real-time suggestions near your current location.

If you have done extensive pre-planning, however, you can set up and save trips prior to embarking on your road trip. You can even download up to five offline maps.

There’s a beautiful guides section too which is currently focused on the USA. Perfect if the USA is your road trip destination this summer!

Available from Google Play and the App Store.

Evernote

Evernote is a travel planner’s dream. This app will help you organize and file any information you have relating to your upcoming road trip.

It can store photos, text, important documents, audio, and web clippings. It saves each piece of information as a note for you to refer to when you need it. If you’re tired of trawling through years of bookmarks, Evernote is a fantastic alternative.

Notes can be annotated digitally with ease and shared with friends or family. Yet, it's the search functionality that really makes Evernote stand out amongst its competitors. The app can read from images, and even handwritten scrawls. Once in the database, you'll be able to search your notes via date, words, or type of media.

This is extremely helpful if you've been making notes prior to booking your trip and permanently documenting all the stop-offs you want to cover.

It's also perfect for when you want to relive your holiday moments back home. What was that fantastic wine you enjoyed during dinner on your last night in Rome? Snap a picture during the meal and you can search for the text on the bottle when you return home.

Spotify

Years on from the cassette, and even the iPod, playlists still reign supreme on road trips. Streaming service Spotify has become the ultimate jukebox in your car.

Its free version requires a Wi-Fi connection but, for a relatively low monthly fee, you can download your music and playlists straight to your phone. Road trip music capabilities have certainly come a long way!

It's got to be better than a patchy radio signal as you navigate long stretches of road.

Hotel Tonight

So, despite being more organized than usual prior to setting off on your road trip, there's been an unforeseen hiccup with your accommodation.

Enter Hotel Tonight. Using your location, this app seamlessly shows you hotels that are available near you there and then (and over the next few days, should you need it.)

Its filters are intuitive and extremely easy to use. It's the perfect solution to needing to book a hotel room from the passenger seat, using your mobile.

The AA App

The thrill of the open road soon descends into frustration when you're stuck in traffic en route to your destination.

Step forward, the AA travel app. Loaded with real-time data, it can help you avoid traffic jams on the move as well as showing you alternative routes to bypass toll charges and congestion charge zones.

If you're a member of the AA, parking information is also available to you alongside petrol pricing tools and the crucial breakdown rescue service.

FancyHands

Several travel concierge apps have come to my attention recently, but it's the non-travel specific FancyHands that's really impressed me.

With this genius app, you can pay for tasks assigned by you to a 24-hour team of people from your phone. It's ideal for hotel reservations, buying tickets, and researching restaurants. And, all of these tasks can be briefed in via text, on the phone, or e-mail.

Spotted By Locals

Trendy travel app Spotted by Locals has compiled under-the-radar information on cities into an easy to use guide. It curates content from locals which provides the app with authenticity and gives users amazing insider tips.

There are no long lists here, nor generic suggestions found through Google. Instead, you'll find hidden gems unique to each location, and recommended by someone who lives there.

Monzo

Monzo is leading a new wave of banking systems, taking over from where PayPal once ruled. Banking from your mobile phone has never been easier, as app-based banking continues to shake things up.

Monzo is the perfect solution if you're tired of banking fees and suspicious exchange rates when using your card abroad. It also lets you track your spending, both at home and abroad, which is an excellent upside if you're traveling to a budget.

As mobile app development continues to improve the way we travel, it's important to know which apps you'll actually use. This list has been a snapshot of some of the best currently available for enhancing your road trip. As the industry continues to develop rapidly, it'll be interesting to see which apps make the list this time next year! www.avis.co.uk/inspires/

