

STRATEGIES

TRAVEL SMARTER



WE'VE SCoured THE VIRTUAL AISLES OF THE ANDROID, BLACKBERRY, IPHONE, PALM, AND WINDOWS STORES FOR OUR 53 FAVORITE TRAVEL APPS. **PLUS** THE BEST NEW SMART PHONES AND INTERNATIONAL CALLING OPTIONS.
BY TOM SAMILJAN

WELCOME TO THE BRAVE NEW WORLD OF smart-phone apps. What started as an iPhone phenomenon—download an application to perform a special function—has turned into a digital revolution. Now, with more than 200,000 titles, the iPhone leads the pack. But its competitors are quickly gaining ground: at press time, Google's Android Market had about 60,000 programs—and counting. And then there's the iPad: not a smart phone but a versatile (and glamorous) e-reader poised to take apps even more mainstream.

For travelers, carrying an app-loaded phone can transform everything from planning a trip to navigating a new city. Though

the first travel-focused smart-phone programs were mainly gateways to existing websites or stand-alone guidebooks, today it's all about location, location, location. Most new titles—from restaurant finders and shopping tools to turn-by-turn navigation programs—use the average smart phone's built-in GPS to help find nearby points of interest. Which means the world around you has never been more annotated—or accessible. But perhaps the best part is discovering apps for needs you never knew you had: calculating a tip, keeping a virtual travel journal, and even avoiding traffic tickets.

Happy downloading! ▶

T+L TIP Apps can drain your phone's energy in less than a day, so be sure to take along an extra battery or a portable charger like the Mophie Juice Pack Air (mophie.com; \$80) when you're on the road.

TOP 53 SMART-PHONE APPS

TRIP PLANNING

► Find a flight, hotel, or car rental

With its stripped-down interface, **Kayak** is easy to use, making it our favorite way to look up airfares, as well as hotel rooms and rental cars. For flights, you can sort your results by price, trip length, and even departure and arrival times using Kayak's signature sliders. One hitch: you'll need to upgrade to the Pro version to get first- and business-class fare quotes.

COST Free; \$1.99 for the Pro version.

RUNS ON Android, BlackBerry, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch, Windows Mobile.

RUNNERS-UP **TripAssist** by Expedia (free; iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch), **Travelocity** (free; Android, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch).

► Manage your vacation right from your phone

Forward all your travel confirmations to **Worldmate** and it automatically updates an online profile, keeps track

of flight delays and gate changes, and even reminds you to check in on time. You also get weather forecasts, a currency converter, a tip calculator, world clocks, local restaurant and shopping listings (with directions), and the ability to make hotel and flight reservations.

COST Free; \$14.99 for the Gold version, which gives you faster updates. **RUNS ON** BlackBerry, iPhone/iPod Touch, Symbian, Windows Mobile.

► Stay on top of your trip

The mobile version of the website **Triplt**, by far the most useful travel planning and management service online, accesses flight, hotel, restaurant, and any other information you've entered into the "My Trips" section of the site. It also offers one-touch calling to airlines and hotels, as well as links to Google Maps.

COST Free. **RUNS ON** Android, BlackBerry, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

► Prep your suitcase

Packing Pro allows you

to choose from a selection of templates (male, female, family, business, etc.) that include ideas for clothing, gadgets, and toiletries, plus helpful to-do lists (recharge batteries; photocopy documents). Or you can create your own custom list and use it as a template for future trips.

COST \$0.99; \$2.99 for the version with the most packing categories. **RUNS ON** iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

► Hands-free advice

Instead of spending your time sifting through online search results to find the hot new play to see or the perfect romantic restaurant, you can hand off the work to **Siri**, a voice-activated virtual personal assistant that will perform online tasks for you. Just speak (or type) into your iPhone at the prompt, and Siri does the rest—even going so far as to buy theater tickets or make dinner reservations.

COST Free. **RUNS ON** iPhone/iPod Touch.

RUNNER-UP BlackBerry and Windows Mobile users can try **Tellme** (free), which offers similar functionality.



