BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

Factory Nav vs. Your Phone — Which to Trust for Directions

Which to trust for directions The car's screen or your phone An Extended Guide · No. 1922

An Extended Guide · No. 1922

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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START HERE

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1. The 60-Second Version If you only read one page, read this one. Here is the whole guide in a nutshell. For everyday driving, your phone maps are usually the better bet. They are free, they update themselves, and they show live traffic so you can slide around a backup before you are stuck in it. The map built into your car's dashboard still has one real job: it keeps working when your phone has no cell signal, which happens on plenty of rural Ohio roads. So think of your phone as the main map and the car's built-in map as the backup. The best part is you do not have to choose forever. You can use your phone on the car's own screen through CarPlay or Android Auto, and keep the factory map tucked away for the day you need it. Use your phone maps most of the time for live traffic and fresh roads. Keep the car's built-in map as a backup for no-signal areas. Before a trip into the country, download an offline map on your phone. Connect CarPlay or Android Auto so the phone map shows on the big screen. Save home, the doctor, and church as Favorites so you are not typing. WATCH OUT Set up your route, your Favorites, and any offline maps while you are safely parked. Poking at a screen while the car is moving is how good drivers get into trouble. THE BASICS 2. What Factory Nav Means The map that came built into your car. Factory nav is the navigation system that came built into your car when you bought it. It lives right in the dashboard screen, and it does not need your phone to work. You tap an address, it draws a route, and a voice tells you where to turn. The maps are stored inside the car itself, on a little drive or a memory card, which is exactly why it keeps working out where there is no cell tower for miles. That is its great strength. The catch is that those stored maps are frozen in time from whenever the car was built. New roads, new roundabouts, and changed exits will not show up unless you update them, and updating can be a chore. We will cover all of that. For now, just picture it as a paper atlas that happens to talk.

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THE BASICS

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Not every car has factory nav, and that is worth checking. Many cars come with a plain radio screen that can show CarPlay or Android Auto but has no map of its own built in. If that is your car, then your phone is your navigation, full stop, and the offline-map habit becomes even more important for the no-signal roads. Other cars, usually the higher trim levels, have a full built-in map that was part of a navigation package when the car was ordered. If you are not sure which you have, look for a Nav or Maps button on the dashboard, or check your owner's manual. Knowing what your car actually has tells you how much you need to lean on the phone. 3. What Phone Maps Means The map that lives in your pocket. Phone maps are the map apps on your cell phone. On an iPhone that is usually Apple Maps, and on any phone you can also use Google Maps or Waze, both of which are free to download. These apps pull fresh information over your cell signal, so the roads are always current and you get live traffic in color right on the road ahead. You can use them on the little phone screen, or you can show them on your car's big dashboard screen through CarPlay for an iPhone or Android Auto for an Android phone. That is the setup I steer most folks toward. You get the always-fresh map and the easy searching of your phone, shown large and simple on the car's screen, with the voice coming through the car speakers. The reason these maps stay so current is that the carmakers do not make them; big technology companies do, and keeping the maps fresh is their whole business. When a road changes anywhere in the country, it gets fixed on everyone's phone soon after, at no cost to you. That is a very different arrangement from the map baked into your car, which was finished the day your car rolled off the line. None of this requires you to be a technology person. If you can send a text or look something up on your phone, you can already use a phone map; it is the same kind of tapping and talking you do every day. GOOD TO KNOW CarPlay and Android Auto are just a way to put your phone's map, music, and calls onto the car's screen. They do not replace the car's own built-in map; both can live side by side.

