



Google Maps, Waze & Apple Maps in the Car — Which to Use When

Google Maps, Waze & Apple Maps Which to use, and when An Extended Guide ·
No. 1924

————— An Extended Guide · No. 1924 —————

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. There are three big navigation apps, and all three will get you where you are going. The differences are smaller than the companies would have you believe, so do not feel you must become an expert in all of them. Google Maps is the best all-rounder and the easiest first choice for almost anyone. Waze, which Google also owns, is the one to reach for when you want up-to-the-minute warnings about crashes, slowdowns and road closures ahead. Apple Maps is the simple, private choice built into every iPhone, and it has become genuinely good. You do not have to learn all three. Pick one, get comfortable with it, and keep the others in your back pocket for the day you need something they do better. Google Maps: best overall, great for finding places and for offline maps. Waze: best for live traffic, crashes and hazards reported by other drivers. Apple Maps: simplest for iPhone owners, strong on privacy. Your car screen can show any of them once your phone is connected. All three are completely free, with no subscription to drive anywhere. You can set which one opens by default — I'll show you how. WATCH OUT Do all your typing, searching and settings while safely parked. Once you are rolling, use your voice or let a passenger help. No destination is worth taking your eyes off the road. THE BIG PICTURE 2. What a Navigation App Actually Does It is a map, a guide and a traffic watcher in one. It helps to understand that a navigation app is really doing three jobs at the same time, and once you see that, every one of them makes sense. First, it is a map that knows exactly where you are, using the little GPS chip built into your phone that quietly listens to satellites overhead. Second, it is a guide that plans a route from where you are to where you want to be and then tells you, turn by turn, where to go — in a calm voice and with a big arrow on the screen. Third, it is a traffic watcher that sees jams building up ahead and nudges you around them. The differences between the three apps all come down to how well each one does those three jobs, plus a few extras like hazard alerts or privacy. Underneath, they work the very same way, so the moment you learn one, the others feel familiar rather than frightening.

GOOGLE MAPS

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3. Google Maps — The Safe First Choice If you only ever learn one, learn this one. Google Maps is the one I point most folks to first, and I do it with a clear conscience. It has the richest information about businesses anywhere — hours, phone numbers, reviews, photos, whether the pharmacy is open today — because Google has spent years gathering all of that. It gives clear lane guidance, so you always know which lane to be in before a tricky exit sneaks up. It reads traffic beautifully and reroutes you in a sensible, measured way rather than sending you on a wild goose chase. And it lets you download whole areas of the map to use when you have no cell signal at all, which matters a great deal on the back roads of Portage County and out in the hills where the bars disappear. For most people, in most situations, Google Maps simply does everything well, and there is real comfort in that. Best-in-class business listings, hours, photos and reviews. Clear lane guidance and easy-to-read turns. Downloadable offline maps for the dead zones out in the country. Works on both iPhone and Android phones, so it's familiar everywhere. GOOGLE MAPS 4. Finding Places the Easy Way Say what you want, not an address. One of the nicest things about Google Maps is that you do not need to know an exact street address to get where you are going. You can search for what you actually want in plain words — 'gas station,' 'pharmacy near me,' 'coffee,' 'Italian food,' 'nearest restroom' — and it shows you the closest ones with their hours and ratings. Tap the one you like, tap the Directions button, and off you go. This is wonderful when you find yourself in an unfamiliar town and just need a bite to eat or a place to fill up. It is also how you check, before you ever leave the house, whether a store is open today or has closed early, which saves many a wasted trip. The search box is forgiving, too — it understands plain language, so you can be as casual as you would be asking a friend.

GOOD TO KNOW

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Searching 'gas' by voice while you drive will show stations right along your route, not random ones across town — handy when the needle drops on the highway. GOOGLE MAPS 5. Downloading Maps for Dead Zones No signal, no problem. Cell signal drops out in plenty of places — rural stretches, deep river valleys, parking garages, the far corners of the county. Google Maps lets you download a whole area ahead of time so the map keeps working with no signal at all. Here is the part people do not realize: the GPS chip in your phone does not need cell service to know where you are, so a downloaded map will still guide you turn by turn even when you have no bars whatsoever. I set this up for folks before long road trips or before visits to areas I know have spotty coverage, and it has saved more than a few people from getting turned around. It is a small bit of planning that removes a surprising amount of stress, and once you have done it a time or two it takes only a minute.