AIR TRAVEL

► Research airline schedules

With the most comprehensive flight database, **eSkyGuide** from T+L's parent company, American Express, gives you the full schedule for all flights along a particular route, including ones that are sold out (so you can try for standby). It also identifies the airport nearest to tourist destinations or addresses and offers up-to-the-minute status reports on delays and weather, along with contact information for airlines.

COST \$4.99. **RUNS ON** iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

► Check your flight status

FlightTrack Pro gives you a flight's departure time, current speed, altitude, location, and odds for an on-time arrival.



Most important, you can share flight information with your friends via Twitter, Facebook, or e-mail, which is useful if someone's coming to pick you up at the airport. Just enter an airline and flight number, choose by route, or simply sync the service with your Triplt itineraries (see above), and FlightTrack will send you the latest updates, including gate status and delays. **COST** \$4.99; \$9.99 for the Pro version, which adds more real-time information. **RUNS ON** Android, BlackBerry, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

THE LATEST SMART PHONES



iPhone 4

The thinnest of its kind on the market (0.37 inches), with an improved, high-res screen, a dual-lens (front and back) camera, and an HD camcorder to edit videos right on your phone. AT&T, \$199 (16GB) or \$299 (32GB) with a two-year plan.



Droid Incredible by HTC

The new Droid Incredible from Verizon Wireless runs on Google's versatile Android operating system, has a large, vibrant screen (3.7 inches), and is equipped with an 8-megapixel camera. Verizon, \$200.



BlackBerry Bold 9650

Business travelers who need easy e-mail access will appreciate the new BlackBerry, which has the platform's signature keyboard and an improved Web browser. Sprint, Verizon, \$150-\$200.



HTC HD2

If you like a big screen for watching videos and use Windows products such as Outlook and Office, then HTC's superfast HD2 with Windows Mobile is ideal. T-Mobile, \$200.



Palm Pixi Plus

One of the least expensive of the latest smart phones, the Palm Pixi Plus offers much of the touch-screen ease-of-use functionality of the iPhone, but has a real keyboard. Verizon, Sprint, AT&T, free-\$50.

► Make the most of a layover

No more lugging around heavy carry-ons in unfamiliar airport terminals looking for a healthy snack, newspaper stand, or ATM. **Gate Guru** lists all the businesses near your gate—along with user ratings, reviews, pictures, and maps—in 100 airports around the world.

COST Free.

RUNS ON iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch (Android and BlackBerry versions coming later this year).



MAPPING AND DIRECTIONS

► Get around a city

How do you move from point A to point B in a snap? **HopStop** maps the route with directions for subway, rail, bus, walking, or taxis (or a combination of transportation methods) in more than 15 cities across the U.S. and Europe.

COST Free.

RUNS ON iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

RUNNERS-UP **AnyStop** (free; Android), **MetRO** (free; BlackBerry, iPhone, Windows Mobile), **Sub MapsXHD** (\$1.99; iPad).

► Navigate the roads (domestic)

The most easy-to-use of the full GPS navigation apps, **Navigon** features text-to-speech directions, real-time traffic updates (\$24.99 extra), and information about points of interest along your route. Other great features: the ability to set anyone from your address book as your "destination," easy-to-read maps, and 3-D views complete with road signs.

COST \$79.99 (North America).

RUNS ON iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch, Windows Mobile.

► Navigate the roads (international)

With 28 separately sold packages for regions on every continent but Antarctica, **TomTom's** navigational apps are ideal for international travel. The on-screen design includes information like time to destination and time until the

next turn, and the option to toggle between 2-D and 3-D views.

COST \$39.99–\$99.99.

RUNS ON iPhone/iPod Touch.

► Explore a U.S. city

UpNext offers highly realistic 3-D maps (complete with color-coded neighborhoods and block-by-block street representations) that let you check off filters to add markers for restaurants, hotels, and other services. Rare among app maps, these are accessible when you're offline. Right now the service is available for Austin, Texas, Boston, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Portland, Oregon, with six more cities coming soon.

COST \$1.99.

RUNS ON iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

RUNNERS-UP **Google Maps** (free; Android, BlackBerry, iPad, iPhone, Symbian, Windows Mobile).

