eSIM Explanation & Options

SIM Card: small plastic card that fits into your device. It links your device with your phone number & carrier and allows you to use cellular data and make & receive calls and texts. **Not all devices have a physical sim card; check with your provider.**

eSIM: a rewriteable 'embedded' SIM is built-in to many newer devices instead of/in addition to a removable plastic SIM card

Travel benefits of eSIM:

- International eSIM plans can be purchased before travel and activated upon arrival (Wi-Fi is usually required for the first activation of an eSIM)

- A wide variety of eSIM carriers, plans, and coverage ranges exist, including country-specific, regional, or global plans
    - 'Talk, text, and data' plans come with an international phone number
    - 'Data-only' plans don't come with an international phone number; must use internet-based apps (WhatsApp, GroupMe, iMessage, etc.) to call or text others, or use your domestic number to make more expensive calls

- Users can easily switch between networks/carriers/numbers since no physical SIM card is required

- Some phones may allow you to use two eSIMs at the same time
    - Example: make/receive calls and texts using a US number AND an international number on the same device; keep the 'data roaming' setting turned off on your domestic SIM while abroad to avoid expensive data charges

Compatibility:

Not all devices are eSIM capable. Contact your domestic cellular provider to determine if your cell phone is unlocked and compatible with eSIMs.

- Example: iPhone XS, iPhone XS Max, iPhone XR, or iPhones 12 or later should all be compatible with eSIM *if unlocked by your cellular provider*

Resources/Providers

- Using eSIMs on Apple Devices
- Airalo: local & regional eSIMs for travelers
- HolaFly: Data eSIM plans
- Maya Mobile eSIM Carrier

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