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THE SHORT ANSWER

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4. Phone for Everyday, Factory for Backup Here is the plan I give almost everyone. If you want one simple rule, here it is. Use your phone maps for your everyday driving, and keep the car's built-in map as your backup. The phone wins on the two things that matter most day to day: it always has the newest roads, and it shows you live traffic so you can dodge a jam. The factory map wins on exactly one thing, but it is an important one. It still works when your phone loses its signal. So most days you drive with the phone, and on the rare day you are deep in the country with no bars on the phone, you lean on the car. You are not picking a winner for life. You are keeping the right tool handy for each situation, which is really all good directions come down to. I know some folks feel they ought to use the car's built-in map because they paid for it, and it feels like a waste not to. I understand that, but do not let it box you in. The map you paid for is still there as your backup, doing an important job on the no-signal roads. Using the free phone map for everyday driving is not throwing away the factory one; it is simply using each where it does the better job. Think of it like having both a good flashlight and the overhead lights at home. You do not feel bad using the light switch just because you own a flashlight. You use whichever one fits the moment. WHY THE PHONE 5. Why Phone Maps Usually Win Three reasons they earn the everyday job. Let me spell out why I lean on the phone for the day to day. First, the maps are always fresh. When a road changes or a new store opens, it shows up on your phone within days, because the app pulls its information from the internet. You never have to update anything yourself. Second, the phone shows live traffic, which the car's built-in map usually cannot. Third, searching is far easier, because you can just talk to it. Say the name of a restaurant and it finds it. The car's built-in search often makes you spell everything out one letter at a time with a little dial, which is slow and fussy. Add it all up and the phone simply does the common jobs better. Fresh maps that update themselves, with no trips to the dealer. Live traffic shown in color so you can avoid the slow spots. Easy search by voice instead of spelling out an address.

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WHY THE CAR

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It is free; there is no map subscription to renew.

6. Where Factory Nav Still Shines Do not write off the dashboard map just yet. The built-in map still has its place, and I would not rip it out. Its biggest gift is that it works with no cell signal at all, because the whole map is stored inside the car. Out on the back roads of Portage County and farther south, where the phone can drop to no bars, the car's map just keeps on guiding you. It also tends to show on a nice big screen that is built to be read at a glance, and it never fills up your phone's data or drains your phone battery. Some cars tie the map into the dashboard display right in front of you, so your next turn appears behind the steering wheel. For a long drive through thin-signal country, the factory map is a comfort worth having. GOOD TO KNOW Learn the basics of your car's built-in map even if you mostly use your phone. On the day the phone has no signal, you will be glad you already know which button starts it. TRAFFIC 7. Live Traffic — The Big Difference This is the feature that saves you time. Live traffic is the single biggest reason the phone earns its keep. As you drive, the app colors the road ahead: green for clear, yellow for slow, and red for stopped. Because thousands of other phones are reporting their speed, the app knows about a wreck or a backup almost the moment it happens. It can then offer to send you around the trouble on a side route and often tells you how many minutes it will save. The car's built-in map usually does not do this, or does it poorly, because it is not pulling fresh information from the internet. If you have ever crawled through a jam wishing someone had warned you, that is the gap. Phone maps are that warning, and they are doing it for free in the background the whole time you drive. This same live information is why the arrival time on a phone map tends to be honest. When it says you will get there at a quarter past the hour, it has already figured in the slow spots and the backups along your way. The car's built-in map often just guesses based on the speed limits, so it can tell you a cheerful arrival time that the traffic has no intention of

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SEARCHING

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honoring. On a trip with a time you need to make, like a doctor's appointment, that honest estimate is a real help. You can see early that traffic will cost you ten minutes and decide to leave a little sooner, rather than finding out the hard way. 8. Finding a Place You Want to Go Searching is where the phone really pulls ahead. Getting somewhere starts with telling the map where you want to go, and this is where the two really part ways. On your phone you can type a business name, an address, or even a vague idea like pharmacy near me, and it figures it out. Better yet, you can say it out loud. On the car's built-in system, search is often clumsy. Many older ones make you turn a dial to pick letters one at a time, or they only accept a full street address and choke on a business name. If you have fought with a dashboard keyboard in a parking lot, you know the frustration. The phone understands plain requests and messy spelling, and it usually guesses what you meant before you finish. Phone maps accept a business name, not just an exact address. You can search by talking instead of spelling. They forgive typos and still find the right place. They show reviews, hours, and a phone number right there. VOICE 9. Talking to Your Maps The hands-free way to set a destination. The safest way to tell your map where to go is to talk to it, and phone maps are very good at this. On CarPlay you press and hold the voice button on the steering wheel, or say the wake word, then say something plain like take me to the Ravenna library. On Android Auto you say Hey Google and then your request. The map sets the route without you touching a thing. This matters because fiddling with a screen while driving is dangerous and, in Ohio, against the hands-free law. Teaching yourself to just ask out loud keeps both hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road. It feels odd the first few times, like talking to the dashboard, but it quickly becomes second nature.