► See what's around you

Wikitude takes street-view maps to a head-spinning new level by

offering you an "augmented reality" view of your surroundings. Just point your phone's camera at the scene around you and it annotates your screen with clickable information about restaurants, subway stops, and even historical facts.

COST Free.

RUNS ON Android, iPhone, Symbian.

► Search a local directory (domestic)

Need to find a restaurant or a gas station on the double? **Yelp** uses your phone's GPS to provide you with a list of local businesses (along with addresses and mapped directions) in more than a dozen categories, from movie theaters and restaurants to drugstores and taxi companies. The best part: the site's very opinionated users weigh in with their reviews and ratings. There are 11 million reviews for U.S. destinations—both urban and rural.

COST Free.

RUNS ON Android, BlackBerry, iPhone/iPod Touch, Palm WebOS.



► Search a local directory (international)

Aloqa links not only to user-generated restaurant and bar reviews from Yelp but also to a plethora of listings for movies, live music, ATM's, food to go, and more, based on your real-time location. Unlike Yelp and its ilk, Aloqa is as strong internationally as it is in the United States.

COST Free.

RUNS ON Android, BlackBerry, iPhone/iPod Touch, Windows Mobile, Java-enabled phones. »

SPOTLIGHT TRANSLATION AND LANGUAGE



Lonely Planet Phrasebooks

These interactive versions of Lonely Planet's print books offer quick reference to more than 600 key travel phrases, which are delivered to you via text (with phonetic spellings) or audio recording. **BEST FOR** First-time visitors. The app, which covers 10 major language groups, makes coming up with the right words easy.

COST \$9.99. **RUNS ON** Android, iPhone.



Jibbigo

Speak an English phrase into your iPhone's mic and Jibbigo recites the translation in Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, or even Iraqi Arabic. Unlike many other translation apps, it doesn't require a (potentially costly) data connection. **BEST FOR** Foreign-language neophytes. If you're too nervous to say the words, Jibbigo will do it for you! **COST** \$24.99–\$27.99. **RUNS ON** iPhone.



Lingopal 44

Get text or voice versions of travel phrases in 44 languages (from Afrikaans and Icelandic to Korean and Mandarin). Phrases are divided into categories, including directions, business, emergencies, and banks. **BEST FOR** Immersion travelers who will make use of the far-flung languages and tutorials on how to both flirt and insult in local parlance. **COST** \$9.99. **RUNS ON** iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.



iTranslate

Type in a phrase, and this app will translate it into any of 52 languages. You can also download dozens of text-to-speech voices for 16 languages, including Dutch, Italian, and Turkish (iPhone version only). **BEST FOR** Business travelers on an expense account. You need to be online to work the app, so beware: roaming data charges will apply. **COST** Free–\$0.99. **RUNS ON** iPhone/iPod Touch.



HOTELS

► Locate a boutique hotel

Use **StayHip** to see instant listings—and slide shows—of more than 400 boutique hotels in your immediate vicinity or in any location in the world. Just enter a city or click on a destination on a map to find available rooms and rates; bookings can be made right from the phone. **COST** Free. **RUNS ON** Android, iPhone/iPod Touch.

► Book a last-minute room

Booking.com's **HotelsNearMe** gives you real-time availability for accommodations near you, along with the ability to make reservations through the app—perfect when you're scrambling to find a room after an unexpected

overnight flight delay. **COST** Free. **RUNS ON** BlackBerry, iPhone/iPod Touch.

CAR TRAVEL

► Get a traffic report

So you can stay hands-free on the road, **Aha Radio** reads you the latest GPS-enhanced traffic reports on a pre-entered, customized route, using Clear Channel sources and updates from other drivers. The app also announces news, Facebook and Twitter posts, and points of interest along the way. **COST** Free. **RUNS ON** iPhone/iPod Touch.

► Score a parking spot

Using your phone's GPS, **Primo Spot** provides you with a 3-D map highlighting the rates of the nearest parking garages and the availability of street parking around you. (It can also tell you about nearby bike racks.) It's available for Boston and New York, with more cities on the way. **COST** \$2.99. **RUNS ON** Android, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

► Avoid tickets

While it isn't quite a radar detector, the automated voice of GPS-enabled **Trapster** gives drivers warnings about speed traps, road cam-

eras at intersections, checkpoints, and common police waiting areas—it's also all laid out on a map. **COST** Free.