- 1 Open Google Maps while parked, and on wifi if you can.
- 2 Tap your little account picture in the top corner.
- 3 Tap 'Offline maps,' then 'Select your own map.'
- 4 Drag the box over the area you want and tap Download. GOOD TO KNOW Downloaded maps take up a little room on your phone and refresh themselves every so often. Download over wifi at home to avoid using up your data plan.

WAZE

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6. Waze — The Driver's Early-Warning System Other drivers tell you what's ahead. Waze is owned by Google, but it is a completely different animal, and it is worth understanding why. Its whole idea is that drivers help each other. As people drive along, they tap buttons to report what they see — a crash, a stalled car on the shoulder, a pothole, an object in the road, heavy police presence, a speed camera. Waze gathers all of those reports from everyone on the road and warns you about them before you ever reach them. It is the app to use when you care most about getting through traffic smoothly and knowing about trouble ahead of time. It is chattier than the others, piping up often, and it reroutes aggressively to shave off a few minutes. Some drivers love that energy and some find it a bit much, so try it and see which camp you land in. Live crash, hazard and road-closure alerts from real drivers ahead of you. Aggressive rerouting to dodge slowdowns, even down side streets. Warns you of police and speed-camera reports along the way. Great for a daily commute or any drive on busy highways. WAZE 7. Reporting a Hazard on Waze A couple of taps helps the next driver. When you pass something other drivers ought to know about, you can report it in Waze — but only ever do it safely. The easiest and safest way by far is with your voice, so your hands never leave the wheel and your eyes never leave the road. You can also have a passenger tap it in for you, or wait until you are stopped. Reporting is part of what makes Waze so useful: every report you make helps the folks coming up behind you, and all their reports are helping you in return. It is a neighborly system, in a way. You are never required to report anything, though — if you just want quiet directions, you can ignore the prompts entirely and Waze will still do its job.

- 1 Say 'Hey Waze, report' and then the type, like 'crash' or 'pothole.'
- 2 Or tap the orange report button on the right while parked or stopped.
- 3 Choose what you saw from the simple picture buttons.
- 4 That's it — it clears itself after a while if no one else confirms it.

WATCH OUT

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Never tap a report while the car is moving. Use your voice, let a passenger do it, or wait until you stop. No alert is ever worth a crash. APPLE MAPS 8. Apple Maps — Simple and Private on iPhone Already on your phone, nothing to install. If you have an iPhone, Apple Maps is already there — nothing to download, nothing to set up, nothing to pay. It has improved a tremendous amount over the years, to the point where its old bad reputation simply no longer fits. The maps are clean and uncluttered, the voice directions are clear and well-timed, and the lane guidance is good. Apple also makes a real point of privacy, designing Maps so that your trips are not stitched together into a tidy history with your name on it. For a great many iPhone owners who just want to get from here to there without any fuss, Apple Maps is all they will ever need, and it is the map that pops up first the moment you tap an address inside a text message or an email. That built-in convenience counts for a lot in everyday life. Built into every iPhone — nothing to install or sign up for. Clean, uncluttered maps and clear, well-timed voice directions. Strong privacy; your trips aren't tied to your name. Opens automatically when you tap an address on an iPhone. APPLE MAPS 9. Why Privacy Might Matter to You Where you go is your business. Every navigation app has to know where you are in order to guide you — there is no way around that. The real question is what the company does with that information afterward, once the trip is over. Apple built Maps to keep your travels as private as it possibly can; it scrambles the details so your route is not knitted together into a running history with your name attached. Google's apps, by contrast, can tie your trips into your Google account, which is part of how they are able to offer such clever, personalized suggestions down the road. Neither approach is wrong, and you are not foolish for choosing either one. If the idea of a company quietly keeping a record of everywhere you have driven bothers you, Apple Maps is the gentler, quieter choice. If you would rather have the smarter suggestions and do not mind the record, Google is perfectly fine.