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GOOD TO KNOW

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Keep your voice request simple and name the place plainly. Short requests like directions home work far better than long, roundabout sentences. THE CATCH 10. The Cell Signal Problem The one spot where the phone can let you down. Phone maps have one real weakness, and it is worth understanding. They normally need a cell signal to pull the map and the traffic as you drive. In town and on the highway you have plenty of signal and never notice. But drive out into the hills of southern Portage County, or down a wooded county road, and the bars can drop to nothing. When that happens, a phone map that was not prepared can freeze, lose the next turn, or go blank. This is exactly the situation the car's built-in map was made for, since it carries its whole map inside. The good news is you can prepare your phone ahead of time by downloading the area as an offline map, which we will cover next. A little planning closes this gap almost completely. There is a subtle point here that trips people up. A phone map will often keep showing the route it already started, even after the signal drops, because it had loaded a bit ahead. So you may not notice the signal is gone until you need to reroute or search for something new, and then nothing happens. That is the moment people panic. The cure is the same either way: have an offline map downloaded before you go, or know how to start the car's built-in map. Once you have one of those in place, a dead zone becomes a minor thing you planned for, not a nasty surprise that leaves you guessing at a dark country crossroads.

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OFFLINE MAPS

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11. Offline Maps — Your Dead-Zone Safety Net Download the map before you lose the signal. An offline map is a copy of an area saved right onto your phone, so the map app can guide you even with no signal. This is the trick that lets your phone cover the same no-service back roads the car's map handles. You pick a region while you are on wifi at home, the phone stores it, and then out on the road the app uses that stored copy instead of needing the internet. You still get turn-by-turn directions and the voice. The one thing you lose while offline is live traffic, since that truly needs a connection. For a drive into known thin-signal country, downloading the area the night before is a five-minute habit that can save you from being stranded with a blank screen. TIP Download offline maps while you are on home wifi, not on cell data. The map files are large, and downloading them over wifi keeps you from eating into your phone plan's data. OFFLINE MAPS 12. Saving an Offline Map on Google Maps A few taps at home and you are covered. Here is how to save an offline area in Google Maps, which works on both iPhone and Android. Do this at home on wifi, parked, with time to spare. It is a one-time setup for each area you care about, and the map will refresh itself now and then on its own.

1. Open Google Maps and tap your little round profile picture in the top corner.
2. Tap Offline maps in the menu that appears.
3. Tap Select your own map.
4. Drag and pinch the map until the box covers the area you want, such as your corner of the county.
5. Tap Download and wait for it to finish while on wifi. From then on, if your signal drops inside that saved area, Google Maps keeps guiding you from the copy on your phone. You will not get live traffic until the signal returns, but you will still get every turn.

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OFFLINE MAPS

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13. Saving an Offline Map on Apple Maps The iPhone has this built in too. If you have an iPhone and prefer Apple Maps, it can save offline areas as well. The idea is the same: grab the map at home while you are on wifi, and it will carry you through the dead zones later. Apple Maps keeps your downloaded areas in one tidy list so you can see what you have saved and delete the ones you no longer need.

1. Open Apple Maps and tap your profile picture or name at the top.
2. Tap Offline Maps.
3. Tap Download New Map.
4. Search for an area, then drag the box to size it over the roads you want.
5. Tap Download and let it finish on wifi. Both Apple and Google let you keep more than one saved area, so you can store your home county and, say, the area around a relative's town you visit often. They do take up some room on the phone, so delete any you no longer need. OHIO ROADS 14. Ohio Back Roads and No Signal Where this all actually comes up around here. Let me make this plain with our own roads. Around Portage County, you have strong signal on the big routes and in Kent, Ravenna, and Aurora. But head out toward the quieter townships, into the woods and the farmland, and your phone can lose its grip. The same thing happens on a drive down into the hills of southeastern Ohio, or up along parts of the lake. These are exactly the places where either an offline map on your phone or the car's built-in map earns its keep. If your regular trips take you through any of these thin-signal stretches, build the habit now: download the area, or make sure you know how to start the car's own map. That little bit of preparation is the whole difference between a calm drive and a worried one.