RUNS ON Android, BlackBerry, Garmin/TomTom, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch, Palm WebOS, Symbian, Windows Mobile.

FOOD AND RESTAURANTS

► Pick a restaurant

Yelp and Aloqa are great for user-generated restaurant reviews, but one of the best sources remains **Zagat to Go**. The service displays a map with your location and icons indicating nearby restaurants (as well as hotels, nightlife, and shopping) for 60 U.S. cities and 30 international cities, including Paris and London. Click on the icon and you'll get the full review, along with the average price of a meal and Zagat's numeric ratings for food, service, and décor. You can also search using filters, such as "open late" or "trendy." **COST** \$9.99.

RUNS ON Android, BlackBerry, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch, Palm, Symbian.

RUNNERS-UP **Michelin Guides** (\$18.99; iPhone), **OpenTable** (free; Android, BlackBerry, iPhone, Palm, Windows

Mobile), **Urban Spoon** (free; Android, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch).

► Eat at a food truck

While the food-truck trend means great meals on the go, tracking down the actual vehicles can be difficult. Enter **RoadStoves**, which gives you an up-to-the-minute list of the nearest gourmet food trucks—along with directions to wherever they happen to be located. The service is currently available in Los Angeles and coming to more cities soon. **COST** \$0.99. **RUNS ON** iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

► See dishes at nearby restaurants

While other apps may tell you where to eat, **Foodspotting** helps you decide what to order. The location-based service gives you user-generated pictures and reviews of specific dishes in your immediate area—all served up in an attractive scrolling interface. **COST** Free. **RUNS ON** iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

ADVICE AND RESOURCES

► Check for rain

Not only does **WeatherBug** give you hour-by-hour forecasts and corresponding satellite views but it also has live camera feeds from 1,600 locations around the country. On Android phones, you can set up weather widgets for specific locations; on BlackBerries, you can upload forecasts to your calendar, so you'll know what to wear. **COST** Free-\$0.99; \$4.99 for enhanced updates and maps. **RUNS ON** Android, BlackBerry, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch, »



CLOSER LOOK ROAMING ABROAD

Something to consider before traveling outside the U.S.: Will you need to check your e-mail, surf the Web, or share pictures or videos while you're on the go? If the answer is yes to any of those activities, then you'll need to add an international data package to your plan, or you could end up with a massive wireless bill. These can be had for as little as \$25 per month from all the major carriers and can be canceled as soon as you return home. (Just be sure to buy enough data access so you're not charged extra; the cheapest options are often rather skimpy.) Another option: if you can wait until you're back at a hotel Wi-Fi hot spot to check your mail or use your apps, then just turn off your phone's roaming capabilities (usually found in the Settings area).

UPDATE THE IPAD



Apple's newest game changer, the iPad, may look like a giant iPhone, but its increased display size (9.7 inches versus the iPod's 3.5 inches) means that maps are more navigable, pictures and videos are more crisp and realistic, and standard-page-size travel guides are easier to read. More than 5,000 iPad-specific apps are already out, but almost all iPhone apps will work on an iPad, too, although they'll be a bit harder to read (unless you have high-def versions, which are made to translate onto a larger screen).

Palm WebOS, Symbian, Windows Mobile.

► **Know what to tip**

For detailed information on what to give everyone from concierges and waiters to ski instructors and tour guides in 108 countries and regions, there's **Tipping Tips**. What's more, the app advises what to give based on both the standards of the destination and the level of service received. And if you're dining with a group, the calculator will break down how much each person owes.

COST \$0.99.

RUNS ON iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

► **Find a restroom**

Using your GPS location, address, intersection, or zip code, **Sit or Squat** provides you with the nearest restrooms, along with maps and even candid user ratings and reviews.

COST Free.

RUNS ON Android, BlackBerry, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

► **Stay healthy**

An essential part of your digital first-aid kit,

MPassport will help you find nearby doctors, dentists, pharmacies, and hospitals and schedule appointments in 20 different cities worldwide, including London, Paris, Madrid, Nairobi, Quito, Beijing, and Hong Kong. It can also translate medication names into other languages.