LANE GUIDANCE

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10. Lane Guidance — The Feature That Saves You Know which lane before the exit sneaks up. The single feature I most want you to watch for is lane guidance, because it is the one that spares you white-knuckle moments. On a busy highway interchange, the app shows you a little picture of all the lanes and lights up the exact ones you need to be in for your turn or exit. That means you are not scrambling across three lanes at the very last second because an exit crept up on you and you did not know which way to go. All three apps do this well now, which is a big improvement over the early days when you had to guess. Google Maps and Waze tend to be the most detailed in tricky, tangled city interchanges, but Apple Maps has caught right up. Trust the lane picture — it is usually right, and following it keeps your lane changes calm, early and safe instead of sudden and frightening. TIP When the lane picture shows up, start easing over right away. Early, gentle lane changes are far safer than a last-second dart across traffic. TRAFFIC 11. How Each App Handles Traffic They all see jams — they just react differently. All three apps color the roads to show you the traffic: green for clear sailing, yellow for slow, red for stopped and crawling. Where they really differ is in how eagerly they will send you around a jam once they spot one. Waze is the most aggressive by a mile — it will happily route you down side streets and through neighborhoods to save three minutes, which is wonderful if you know the area and a little nerve-racking if you do not. Google Maps is more measured and sensible; it reroutes you only when the time saving is real and worth it. Apple Maps is the most hands-off of the three, generally keeping you on the main road unless the delay ahead is genuinely serious. Pick the behavior that suits your temperament: Waze if you want every last shortcut, Apple if you would rather be left alone, and Google sitting comfortably in between. App How it reroutes

VOICE

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Waze Aggressively, even to side streets Google Maps Sensibly, when it truly saves time Apple Maps Rarely, sticks to main roads 12. Using Your Voice Instead of Your Hands The safest way to run any map. The safest way to use any of these apps in the car is to never touch the screen at all while the wheels are turning. Your voice does the work for you. On an iPhone you say 'Hey Siri'; on an Android phone you say 'Hey Google'; and in Waze you can say 'Hey Waze.' Then you simply speak your request in ordinary, everyday words, the same way you would ask a passenger. It feels a little odd and self-conscious the first few times, as talking to a machine always does, and then quite quickly it becomes second nature and you wonder how you ever managed without it. The trick is to set up your destination before you pull out of the driveway, and then use your voice for anything you need to change along the way, like adding a stop or checking how long is left. 'Take me home.' 'Navigate to the nearest gas station.' 'Add a stop at the pharmacy.' 'Avoid highways.' 'How long until I get there?' WATCH OUT Practice the voice commands in the driveway a few times before you rely on them. Once the words feel natural, you will never reach for the screen again.

ON THE CAR SCREEN

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13. These Apps on CarPlay and Android Auto Big, simple maps on the dashboard. When you plug an iPhone into a car that supports Apple CarPlay, the phone's maps jump up onto the big dashboard screen in a large, simplified layout that is easy to read and legal to glance at. Android phones do exactly the same thing through a feature called Android Auto. The good news here is that all three navigation apps work this way, so you are not locked out. On CarPlay you can run Google Maps, Waze or Apple Maps, whichever you prefer. On Android Auto you can run Google Maps or Waze. The car screen is bigger, brighter and far safer than squinting down at a phone sitting in a cup holder, so use it whenever your car supports it. If you are not sure whether your car has CarPlay or Android Auto, that is an easy thing for me to check for you. GOOD TO KNOW Apple Maps only runs on Apple devices, so it won't appear on Android Auto at all. Google Maps and Waze, though, run on both systems. SET THE DEFAULT 14. Picking the Default App on CarPlay Make your favorite the one that opens. On an iPhone, you can tell it which map should open automatically when you tap an address — this chosen map is called the 'default' app. Out of the box, iPhones use Apple Maps, but you are free to switch the default over to Google Maps or Waze if you like one of those better. This way, when you tap an address in a text message from a friend or in an email from the doctor's office, your favorite map springs open automatically instead of Apple's, saving you a few steps every single time. The setting lives inside the Settings app, filed under the name of the map you want to use rather than under Maps itself, which trips people up. Change it once while parked and you are set for good.

- 1 Open the Settings app on your iPhone while safely parked.
- 2 Scroll down, tap Apps, then find Google Maps or Waze in the list.
- 3 Tap 'Default Navigation App.'
- 4 Choose the app you want. You're all set from here on.

