

Google Fi gets iPhone eSIM support

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Google's mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) Google Fi is getting eSIM support on the iPhone. Previously, you would need to order a plastic SIM card to use Google Fi, but now iPhone users can set up service with just a few taps and clicks. You can even use it as a second mobile service on the iPhone now, with Google Fi on the eSIM and some other carrier in the physical SIM slot.

The support page, first spotted by 9to5Google, warns that, for now, eSIM support is only open to new signups for Google Fi. You'll need an iPhone XR, XS, XS Max, or 11 series for it to work. The setup process is a bit strange since it can't all be done through the app like normal. Instead you have to go to the Google Fi website and sign up for service first, presumably so that Apple doesn't get a cut of the Google Fi subscription. After signing up and opting into "quick setup," you can download the Google Fi app and do the rest of the setup on your phone.

At its maximum power, Google Fi combines the networks of T-Mobile, Sprint (which is now part of T-Mobile), and US Cellular, but this only happens on "Google Fi Compatible" devices. On devices like the iPhone, Google Fi is just a regular, old T-Mobile MVNO. There are still reasons you might

want to sign up for Google's version of T-Mobile service, though, since it's often more flexible than other carrier plans.

You only pay for the data you use, and you can start and stop the monthly service easily—just press a button in the app—whenever you want. There's no extra cost for tethering or for adding extra data-only devices—you just pay for whatever data you use. You get many of the best features of Google Voice in the package, like the ability to call, text, and check voicemail from the Web and from the Google Hangouts app, along with easy call forwarding and easy call blocking. Google Fi works internationally in over 200 countries, and while calls internationally are billed at 20 cents a minute, there are no extra data fees. You'll be able to hop on the local LTE networks and pay for whatever data you use at the same rate as normal. If you're using it as a second mobile service, you could have an easily controllable second phone number or have a work and personal number on the same phone.

The pricing is easy to understand. The "Flexible" plan for lower data usage is \$20 a month for unlimited calls and texts plus \$10 per gigabyte of data you use (billed by the megabyte). If you regularly use a ton of data, the "Unlimited" plan—a flat \$70 per month with 22GB of high-speed data—might make more sense. There is also a discount for group plans.

For now, the feature is still rolling out, so if you don't see the option for eSIM setup, just wait a few days.

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