COST Free.

RUNS ON iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

► **See what a cruise ship really looks like**

With video feeds of more than 100 cruise ships, **Cruise Cam** lets you see everything from the pool deck to the dining room of a given ship; the app also has cameras at 150 ports of call.

COST \$1.99.

RUNS ON iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.



STAYING CONNECTED

► **Get unlimited Wi-Fi access**

Sign up with **Boingo Mobile Wi-Fi**, and you'll

have unlimited access to thousands of partnering Wi-Fi hot spots in more than 70 countries around the globe.

COST Free, plus \$7.95 per month service charge.

RUNS ON Android, BlackBerry, iPhone/iPod Touch, Nokia, Symbian, Windows Mobile.

► **Find nearby hot spots**

JiWire's **Wi-Fi Finder** online database gives you mapped listings of the nearest free and paid Wi-Fi areas in your vicinity. Click on an icon to find out how much the network costs and how to get there.

COST Free.

RUNS ON Android, iPhone/iPod Touch.

► **Call home**

Want to save money on your calls? Traveler standby **Skype** sends phone calls over Wi-Fi, so you don't have to turn on your data roaming service (see "Roaming Abroad," page 120). The service offers free calls to other Skype users and reduced-rate calls (along the lines of

2.1 cents a minute from Europe, or less) to regular phones.

COST Free.

RUNS ON Android, BlackBerry (Verizon), iPhone/iPod Touch.

RUNNER-UP **Line2**, a similar app for Android and iPhone that lets you make unlimited international calls for \$14.95 a month.



THE EXTRAS

► **Record your findings**

How do you remember a great bottle of wine that you tried in Burgundy last summer? Or the perfect little sandal-maker in Positano? Just take a picture—or text or audio note—and upload it to

Evernote, a service accessible from your phone or any Web-connected computer. Searching among your notes is easy: you can look under tags, text, and even words that are embedded in images. **COST** Free; \$45 per year for the premium version, which includes



extra memory and more features.

RUNS ON Android, BlackBerry, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch, Palm WebOS, Windows Mobile.

► **Share your travels**

Trip Journal, which will track your route using GPS, lets you record your travels on the go through text, pictures, and video and share them with friends and family on social networks.

COST \$0.99.

RUNS ON Android, iPad, iPhone/iPod Touch.

► **Google your world**

Like Wikitude, **Google Goggles** uses your phone's camera to annotate the world around you—but it goes a step further. Take a picture of foreign-language text and it'll give a translation; photograph a wine bottle and it'll give you links to product information. It also offers Yelp-like information about restaurants and other points of interest in the area.

COST Free.

RUNS ON Android.

► **Travel with your pet**

Mo's Nose is the canine equivalent of Yelp, allowing you to search for dog-friendly restaurants, hotels, and stores, along with dog parks and running routes in U.S. cities.

COST Free.

RUNS ON iPhone/iPod Touch.

SPOTLIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY



Hipstamatic

Automatically give pictures taken with your cell phone that vintage, 1970's-era Instamatic look. This whimsical photo-enhancement app comes with a choice of six virtual lenses, eight films, and six flashes to transform your images with a grainy, faded aesthetic that makes for distinctive Facebook updates and multimedia messages or e-mails right from your phone. **COST** \$1.99. **RUNS ON** iPhone.



SodaSnap

Turn any photo on your iPhone into a virtual postcard (complete with text greeting) that you can post on Facebook or Twitter or share via e-mail. The SodaSnap+ premium version lets you resize and make basic edits on your cards, plus you can pick from a variety of fonts for the text box. **COST** Free–\$2.99. **RUNS ON** iPad, iPhone.



CameraBag

This photo-processing app lets you apply classic effects to images taken using your camera with just a few clicks and finger swipes. Some of the iconic camera looks include 1962 (high-contrast black-and-white), Instant (looks like a Polaroid shot, complete with borders), and Helga (faded colors from a trendy square-format camera). **COST** \$1.99–\$2.99. **RUNS ON** iPad, iPhone.