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ON THE BIG SCREEN

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15. Showing Your Phone Map on the Car Screen The best of both worlds, for most folks. You do not have to squint at the little phone screen to use phone maps. CarPlay and Android Auto let you show your phone's map on the car's big dashboard screen, with the directions spoken through the car speakers. This is the setup I recommend to most people, because you get the fresh maps and easy search of the phone, displayed large and simple where it is easy to read. Once it is connected, your map, your music, and your phone calls all appear on the car screen in big, clear buttons. The phone usually stays in your pocket or a cup holder. You still want to pick your destination before you pull out, but after that, everything runs through the car's screen and speakers the way the built-in map would. Connecting is usually as simple as plugging the phone into the right USB port with a good cable, and many newer cars do it without a cable at all, over wireless. The first time, the car may ask you to tap Allow or Trust on the phone, and after that it tends to connect on its own every time you get in. CarPlay is for iPhones, and Android Auto is for Android phones, so you use whichever matches your phone. If your car has a plain screen and you are not sure it has this feature, look for a phone or CarPlay symbol near the USB port, or ask me and I will tell you in a moment whether your car can do it. ON THE BIG SCREEN 16. Making a Phone Map Your Default on CarPlay Tell the iPhone which map to open. If you have an iPhone, you can pick whether CarPlay opens Apple Maps, Google Maps, or Waze when you ask for directions. All three can run on CarPlay; it is just a matter of which one answers when you talk to Siri. To use Google Maps or Waze, download the app first from the App Store. After that, the phone will offer to use your chosen map.

1. Download Google Maps or Waze from the App Store if you want to use one of those.
2. On CarPlay, tap the app you want, such as Google Maps, to open it the first time and tap through its sign-in.
3. When you ask Siri for directions, it will offer to use your preferred map.
4. To reorder the icons, open the car screen's app grid and press and hold any icon, then drag it where you like.

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GOOD TO KNOW

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On an iPhone, Siri learns which map you lean on and starts offering it automatically. There is no single on-off switch; it follows your habit. ON THE BIG SCREEN 17. Choosing Your Default on Android Auto Android lets you set the map that opens. On an Android phone running Android Auto, you can also choose which map leads the way. Google Maps and Waze both work, and Android makes it easy to set your favorite as the default so your directions always open in the one you like best. Do this parked, in the Android Auto settings on the car screen or in the phone's settings.

1. Make sure the map you want, such as Waze, is installed from the Play Store.
2. On the car screen, open the app launcher, the grid of dots.
3. Tap your chosen map to open it and sign in the first time.
4. In Android Auto settings, look for a default navigation app option and pick your map.
5. Test it by asking Hey Google for directions and seeing which map opens. If you cannot find the default setting, do not worry. Simply opening the map you want and starting a route in it works perfectly well; the phone tends to remember your choice. COMPARE 18. Google Maps, Apple Maps, and Waze Three good phone maps, each with its own flavor. If you are going with a phone map, you have three solid choices. They all get you there, so do not agonize over it. Google Maps is the all-rounder with the richest business listings. Apple Maps is clean and simple and comes already on the iPhone. Waze is the traffic-and-shortcut specialist, beloved by commuters but busier to look at. Here is a quick side by side. Map Best for Google Maps Searching places, reviews, all-around use Apple Maps iPhone owners who want simple and built in Waze Live traffic, police alerts, shortcuts

