

Worldwide Mobile Data 2021

*****STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY 9 APRIL,
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The cost of 1GB of mobile data in 230 countries – UK ranks 78th in the world for cost of mobile data

- 6,148 mobile data plans in 230 countries were gathered and analysed by Cable.co.uk to compare the cost of one gigabyte (1GB) of mobile data across the entire world
- The UK comes in at 78th in the world, with 1GB of mobile data costing an average of USD 1.42
- Israel is the cheapest country in which to buy mobile data, with the average cost of 1GB at USD 0.05
- The United States is one of the most expensive developed nations for purchasing mobile data, coming in 154th in the world, and with an average 1GB cost of USD 3.33
- Equatorial Guinea is the most expensive place in which to buy mobile data. The average cost of 1GB there is USD 49.67 – nearly a thousand times more expensive than 1GB in chart-topper Israel
- Six of the ten most expensive countries to buy mobile data are in sub-Saharan Africa. Island nations in Oceania and the Caribbean also tend to be among the most expensive in the world
- You can download [the full data set](#), plus further insights, a detailed research methodology description, interactive tools and an interactive map via [this study's landing page](#) – please link either to this or [to our homepage](#) if you intend to use our data. Please see the editor's notes for more information concerning this request

[EMBARGOED UNTIL] Friday, 9 April, 2021: Data from 6,148 mobile data plans in 230 countries were gathered and analysed by Cable.co.uk between 8 December 2020 and 25 February 2021.

Israel is home to the cheapest mobile data plans in the world, with one gigabyte (1GB) of data costing an average of just USD 0.05. The most expensive place in the world to buy mobile data is Equatorial Guinea, where the average cost of 1GB is USD 49.67 – nearly a thousand times the cost of mobile data in Israel. Kyrgyzstan is a close second to Israel with 1GB costing USD 0.15 on average. It's followed by Fiji (USD 0.19) in third place.

The cheapest mobile data in Western Europe is in Italy in fourth place overall, where the average price of 1GB is just USD 0.27. France (USD 0.41) is the second cheapest in Western Europe followed by San Marino (USD 0.43) and Denmark (USD 0.79). The UK (USD 1.42) is the 11th cheapest in Western Europe and 78th cheapest in the world.

Within Eastern Europe, Moldova (USD 0.32) is the cheapest followed by Poland (USD 0.64), Macedonia (USD 0.96) and Romania (USD 1.18). Czech Republic is the most expensive in the region, with 1GB of data costing USD 8.15 on average. Of the Baltic nations, Lithuania is the cheapest at USD 1.38.

A number of CIS countries are among the very cheapest in the world for mobile data and all but two sit inside the less expensive half of the table. Kyrgyzstan is second-cheapest in the world overall with an average of USD 0.15, ahead of sixth-placed Russia (USD 0.29) and 13th-placed Belarus (USD 0.43).

Israel is the cheapest country in the Near East region and cheapest in the world, with 1GB costing an average of USD 0.05. Turkey (USD 0.63) is a distant second-cheapest, closely followed by Kuwait (USD 0.81) and Iraq (1.14). The most expensive mobile data in the region can be found in Yemen, where the average price of 1GB is USD 15.98.

Asian nations make up over a quarter of the top 20 cheapest countries for mobile data, with both Bangladesh (USD 0.34) and Sri Lanka (USD 0.38) in the top ten. Only three Asian countries are more expensive than the global average of USD 4.21 – South Korea (USD 4.72), Taiwan (USD 5.67) and British Indian Ocean Territory, the most expensive in the region at USD 7.50.

All but one of the seven North African countries are in the cheapest half of the table. Algeria is the cheapest in North Africa at USD 0.51 and the most expensive in the region, Mauritania (USD 5.56), the only country to exceed the global average of USD 4.07. Northern Africa is the cheapest overall region in the world.

Sub-Saharan Africa on the other hand has just one country among the top ten cheapest in the world – Sudan, in fifth place overall at USD 0.27. The region also has six out of the ten most expensive countries in the world, with Equatorial Guinea the most expensive in the world (USD 49.67), joined by Saint Helena (USD 39.87), São Tomé and Príncipe (USD 30.97), Malawi (USD 25.46) and Chad (USD 23.33) at the bottom of the table.

The average price of 1GB of mobile data in both Bermuda (USD 19.80) and Canada (USD 5.72) is in excess of the global average of USD 4.07. The United States is the cheapest country in the region for the first time in this study, and now has an average cost of USD 3.33 per 1GB of data.

The cheapest mobile data plans in Central America can be found in Nicaragua, where 1GB of data costs USD 0.94 on average. Prices are somewhat steeper in El Salvador (USD 1.33) and Honduras (USD 1.56). The most expensive country in Central America

is Panama, where an average 1GB costs USD 4.49.

Most Caribbean nations are in the more expensive half of the list. The Cayman Islands are the most expensive in the Caribbean with an average of USD 11.97, while an average 1GB in the Haiti is 14 times cheaper at USD 0.85.

Chile, with an average of USD 0.39, and Brazil (USD 0.92) are the only South American countries to make it into the top 50 cheapest in the world. Ecuador (USD 1.06) is the next cheapest in South America followed by Peru (USD 1.15). The most expensive in the region is the Falkland Islands at USD 44.56 – it is also the second most expensive in the world.

The average 1GB of data costs USD 0.56 in Samoa, making it the second-cheapest country in Oceania, just behind Fiji (USD 0.19). The region's island nations are mostly in the more expensive half of the table, with Tokelau the most expensive at USD 20.48. Australia comes in third place in the region at USD 0.70, with New Zealand a long way behind – 15th in the region with an average 1GB cost of USD 6.99.

In previous reports, in the middle of 2020 Cable.co.uk analysed more than half a billion broadband speed tests to [rank 221 countries by average internet speed](#), and at the end of 2020 compared 3,288 broadband deals globally to reveal the [cost of getting online in 211 countries](#). Data was also gathered last year to better understand the [effect of Covid lockdown periods on global network speeds](#).

Commenting on the UK specifically, Dan Howdle, consumer telecoms analyst at Cable.co.uk, said:

“Perhaps thanks to Covid and factors such as the industry focus on 5G rollout, the UK marketplace has failed to substantially better its value proposition over the last 12 months when it comes to the cost of mobile data. It has, in fact, when measured on the day increased pricing per 1GB of data on average.

"However, it should be noted that due to the increase in the number of unlimited data packages available – and indeed providers' propensity to push those to new customers – it is unlikely we will measure drops in data pricing matching those in previous years, which have largely come down to increases in data limits."

Commenting on the worldwide rankings, Dan Howdle, consumer telecoms analyst at Cable.co.uk, said:

“Many of the cheapest countries in which to buy mobile data fall roughly into one of two categories. Some have excellent mobile and fixed broadband infrastructure and so providers are able to offer large amounts of data, which brings down the price per gigabyte. Others with less advanced broadband networks are heavily reliant on mobile data and the economy dictates that prices must be low, as that's what people can afford.

“At the more expensive end of the list, we have countries where often the infrastructure isn’t great but also where consumption is very small. People are often buying data packages of just a tens of megabytes at a time, making a gigabyte a relatively large and therefore expensive amount of data to buy. Many countries in the middle of the list have good infrastructure and competitive mobile markets, and while their prices aren’t among the cheapest in the world they wouldn’t necessarily be considered expensive by its consumers.”

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