GOOD TO KNOW

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If you don't see a 'Default Navigation App' choice, update the app first. Older versions didn't offer that setting at all. SET THE DEFAULT 15. Picking the Default on Android Auto Choose your map on the dashboard. On an Android phone running Android Auto, you can tell the car screen which map to open by default so it is ready the moment you climb in. Both Google Maps and Waze live right there on the Android Auto home screen, so switching between the two is as easy as tapping the one you want at the start of a drive. If you always want Waze for its traffic alerts, you can set it once and the car will remember your choice. The exact wording of the setting varies a little from one car and phone to the next, which is a bit annoying, but it is always tucked inside the Android Auto settings, under something named like 'Default apps' or 'Navigation.' If you find yourself hunting for it, this is exactly the sort of small thing I can set up for you in a couple of minutes so you never have to dig for it.

- 1 Open the Android Auto settings on your phone or car screen while parked.
- 2 Look for 'Default apps' or a navigation choice in the menu.
- 3 Pick Google Maps or Waze as your preferred map.
- 4 Reconnect, and your chosen map opens first from now on. SWITCHING 16. Switching Apps Mid-Trip You're not locked into one. You are never stuck with one app for a whole trip, which is a freeing thing to realize. Maybe you start out in Apple Maps for its simplicity, hit a solid wall of red traffic on the highway, and decide you suddenly want Waze and its clever shortcut. That is perfectly fine — pull over somewhere safe or wait for a red light, open the other app, search your destination again, and carry on. A great many folks keep two apps handy as a matter of habit: one they trust for everyday driving, and Waze for the days the roads turn into a mess. There is no harm at all in having all three installed on your phone. They do not fight with one another, they do not slow your phone down, and keeping a backup or two costs you nothing but a little storage space you will never miss.

SEARCH & PLACES

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17. Reviews, Photos and Knowing Before You Go The map is also a guidebook. Beyond simply pointing you down the road, these apps — Google Maps especially — double as a handy guidebook to the world around you. Tap on a restaurant and you will often see photos of the dining room and the dishes, star ratings from other customers, the full menu, the busiest times of day, and whether it takes reservations. Tap on a park and you may see pictures of the trails. This is genuinely useful when you are deciding where to eat on a road trip or whether a shop is worth the drive across town. A word of friendly caution, though: reviews are written by all sorts of people, some happy, some grumpy, so read a handful rather than trusting a single bad one. Treat the ratings as a helpful general sense, not the final word, and you will use them well. TIP Before driving somewhere new, glance at the photos and the most recent reviews. A quick look often saves you from a closed shop or a long wait. EV ROUTING 18. If You Drive an Electric Car Charging stops planned for you. If you drive an electric vehicle, navigation apps can do something extra and rather clever: they can plan your charging stops for you. Google Maps and Apple Maps can route you past charging stations along the way and even estimate how much battery you will have left when you arrive at each one, so you are never caught short out in the middle of nowhere. Many electric cars also have their own built-in route planner that knows the exact state of your particular battery and can be even more precise. For ordinary around-town errands you will rarely give charging a second thought, because you simply plug in at home overnight. But on a long haul across the state, letting the app plan the charging stops takes a real worry off your plate. If you are shopping for an electric car or just brought one home, this is well worth a quick setup session together.

GOOD TO KNOW

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Your car's own charging planner usually knows your battery best. Use the phone app as a helpful second opinion on a long trip. TRUCKS & RVS 19. Towing, Trucks and Tall Vehicles A regular car map may steer you wrong. A standard navigation app quietly assumes you are driving an ordinary car, and most of the time that assumption is harmless. But if you drive a big truck, pull a tall camper, or haul a trailer, that assumption can get you into real trouble — the app may happily route you under a low bridge, down a road with a weight limit, or through a turn your rig simply cannot make. The big three apps have gotten better about this: Waze and Apple Maps now let you tell them you are in a larger vehicle so they steer you clear of low clearances and tight spots. For serious towing or a commercial truck, there are specialized apps built just for that purpose, which know bridge heights and road restrictions in detail. If you tow anything regularly, it is worth either setting the vehicle type correctly in your app or using a dedicated trucking app, and watching the posted signs besides. WATCH OUT Never trust a car app to keep a tall rig away from a low bridge on its own. Set your vehicle type, and always obey the posted clearance signs you pass. DATA USE 20. Do These Apps Use a Lot of Data? Less than you might fear. A common worry, and a fair one, is that running a map on the screen all day long will burn straight through your phone's monthly data plan. The good news is that navigation uses surprisingly little data — a typical hour of driving with the map running uses only a small slice, far, far less than streaming a video or a couple of songs. If you happen to be on a tight or limited data plan, downloading your Google Maps areas ahead of time over wifi at home cuts the data use down to almost nothing, because the map is already sitting on your phone. Waze, because it is constantly swapping reports back and forth with other drivers, uses a touch more than the other two, but it is still quite modest in the grand scheme. For the great majority of people, the data a map uses is nothing to lose any sleep over at all.

