

Cell Phone Usage in Russia

If you are planning to travel to Russia, you may be wondering if your cell phone will work in that particular country. To begin with, your phone must be the GMS (Global System for Mobile communications) type. As many American providers do not carry these phones regularly, you may have to contact yours in order to rent or purchase one. As with many other countries, the Russian cellular phone system operates using the 900 and 1800 frequencies. Since the United States and Canada use the 1900 and 850, you will need to make sure that the GMS phone that you have can operate at these particular frequencies.

Once you have obtained a phone that is compatible with the Russian phone system, you will need to contact your service provider to make sure that you have a "roaming" feature on your cell phone, which will also require you to pay an additional fee. The cost of this feature can be quite expensive, with some companies charging you over \$1.00 per minute.

Bringing your cell phone into the country should not be a problem. Russian custom regulations do not require travelers to claim their cell phones upon entering the country. So as long as you have the proper phone and the "roaming" set up, you may have no problem in using your phone during your visit.

Another obstacle that you may run into when you reach Russian soil is the ability to send and receive text messages. In order to use this feature, your service provider must have a special roaming agreement with the Russian service providers. If this agreement is not in existence, you will not be able to use the text messaging feature at all.

You will also need to purchase some extra accessories in order to charge your cell phone when visiting this country. You will need to have a plug type "C" or "F," as these are the only two types that the country uses. Russia also uses 220 volts for almost everything, so you will need a 220 volt transformer. If you try to charge your phone without one of these devices, you run the risk of burning it up.

You may want to purchase a cell phone once you arrive in Russia. Statistics have estimated that there are more cell phones in Russia than people. With a total population of over 142 million, that equals a lot of cell phones. Unlike other countries, it is relatively easy to purchase a cell phone and SIM (Subscriber Identity Module) card that will allow you to have a Russian phone number. The downside of making one of these purchases is the fact that the SIM card rates are valid only in the city in which they were purchased. If you use your cell phone in a different city, the rates per call can rise dramatically.

These are just a few of the options that are available to you if you wish to use your cell phone while visiting Russia. As you can see, it is probably best to contact your cellular service provider to discover the least expensive way that you can use one of these devices while you are away from home.

About the Author

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