

# Traveling Internationally with Kids and Devices (<http://www.gokidtrips.com/our-blog/traveling-internationally-with-kids-and-devices>)

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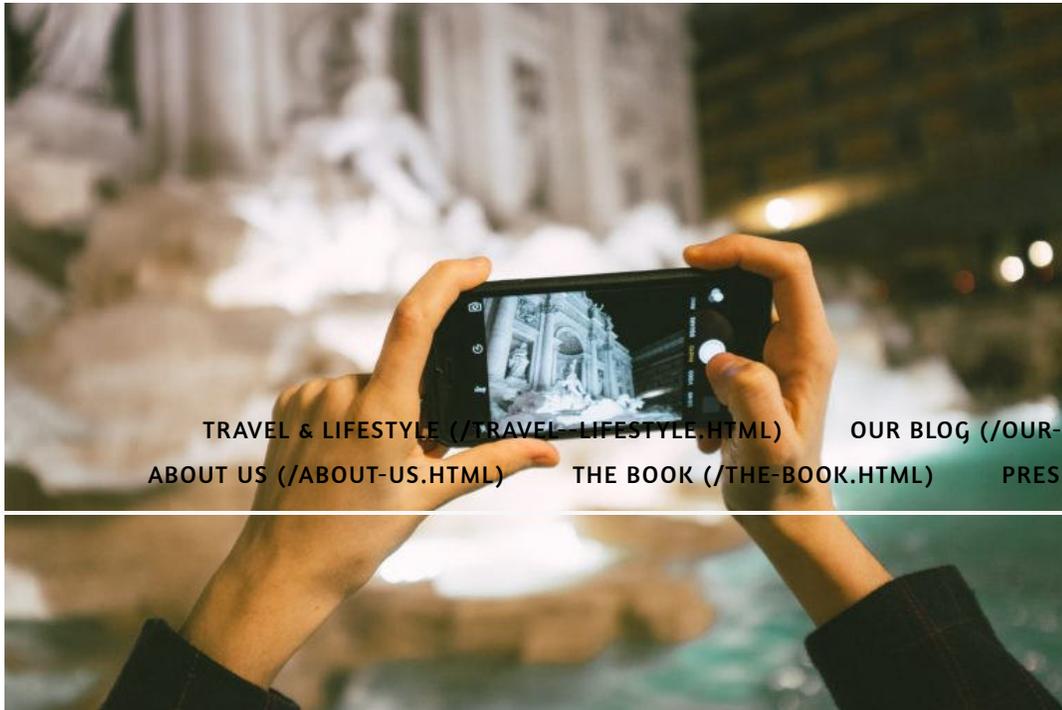
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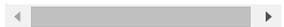
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**By Amy Suski**

We just got back from a two-week long vacation through Great Britain and France with 3 kids, 3 iPhones, 1 iPad mini, 1 Macbook, 2 iPods, and a digital camera. (In case you're wondering this is not an advertisement for Mac products -- our family just happens to be addicted to them.) To power all these devices, adapt to international currents, and connect to WiFi we needed a strategy. Here I share with you what worked and what didn't.

1. [Accell USB Charging Kit with International Plug Adapters](http://www.accellcables.com/products/home-or-away-dual-usb-charging-kit-with-international-plug-adapters?)



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**variant=994300456**): this little kit automatically detects and switches to the correct voltage for the country you are in and was essential for quickly recharging our iPhones, iPods and iPad. It has two USB ports so we could get two devices charged at a time, plus it can be used at home whenever two USB devices need to be charged in the same outlet. Another bonus: the 2-pronged US plug folds down so that it is easier to

carry. The kit retails for \$21.99.

**2. International AC Plug Adapters:** although most of our devices were covered by the Accell USB charger above, in order to charge the MacBook and digital camera, we needed another set of adapters for converting their AC plugs. I was lucky enough to find a set of adapters from our last trip that worked just fine, but next trip I'm going to bring an extra set since competition for charging devices was at a premium.



**3. SkyRoam Personal Hotspot ([http://www.skyroam.com/travel-wifi?gclid=CK2IlgKiT-84CFYskhgod\\_NMFkg](http://www.skyroam.com/travel-wifi?gclid=CK2IlgKiT-84CFYskhgod_NMFkg)):** The WiFi provided for free by train stations, airports, and hotels was spotty at best. Since I had to bring work with me, I wanted to ensure I could work online, especially when hanging out in a waiting area with nothing else to do. For \$99.99 we purchased this handy device which for a daily fee of around \$8, gave us unlimited WiFi for up to 5 devices. In addition to allowing me to work on my laptop, it allowed us to access directions, travel information, and reservations on our iPhones without racking up roaming charges. Every day we slipped it into our backpack and more than once it saved our

bacon by allowing us to use Maps when we were lost, search for a nearby restaurant, or summon a ride through a car service app when our feet were just too tired to go on. The only problem was that the battery life wasn't long enough to get us through a whole day of traveling. Next time, we'll be bringing a back-up power source (#4).

**4. Back-up Power Sources:** My kids were smart enough to bring small chapstick-sized back-up power sources for their devices. I didn't and regretted it. We had many long days pounding the pavement and none of my devices could make it from start to finish, so my husband and I tag-teamed turning on and off our phones so that we could conserve our connectivity.

**5. Upgraded Phone Plan:** Given that we were renting a car, traveling in unfamiliar areas, and occasionally needed to make reservations on the fly, we definitely wanted some cell service. By purchasing a one-month international plan before we left the US, we avoided costly roaming charges. For about \$40, the Verizon plan allowed one month of limited voice and messaging, but no data. I missed the significance of this last point until I'd racked up \$25 in international data roaming charges. For the rest of the trip, I turned OFF data roaming and relied on the WiFi we were able to get through SkyRoam. Although we didn't come close to using our voice or messaging allowance, for peace of mind I'm glad we invested in the international phone plan. Next time, I'll just be smarter about the data settings to avoid unnecessary charges.

Of course, once we mastered the art of charging and connecting our devices, we couldn't wait to turn them all off. Although it was nice for the kids to be able to communicate with friends, snap pictures of Big Ben, and entertain themselves while waiting for a flight, we really didn't want them immersed in a video game while their vacation happened around them. We needed to teach our kids that sometimes the best memories of travel can be caught while idly people watching from a cafe or counting cows during a car ride through Normandy. So my advice is, once you are comfortably connected, charged-up, and ready for every possible travel conundrum, power down and just enjoy!

*The opinions expressed herein are my own and do not reflect those of the businesses mentioned.*

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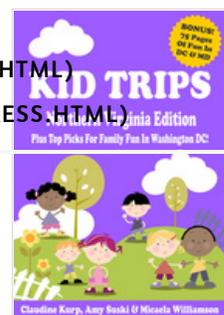


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Kid Trips' blogs profile fun events and cool family-friendly venues. We focus on regional and national family travel articles.

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