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Travel Apps To Help You Explore Latin America (VIDEO)

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The holidays are here. One of my favorite parts of this season is that there is a little time off to do some travelling to Latin America. It's hard to imagine that with this harsh winter weather upon us in the northern hemisphere, Rio de Janeiro, Lima and Buenos Aires are enjoying their sunny summer.

Traveling as frequently as I do has taught me many tricks to help make travel more comfortable. Thanks to the revolution of smartphones, there are many apps that you can now use to make your life much easier along the way, from booking a flight to selecting places to visit when you arrive at your destination. Here are several useful applications:

SeatGuru is one of my favorite apps when booking a flight. Seating configurations vary by airline and aircraft type. You could say that all seats are uncomfortable but some are definitely less uncomfortable than others. With Seat Guru you just have to enter the airline, flight number and aircraft and it will show you a diagram with the best seats. Those in red you should avoid, yellow are a little better and those in green are the least uncomfortable, so you can get to your destination a little more rested.

Minube, is a travel guide in Spanish created with the experience of over half a million travelers. Instead of visiting the same old places, you can discover the hidden spots of the city that suit your style and share your travel experiences through social networks. Their travel guides have a wealth of information on what to do, where to eat and you'll also find the shared experiences of other travelers on various topics. The app has great pictures and the address of each place. You can also have your own profile where you can create lists of your favorite spots, such as your favorite restaurants in Buenos Aires. These lists can be public or private and you can invite your friends to follow you and of course, keep up with their adventures too.

Tourist Eye is another travel guide alternative that can help you plan your trip and has info on 10,000 cities and 200,000 places like tourist attractions, restaurants, parks, museums and much more. It's available in Spanish and the app integrates community tips from Foursquare, sending you personalized recommendations and ideas based on your travel preferences. A clever feature is that texts, maps and photos of your trip are designed to be able to be accessed locally on the phone without needing an internet connection, so you should download the information before leaving your home country so you don't have to access your data plan internationally.

Speaking of data plans, I imagine you've heard the horror stories of people who travel internationally and return home to find a bill of hundreds or thousands of dollars because their phones were receiving emails automatically or browsing the internet abroad where international rates apply. The app *Data On-Off* helps you turn off your data plan before your trip without having to access a complicated and mysterious menu. I recommend placing it on your home screen before traveling to avoid a shock when you return.

A new generation of connected travelers are transforming the way we visit new places and are making maps and traditional travel guides obsolete. By using the information gathered and shared collectively by millions of people, it's getting easier to find good places based on their merit and on the positive experiences of their clients. Having an authentic local experience in each country is now within everyone's reach.

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