ACCOUNTS

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What you're doing Rough data appetite Running a map for an hour Small Using a downloaded offline map Almost none Streaming music while you drive Much larger 21. Saving Home, Work and Favorites Set the places you go most, once. All three apps let you save the places you visit over and over — your home, a son or daughter's house, the doctor's office, your church, the grocery store. Once a place is saved, getting there is as simple as saying 'take me home' out loud or tapping a Home button on the screen. I strongly encourage setting up Home and a handful of favorites the very first time you use an app, because it transforms navigation from the chore of typing out a full address into a single tap or a few spoken words. You only have to do it once, and it pays you back on every single drive afterward for years. It is the difference between the app feeling like a bother and the app feeling like a trusted friend who already knows where you like to go. If you would like, I can sit down and set all your favorites up with you. Save Home and Work so 'take me home' simply works. Add favorites for the doctor, family and your regular errands. Starred places carry over so they're there if you change phones. A passenger can add a stop by voice without ending the trip.

SHARING

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22. Letting Family See You're On the Way Peace of mind for the people waiting. Both Google Maps and Apple Maps can share your live arrival with family members while you drive, and it is a lovely feature that gets overlooked. You tap Share, pick a person from your contacts, and they receive a link that shows roughly where you are on the map and when you are expected to arrive. It updates all on its own as you travel, and it stops sharing the moment you reach your destination. This is a real comfort on long drives — the grandkids or your spouse can simply watch the little dot creep closer to home without you having to call and say you are nearly there. It is entirely your choice whether to use it, and it is easy to turn off whenever you like. Nobody can follow your travels unless you deliberately send them the link, and the sharing ends by itself when the trip does, so there is nothing to remember to switch off. TIP Share your arrival time instead of calling to say you're close. The person waiting can simply watch the little dot get nearer, with no interruption. VOICE SOUND 23. Changing the Voice and Volume Make the directions easy to hear. If the spoken directions are too quiet to catch over the road noise, too loud and startling, or just hard to follow, the happy news is that you can change all of it to suit you. Each app has a setting for how chatty it is — some folks want every little turn and lane announced, while others just want the big ones so it is not nattering at them constantly. You can turn the guidance voice up or down separately from your music, which is a godsend, and in some apps you can even change the voice to a different accent if the standard one grates on you. For anyone who is hard of hearing, turning the guidance volume up and setting the app to quiet the music briefly during each spoken instruction makes a world of difference. These settings all live in the app under a little gear icon or a three-dots menu, and dialing them in just right is exactly the kind of thing I am glad to do for you.

ACCURACY

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24. When the Map Is Wrong Trust your eyes over the screen. Maps are very good, but they are not perfect, and it is important you know that going in so a glitch does not rattle you. A new road opens, a store packs up and moves, a construction crew closes a ramp overnight, and the app simply has not caught up yet. The golden rule in those moments is beautifully simple: your own two eyes beat the screen every time. If the app cheerfully says turn here but the sign in front of you says 'road closed,' believe the sign. If it tells you to turn the wrong way down a one-way street, do not do it no matter how confidently the voice insists. The app will quietly recalculate a fresh route within a few seconds once you ignore a bad instruction, no harm done and no scolding. Treat it as a helpful co-pilot offering suggestions, not a boss giving orders, and it will never once lead you somewhere you should not be. WATCH OUT A map that's wrong won't argue with you. If it ever conflicts with a road sign, a barricade or your own good judgment, trust the real world in front of you every time. PARKING 25. Finding and Remembering Where You Parked A small feature with a big payoff. Here is a handy little trick that saves a good deal of wandering around a lot. Both Google Maps and Apple Maps can help you find parking near where you are headed, showing lots and garages and sometimes even how full they are. Even better, after you park, the app can drop a little pin to remember exactly where you left the car, so when you come out of the doctor's office or the mall an hour later you are not standing there scratching your head wondering which row you were in. On an iPhone, the car's spot is often marked automatically when you disconnect from the car. It is one of those small conveniences that you do not think you need until the day it rescues you in a vast, confusing parking garage, and then you are grateful for it. TIP In a big unfamiliar garage, snap a quick photo of the level number or nearest sign with your phone too. Between that and the dropped pin, you'll always find your way back.