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ON THE ROAD

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My honest take: pick one, learn it well, and keep a second installed as a backup. Knowing one map deeply beats flitting between three. 19. Lane Guidance — Getting in the Right Lane The feature that takes the panic out of exits. One of the quietly wonderful things good maps do is lane guidance. As you come up on a complicated interchange or a fork, the map shows little arrows for each lane and highlights the ones you should be in. Instead of guessing which of five lanes keeps you on your road, you can glance over and see exactly where to be, early enough to move over calmly. Phone maps tend to do this very well and keep it up to date. Many newer car systems do it too. If busy highway interchanges make you nervous, this one feature is worth the whole setup. It turns a stressful last-second lane change into a relaxed one you saw coming from a quarter mile back. WATCH OUT Listen for the spoken cue as well as watching the arrows. A good map will say keep left or use the two right lanes, so you do not have to look down at all. ON THE ROAD 20. Speed Limits and Speed Warnings A gentle nudge to keep it reasonable. Most good maps now show the current speed limit in a little badge on the screen, and some will gently flag you if you drift well over it. This is handy on unfamiliar roads where the limit changes without much warning, like coming off a highway into a small town. Phone maps keep these limits fairly current, and Waze in particular is known for flagging speed traps and cameras that other drivers have reported. The car's built-in map may show a limit too, but it can be out of date if the maps are old. None of these are perfect, so treat the posted sign as the law and the map as a helpful reminder. Still, a glance at that little number has saved many a driver from an expensive surprise. These little alerts are genuinely helpful on the stretches of road that catch people out, like the spots where a county road drops its limit sharply as it enters a village. The map's chime gives you a nudge to ease off before you have even spotted the sign. Just do not come to

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DATA

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depend on it so much that you stop reading the signs yourself, because the map can be a step behind on a limit that changed last month. Think of it as a friendly passenger pointing things out, not as a replacement for your own eyes. Used that way, it is one more small thing that makes an unfamiliar drive feel a little calmer. 21. How Much Data Does It Use Less than you probably fear. Folks often worry that running phone maps will blow through their data plan. In truth, navigation sips data rather than gulps it. An hour of driving with the map running typically uses only a few megabytes, far less than watching a single short video. Where it adds up is if you also stream music or a podcast through the same connection, since audio uses much more than the map does. If your plan is tight, the map itself is not the thing to worry about. And if you have downloaded an offline map for the area, the phone leans on that and uses almost no data at all. For most people on a normal plan, driving with the map on all the time is simply not something you need to think about. The map itself uses very little data, just a few megabytes an hour. Streaming music or podcasts uses far more than the map. An offline map uses almost no data at all. Downloading offline maps is the big download; do that on home wifi. THE PHONE 22. Keeping Your Phone Cool and Charged A hot phone is a cranky phone. Running the map, the screen, and the connection all at once makes your phone work, and that uses battery and makes it warm. On a hot Ohio summer day, a phone baking in a windshield mount can get hot enough to slow down or even shut off to protect itself. Two simple habits prevent this. First, keep the phone plugged into a charging cable while you navigate, so the battery does not drain on a long trip. Second, keep it out of direct sun and the blast of the heater; a spot by a cool air vent is ideal, or just lay it flat rather than stuck to the hot glass. If your phone ever goes black on a long summer drive, heat is the usual reason, and a few minutes in the shade or the air conditioning brings it right back.

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WATCH OUT

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A cheap or worn charging cable can keep the battery draining even while plugged in, which leaves you stranded mid-trip. A good cable that actually keeps the phone charged is worth it. UPDATES 23. Updating Your Factory Maps How to freshen the car's built-in map. If you want to rely on the car's built-in map, it helps to keep it current, though this is more work than the phone. The way you update depends on the carmaker. Some let you download the update to a USB stick from the carmaker's website and plug it into the car. Some update over the car's own wifi if it has it. And some still want you to visit the dealer. The first stop is your owner's manual or a search for your make, model, and the words map update. Be warned that it can be a fiddly process and, as we will see, it often is not free. This is a big part of why I steer people toward the phone for everyday use and treat the factory map as the no-signal backup.

1. Find your car's make, model, and year, and look up map update for it.
2. Check whether yours updates by USB stick, over wifi, or at the dealer.
3. If it is a USB update, download the file to a stick on a computer first.
4. Plug the stick in with the car parked and running, and follow the on-screen steps.
5. If it is unclear or stuck, the dealer service desk can do it for you. UPDATES 24. Why Factory Map Updates Can Cost Money The honest truth about the price tag. Here is something that surprises people. Updating the map built into your car is often not free. Carmakers may give you a few free updates in the first few years, then start charging, sometimes a good bit, for each new map version or for a yearly map subscription. Prices vary by brand and change over time, so I will not quote a figure; check with your dealer or the carmaker's website for the current cost. The reason this matters is simple. Your phone maps update themselves for free, forever, with no stick to download and no dealer visit. When you weigh a paid update against a free phone map that is already more current, the phone usually wins for everyday use. Pay for the factory update only if you truly need offline coverage and prefer the built-in screen.

