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Telephone Tips for Overseas Calls

Many Americans are intimidated by dialing European phone numbers. You needn't be. It's simple, once you crack the code.

Making calls within a European country: About half of all European countries use area codes (like we do) — the other half uses a direct-dial system without area codes.

To make calls within a country that uses a direct-dial system (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland), you dial the same number whether you're calling across the country or across the street.

In countries that use area codes (such as Austria, Croatia, Britain, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, and Turkey), you dial the local number when calling within a city, and you add the area code if calling long-distance within the country. Example: To call a Munich hotel (tel. 089/264-349) within Munich, dial 264-349; to call it from Frankfurt, dial 089/264-349.

Note that some countries, particularly those with area codes, can have phone numbers of varying lengths. For instance, a hotel might have a seven-digit phone number and an eight-digit fax number.

Making international calls: Always start with the international access code: 011 if you're calling from America or Canada, 00 from anywhere in Europe. (If you see a phone number that begins with +, you have to replace the + with the international access code.) Then dial the country code of the country you're calling (see chart below).

What you dial next depends on the phone system of the country you're calling. If the country uses area codes, drop the initial zero of the area code, then dial the rest of the number. Example: To call the Munich hotel (tel. 089/264-349) from Italy, dial 00, then 49 (Germany's country code), then 89/264-349.

Countries that use direct-dial systems vary in how they're accessed internationally by phone. For instance, if you're making an international call to Denmark, the Czech Republic, Italy, Norway, Portugal, or Spain, simply dial the international access code, country code, and phone number. Example: To call a Madrid hotel (tel. 915-212-900) from Germany, dial 00, 34 (Spain's country code), then 915-212-900. But if you're calling Belgium, France, Poland, or Switzerland, drop the initial zero of the phone number. Example: To call a Paris hotel (tel. 01 47 05 49 15) from London, dial 00, then 33 (France's country code), then 1 47 05 49 15 (phone number without initial zero).

Calling home: To dial the US direct, first enter the international access code (00 from Europe), then the country code of the US (1), then the area code and the seven-digit number. To call me from France, dial 00-1-425/771-8303. Every country has its quirks. Try pausing between codes if you're having trouble. Off-hour calls are cheaper. Remember, from most of Europe, it's six hours earlier in New York and nine hours earlier in California.

European Calling Chart

Just smile and dial, using this key: AC = Area Code, LN = Local Number.

Country	Country Code	Calling within	Calling from the US/Canada	Calling from another European country
Austria	43	AC + LN	011 + 43 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 43 + AC (without the initial zero) + LN
Belgium	32	LN	011 + 32 + LN (without initial zero)	00 + 32 + LN (without initial zero)
Bosnia-Herzegovina	387	AC + LN	011 + 387 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 387 + AC (without initial zero) + LN
Britain	44	AC + LN	011 + 44 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 44 + AC (without initial zero) + LN
Croatia	385	AC + LN	011 + 385 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 385 + AC (without initial zero) + LN
Czech Republic	420	LN	011 + 420 + LN	00 + 420 + LN
Denmark	45	LN	011 + 45 + LN	00 + 45 + LN
Estonia	372	LN	011 + 372 + LN	00 + 372 + LN
Finland	358	AC + LN	011 + 358 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	999 + 358 + AC (without initial zero) + LN
France	33	LN	011 + 33 + LN (without initial zero)	00 + 33 + LN (without initial zero)
Germany	49	AC + LN	011 + 49 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 49 + AC (without initial zero) + LN
Greece	30	LN	011 + 30 + LN	00 + 30 + LN

Hungary	36	06 + AC + LN	011 + 36 + AC + LN	00 + 36 + AC + LN
Ireland	353	AC + LN	011 + 353 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 353 + AC (without initial zero) + LN
Italy	39	LN	011 + 39 + LN	00 + 39 + LN
Montenegro	382	AC + LN	011 + 382 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 382 + AC (without initial zero) + LN
Netherlands	31	AC + LN	011 + 31 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 31 + AC (without initial zero) + LN
Norway	47	LN	011 + 47 + LN	00 + 47 + LN
Poland	48	LN	011 + 48 + LN (without initial zero)	00 + 48 + LN (without initial zero)
Portugal	351	LN	011 + 351 + LN	00 + 351 + LN
Slovakia	421	AC + LN	011 + 421 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 421 + AC (without initial zero) + LN
Slovenia	386	AC + LN	011 + 386 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 386 + AC (without initial zero) + LN
Spain	34	LN	011 + 34 + LN	00 + 34 + LN
Sweden	46	AC + LN	011 + 46 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 46 + AC (without initial zero) + LN
Switzerland	41	LN	011 + 41 + LN (without initial zero)	00 + 41 + LN (without initial zero)
Turkey	90	AC (if no initial zero is included, add one) + LN	011 + 90 + AC (without initial zero) + LN	00 + 90 + AC (without initial zero) + LN

- The instructions above apply whether you're calling a land line or a mobile phone.
- The international access codes (the first numbers you dial when making an international call) are 011 if you're calling from the US or Canada, or 00 if you're calling from virtually anywhere in Europe (except Finland, where it's 999).
- To call the US or Canada from Europe, dial 00, then 1 (the country code for the US and Canada), then the area code and number. In short, 00 + 1 + AC + LN = Hi, mom!