OHIO ROADS

17. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

26. A Note for Portage County Driving Back roads, winter and dead zones. Out here in our corner of Ohio, a few local realities are worth planning around, and a map can help with each of them if you let it. Cell signal thins right out on the rural stretches and the township roads, so downloading a Google Maps area before any trip into the countryside is a smart and simple habit. Winter brings road closures and sudden whiteout conditions that Waze's live driver reports can flag for you before you ever reach the trouble. And the GPS itself sometimes gets a little confused on the tangle of township roads, gravel lanes and unmarked intersections we have around here, so do not be startled if the little blue arrow wobbles or hesitates for a moment before it settles. None of this is any cause for worry — it simply means that a tiny bit of preparation, like saving your map offline and keeping Waze within reach, makes winter driving and country driving a great deal calmer and more certain. SETUP ONCE

27. A One-Time Setup That Pays Off Twenty minutes parked saves a thousand fumbles. If there is one idea I want you to take from this whole guide, it is this: nearly every frustration people have with car navigation comes from either trying to set things up while actually driving, or from never setting them up at all and fighting the app fresh each time. The cure is wonderfully simple. Spend twenty quiet, unhurried minutes sitting in the driveway and you will be set for good. Pick your one main app. Save Home and your most-visited places. Download an offline map of your local area. Practice a few voice commands out loud until they feel natural. Set which app opens by default. After that, every single drive becomes just 'take me there,' and all the fiddly, fumbling part is behind you forever. This is exactly the kind of thing I truly enjoy setting up alongside folks at the kitchen table — once it is done properly, it stays done, and you reap the benefit every day.

- 1 Choose one main app and open it while safely parked.
- 2 Save Home, Work and a few favorite places.
- 3 Download an offline map of your local area.
- 4 Practice saying 'take me home' and 'add a stop' out loud.
- 5 Set your default navigation app in Settings.

COMPARE

18. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

28. The Three Apps Side by Side A quick table to settle the choice. If you are the sort who likes to see everything laid out in one tidy place to make a decision, here is the short version of this whole guide. Think honestly about what matters most to you in the car — is it finding places and businesses, is it dodging traffic and knowing about trouble ahead, or is it keeping things simple and private? Let that single question guide your pick. There is genuinely no wrong answer here, and the beauty of it is that you can always try another one tomorrow if the first does not suit you. The apps are free, they live together peacefully on your phone, and switching costs you nothing. If you want... Reach for... The best all-rounder Google Maps Crash and hazard alerts Waze Simple and private on iPhone Apple Maps Offline maps for dead zones Google Maps

MY RECOMMENDATION

19. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

29. What I'd Tell a Friend A plain, honest recommendation. Here is what I actually tell people when they ask me over coffee, with no hedging. Start with Google Maps — it does everything well, it works on absolutely any phone, and it handles the rare dead zone gracefully with its offline maps. If you drive busy roads or have a regular commute, add Waze alongside it for its crash and traffic warnings, and lean on Waze whenever things get snarled up. And if you have an iPhone and simply want the easiest, most private option with nothing to install, Apple Maps is already sitting right there and is more than good enough for everyday trips around town and to appointments. You truly do not need all three. But having Google Maps plus one other covers just about every situation you will ever meet on the road, in every season, and that combination gives most drivers everything they could want. And remember, there is no commitment in any of this. If you set up Google Maps and find after a few weeks that you miss something, switching or adding another app takes only a minute. The apps are free, they live together peacefully, and your favorites and saved places can carry over, so trying a different one costs you nothing but a little curiosity. Pick one to start, drive with it a while, and let your own experience on the road be the real judge of what suits you best. TIP If you remember nothing else from this guide: Google Maps for everyday driving, Waze for when the traffic is bad. That one-two combination serves most drivers beautifully.