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GOOD TO KNOW

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Before paying for a factory map update, ask yourself whether a free offline map on your phone would cover the same no-signal roads. Often it will, and for nothing. ON THE ROAD 25. Rerouting Around Jams and Closures Letting the map think so you do not have to. One of the real joys of phone maps is that they keep watching the road ahead and rethink the route for you. If a wreck or a construction closure pops up miles down your path, the map notices and offers a better way around, often before you had any idea there was trouble. You just tap yes, or it reroutes on its own, and you glide past the mess on a side street. During road construction season, when half of Ohio seems to be under orange barrels, this is a genuine time-saver. The car's built-in map generally cannot do this, because it does not know about the jam. If you have ever sat in stopped traffic watching other cars peel off onto a clever detour, those drivers were almost certainly following a phone map that spotted the backup. A gentle word of caution goes with this, though. Sometimes a map, especially Waze, will send you off the highway and through a maze of little neighborhood streets to shave a couple of minutes. That is not always worth it, and it can drop you onto roads you do not know in the dark. You are always allowed to ignore a reroute and stay your course; just keep driving and the map will fall back in line with you. Use the detours when the time saved is real and the road makes sense, and wave them off when the main road is only a touch slower but far simpler. You are still the driver, and the map is only making a suggestion.

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HANDY EXTRAS

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26. Finding Gas, Food, and Rest Stops Your map is a search tool too. A map is not just for the final destination; it is a great way to find what you need along the way. On a phone map you can say or tap gas near me, coffee, or restroom, and it drops a list of nearby spots right onto your route, often with prices, hours, and reviews. It can even add a quick stop to your trip without losing your main destination. This shines on a long drive when you want the cheapest gas or a decent place to stretch your legs. The car's built-in map may have a points-of-interest list, but it is usually shorter and more out of date. When you are hungry and tired on a trip, being able to simply ask the map what is good nearby is a small comfort that adds up. Search gas, food, or restroom and see nearby options on your route. Many maps show gas prices and current business hours. You can add a stop without losing your main destination. Reviews help you skip the places best avoided. HANDY EXTRAS 27. Sharing When You Will Arrive Let the family know without a phone call. Phone maps can quietly let a loved one know you are on your way and when you will arrive, which is a comfort for family who worry. On most phone maps there is a share trip or share arrival option while a route is running. You pick a person from your contacts, and they get a link showing your progress and your estimated arrival time, updated as you drive. When you get there, the sharing usually stops on its own. This is a kind thing for adult children who like to know mom or dad made it safely, and it saves you from fumbling with the phone at the wheel to call. Set it up before you pull out, pick the person, and then just drive. They will see you arrive without you touching a thing. It is worth knowing that this sharing only happens when you turn it on for that one trip. You are not broadcasting where you are all the time; you choose the person and the moment, and it ends when the drive does. Some families like to use it for the long drives to see the grandkids, or whenever the weather turns bad on the roads. The car's built-in map generally has nothing like this, which is one more small point in the phone's favor for everyday peace of mind. If setting it up feels fiddly, it is a two-minute thing I can show you once, and then you will have it ready whenever you want the family to know you are on the