HABITS

20. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

30. Safe Habits That Become Second Nature Good routines make all of this easy. A few simple habits turn navigation from a nervous chore into a genuine comfort, and they are all easy enough to make automatic. Set your destination before you ever shift into drive, so you are never poking at the phone with the car rolling. Mount the phone up where you can glance at it without dropping your eyes to your lap. Use your voice for any change you need to make along the way. Keep the guidance volume set where you can clearly hear the next turn coming. And if you ever feel rushed, lost, or flustered, simply pull over somewhere safe and sort it out calmly — the app will wait for you as long as you need, it is in no hurry. These are the very same habits I teach at the kitchen table, and they work precisely because they are small and simple. Do them a handful of times and you will not even think about them anymore; they will just be how you drive. Set the destination before you start driving, always. Mount the phone up at eye level, never down in your lap. Change things by voice, never by typing while moving. Pull over safely if you ever feel rushed, lost or flustered. MONEY 31. Are Any of These Worth Paying For? The short answer is no. Here is a genuinely happy fact to end the money question on: all three of these apps are completely free. Google Maps, Waze and Apple Maps cost nothing to download and nothing whatsoever to use, with no subscription fee hiding anywhere for ordinary navigation. You may well stumble across other map apps in the app store that try to charge you a monthly fee, and for the everyday driver there is simply no good reason to pay a dime for any of them. The free big three are excellent, polished, and trusted by millions. The only things that ever cost money are entirely separate from the apps — like the phone data plan you already have, or a specialized trucking app if you happen to haul for a living. For the plain job of getting from your house to the doctor and safely back again, you will never need to spend a single cent.

GOOD TO KNOW

21. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

If any map app ever demands a subscription just to give you basic directions, you can safely close it and walk away. The very best navigation apps are free. **MULTIPLE STOPS** 32. Planning a Trip With Several Stops Line up your errands in one go. Here is a feature that saves a surprising amount of driving back and forth, and most folks never discover it. All three apps let you add more than one stop to a single trip. Say you need to hit the bank, then the pharmacy, then the grocery store before heading home. Instead of punching in each address separately as you go, you can set them all up at once before you leave, and the app will string them together in a sensible order and guide you from one to the next without you lifting a finger. Google Maps lets you add stops by tapping the three dots and choosing 'Add stop.' This is wonderful for a morning of errands, because once it is set up you simply drive, and the app quietly tells you where to turn for each one in turn. Set the whole chain up while parked in the driveway, and your errand run becomes a single smooth loop instead of a series of separate puzzles. **TIP** Set up your whole errand run as one trip with several stops before you leave home. Then you just drive, and the app handles the order and the turns for you. **CHARGING** 33. Keep the Phone Charged and Mounted A running map drinks battery. Running a navigation app with the screen bright and the GPS working hard does use up your phone's battery faster than usual, so it is worth planning for on any longer drive. The simple answer is to keep the phone plugged into a charger in the car while you navigate, which keeps it topped up and ready. Just as important is a good phone mount — one that clips to a vent or sticks to the dash and holds the phone up at eye level where you can safely glance at it. Fishing a phone out of a cup holder at a stoplight, or worse while moving, is exactly the kind of fumbling that causes trouble. A sturdy mount and a charging cable are a few dollars well spent, and they turn your phone into a proper, steady co-pilot rather than something sliding around the seat.

GET HELP

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Keep the phone plugged into a car charger while you navigate.