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SETUP

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28. Favorites — Home, the Doctor, and Church Save the places you go, so you stop typing. The single best habit for easy navigation is saving your regular places as Favorites. Once home, the doctor's office, your church, the grocery store, and the kids' houses are saved, getting directions is a single tap or a few spoken words. No more typing an address in a parking lot. Both phone maps and most car systems let you save these. On a phone map, search for the place, tap it, and choose Save or Add to Favorites, and give it a plain name like Doctor. Then any time you want to go, you just say take me to the doctor and off you go. Spend ten minutes at the kitchen table setting these up, and you will thank yourself every single drive after that. TIP Set Home and Work first; maps treat those two as special and use them for quick one-tap directions and smarter traffic warnings. READING THE SCREEN 29. Keeping the Map Easy to Read A cleaner screen is a safer one. A map crammed with clutter is hard to read at a glance, and glancing is all you should ever do while driving. The good news is you can tune the view to your liking. Most maps let you make the view bigger, switch to a simple day or night color scheme, and turn the map so your direction of travel is always up, which many people find far easier to follow than north-up. Bump up the font or zoom in so the roads are large. On the car screen, CarPlay and Android Auto already use big, clear buttons made for driving. The aim is a screen you can read in half a second and then get your eyes back on the road. If yours looks busy and small, a few minutes in the settings parked in the driveway can fix it. Turn on the view that keeps your direction of travel pointing up. Zoom in so the roads and your next turn are large. Use the day or night colors that are easiest on your eyes. Rely on the spoken directions so you barely need to look.

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WHEN IT ERRS

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30. When the Map Sends You Wrong Trust your own eyes first. No map is perfect, and now and then any of them, phone or factory, will steer you oddly. It might want you to turn down a road that is closed, miss a brand new exit, or confidently send you the long way. The rule is simple: your own eyes and the road signs win every time. If the map says turn where there is clearly no road, or into a closed gate, do not do it. Pull over safely, let the map catch up and recalculate, or check the signs and carry on. This is also why I like having both options available. If the phone map acts strange in a dead zone, the car's map may do better, and the other way around. A map is a helper, not a boss. Keep thinking, and you will be fine. WATCH OUT Never follow a map instruction that your eyes tell you is wrong, like turning onto a closed road or the wrong way down a one-way. The road is real; the map is only a guess. PUTTING IT TOGETHER 31. A Simple Plan for Every Trip Three quick habits and you are set. Let me tie it all together into a routine you can actually use. Before any ordinary drive, set your destination on your phone map while parked, preferably by just talking to it, and let it run on the car screen. For a trip into country you know has poor signal, download the area as an offline map the night before on home wifi. And always know, in the back of your mind, how to start the car's built-in map in case you need it. That is the whole system. Phone first, offline map as insurance, factory nav as the final backup. You do not have to memorize any of this. Set up your Favorites once, build the offline-map habit for country trips, and the rest becomes automatic.

1. Parked, set your destination on the phone map by voice.
2. For thin-signal country, download the offline area the night before.
3. Connect CarPlay or Android Auto so it shows on the car screen.
4. Keep the car's built-in map in mind as your last-ditch backup.

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COMMON QUESTIONS

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32. Quick Answers to Common Questions The things folks ask me most about maps. Here are the questions I hear most often, with the short answers. These cover the little worries that keep people from trusting one map or the other. Question Short answer Does the phone map cost anything? No, the common maps are free to use. Will it work with no signal? Only if you downloaded an offline map first. Does it use lots of data? No, the map sips data; music uses more. Can I use both maps? Yes, keep the phone for daily, car for backup. If your question is not here, that is exactly the kind of thing I am happy to sort out in person. There is no such thing as a silly question about this. GET HELP 33. When to Call Bill I am glad to get you set up in person. If any of this feels like a lot, please do not let it stop you. Getting directions should make driving less stressful, not more, and I am happy to set the whole thing up with you. In a short in-home or driveway visit, I can connect your phone to the car screen through CarPlay or Android Auto, download offline maps for the roads you actually drive, save your Favorites like home and the doctor, and show you how to just talk to the map so you never fuss with it while driving. I will go at your pace, write down the steps in plain words, and make sure it all works before I leave. I have been doing this kind of in-home tech help for more than thirty years right here in Portage County, and I stand behind my work with a friendly guarantee. Give me a call at (330) 200-8042. My assistant Sophie can get you on the schedule, and there is never any pressure. You do not have to remember all this. That is what I am for.

CHEAT SHEET

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Everyday Cheat Sheet Keep this page handy. It points you straight to what to do for each task. I want to... Do this Everyday driving Use your phone maps for live traffic No cell signal in the country Fall back on the car's built-in nav Avoid a traffic jam Let phone maps reroute you around it Drive where there is no service Download offline maps before you go See phone maps on the car screen Connect CarPlay or Android Auto Update the car's maps Check with your dealer or carmaker site Search by just talking Use the voice button on phone maps Save home and the doctor Add them as Favorites in your map app Get help Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

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HOW I CAN HELP

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Your Visit — and My Promise In-home visit — $99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included. Remote Support — $49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the $49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that $49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members ($39/mo). GOOD TO KNOW My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated. Call or text (330) 200-8042 · Book a visit: billshometech.com/book · bill@billshometech.com This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Which Map to Use

A quick rule of thumb for any trip.

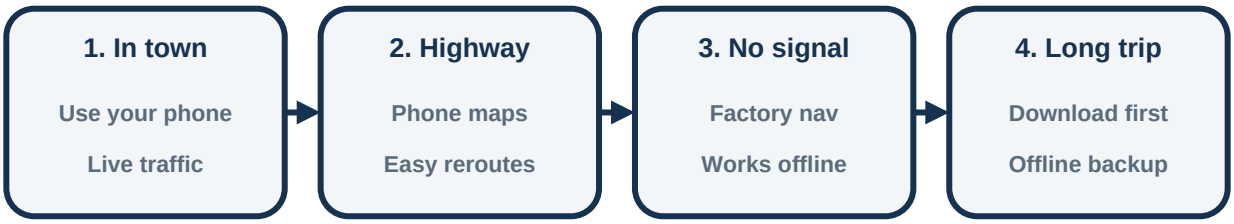

Illustration — a schematic. The order is a suggestion; do one box at a time.

A schematic of the plan — company steps vary; the order does not have to.

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AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

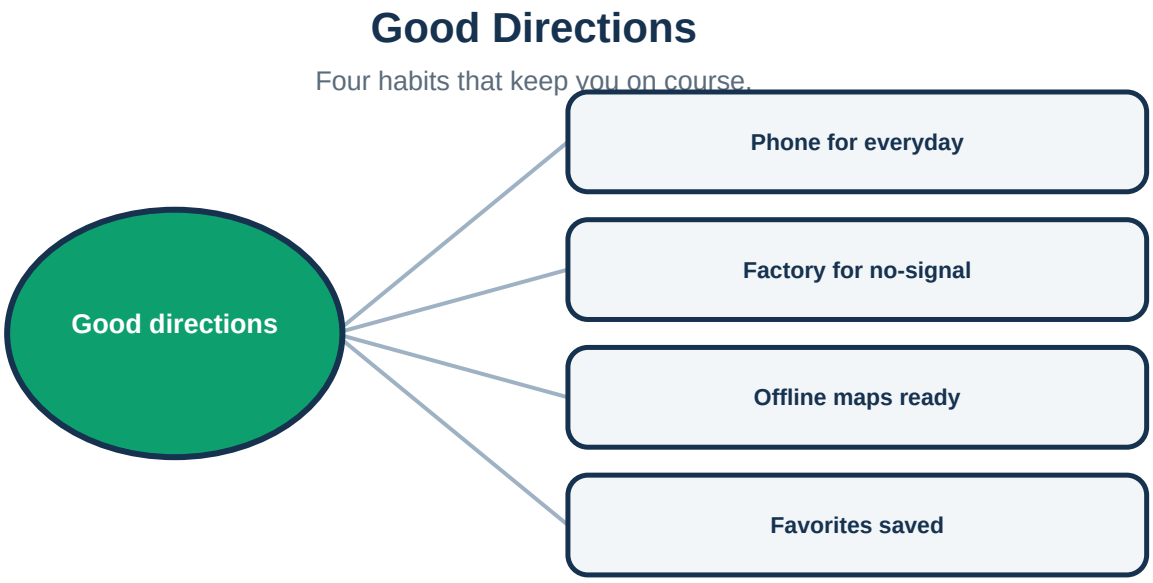

Illustration — a schematic. Set-up screens differ; each takes only a few minutes.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

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Remote Support — $49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the $49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that $49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members ($39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

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