Use a solid mount that holds the phone at eye level. A vent clip or dash mount beats fishing it out of a cup holder. A charged phone and a steady mount make navigation far safer. 34. When to Call Bill I'm glad to set this up with you. If any of this feels like a lot to take in, please do not worry one bit — you do not have to remember it all, because remembering it for you is exactly what I am here for. I can come right to your home, sit out in the driveway with you and your car, and set up whichever map suits you best from top to bottom. We will save your home and your favorite places, download a map for the back roads, practice the voice commands together until they feel easy and natural, and pick the app that opens by default so the car is ready the moment you climb in. With more than thirty years of doing this kind of work, I have learned to go at your pace, with no rush, no pressure and no jargon that makes your eyes glaze over. Give me a call at (330) 200-8042 and my assistant Sophie will get you onto the schedule. I serve folks all over Portage County, and I stand behind my work with a friendly guarantee — if it is not right, we make it right, plain and simple. CHEAT SHEET Everyday Cheat Sheet Keep this page handy. It points you straight to what to do for each task. I want to... Do this I want the best all-rounder Use Google Maps I want crash and hazard alerts Use Waze I have an iPhone and want simple Use Apple Maps I'll be out of cell range Download offline maps in Google Maps I want to report a pothole or crash Tap Report in Waze I want to set which app opens Change the default in phone settings I want to start a trip hands-free Say 'Hey Google' or 'Hey Siri' I'm not sure which to pick Start with Google Maps Get help Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

HOW I CAN HELP

23. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

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

Starting a trip

The same four steps in any app.

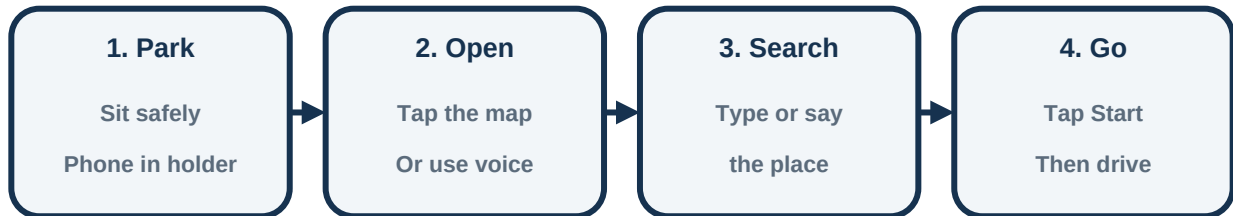


Illustration — a schematic. The order is a suggestion; do one box at a time.

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

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

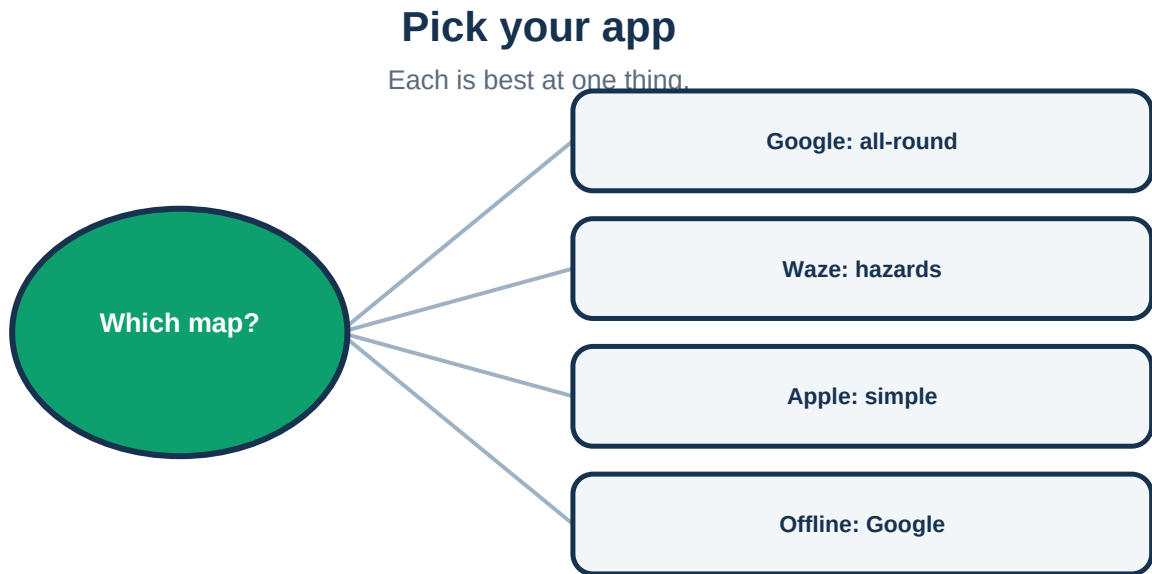


Illustration — a schematic. Set-up screens differ; each takes only a few minutes.

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.



HOW I CAN HELP

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.

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